

INSPECTION REPORT

ELTHAM HILL TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

Eltham Hill, Eltham

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 100182

Headteacher: Marjorie Findlay-Stone

Reporting inspector: Terence Parish
15465

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 November 2002

Inspection number: 252566

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Technology college - comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Female

School address: Eltham Hill
Eltham
South East London

Postcode: SE9 5EE

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: John Twidale

Date of previous inspection: 17 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15465	Terence Parish	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12775	Judith Goodchild	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32211	Brendan Geoghegan	Team inspector	Design and technology	
32166	Nasim Butt	Team inspector	Science	
302128	Shirley Stanley	Team inspector	Religious education	
31100	Geoffrey Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
15407	Muriel Harrison	Team inspector	Geography	
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Art and design	
23308	John Morell	Team inspector	Music	
18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English Drama	
2183	Peter Thomson	Team inspector	Information and communications technology (ICT) Business education	
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?

16950	Caroline Orr	Team inspector	Educational Inclusion English as an additional language (EAL) Modern foreign languages	
7926	James Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education co-ordination of the inspection of special educational needs	
4351	Jeanne Strickland	Team inspector	English (sixth form) Drama (sixth form)	
2919	Phillip Armitage	Team inspector	Chemistry Mathematics (sixth form)	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has been designated a technology college for five years. Pupils have a wide range of ability and those in Year 7 are of average attainment. The attainment on entry of previous years has sometimes been below average, at other times well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average; their needs are diverse. With 924 pupils on roll, the school is of average size. The demand for places at the school is above the number that can be taken. About forty per cent of pupils, mainly from Black ethnic minorities, travel in from neighbouring authorities. Though the social-economic background of pupils is mixed, and improving, overall it is poor. There is a wide range of ethnic minorities and the proportion of pupils who do not necessarily use the English language at home is high. About half the pupils in the school are white British. Other ethnic groups well represented are Black African, Black Caribbean, and Turkish/Turkish Cypriot. Until September 2001 the school accepted pupils into a sixth form. The school is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) and an Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative. Both bring resources and money into the school which are well used to support teaching and learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Eltham Hill is a good school overall; some features are very good. It is rapidly improving owing to the very high expectations of the principal and the senior managers. It is very inclusive; all pupils are helped to do their best. Very good leadership and management have improved the school in the last two years and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are now good. Relationships between pupils are very good. Pupils are well taught and make good progress. GCSE examination standards, overall, are about average and well above those found in similar schools. The school costs a great deal more than most to run and the continuing expense of providing for small numbers of sixth form students is a significant part of this high cost. Too many pupils are also absent from school too often. Consequently the cost of providing for each pupil is too high. This cost should reduce to a reasonable amount once the sixth form has completely closed and attendance has risen a little further; very good work by the school has begun to pay off.

What the school does well

- Provides a safe and civilised place for all pupils to learn and develop owing to the very high expectations held by the Principal and senior managers.
- Citizenship and personal and social education is very good overall; aspects of it are excellent.
- Moral development and cultural development are very good and contribute to the very good relationships that are evident between individuals and groups in this ethnically mixed school.
- Provision for English and for science is very good and raising standards.
- Teaching in art and design in Years 10 and 11 is very good; work is very imaginative and supports the local community.
- Pupils are looked after and cared for, and helped to do better work, very well.
- Opportunities for work and activities outside lessons are very good.
- The school's self evaluation is very good.

What could be improved

- The attendance of pupils, which remains too low despite much effort by the school.
- Provision for music, including teaching, management and the curriculum.
- The overall management of ICT and the use of computers by pupils and some teachers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Standards at the end of Year 9 started declining after the last inspection. GCSE results continued to improve but sharply fell in 2001 when pupils, who had achieved unsatisfactorily in Year 9 tests, took them. However, they turned the corner again in 2002 and improved. This improvement is on the back of pupils' much better behaviour and attitudes compared to the poor situation two years ago and

commented on in the last report. Attendance has not improved since the last inspection but has begun to improve from being worse in recent years; systems to try to make a difference are rigorous. The curriculum is better and statutory requirements are now met. Teaching is far better. Music had significant weaknesses five years ago and is unsatisfactory now. Though ICT is better provided for, it still needs to improve more. Owing to the rapid change for the better in the last two years, improvement of the school overall has been good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	C	D	C	A
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E	N/a	

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

Results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average but above those attained in most similar schools. English test results were much better than science, which were a little better than mathematics; mathematics and science results were well below average. Overall results were better than in 2001. This improvement is also reflected in GCSE results which were much better overall in 2002 compared to 2001, a particularly weak year. In 2002, the proportion of pupils who attained five or more A*-C grades was below average but the proportion that attained five or more A*-G grades was above average and almost all pupils attained one or more. The school's statutory targets were almost met. Pupils who are bilingual, and possibly use a language other than English at home, do better at GCSE than white British pupils; they attain well above average results. In 2001 GCSE, business studies, drama and modern languages, especially German, did particularly well and were broadly above average. Science and ICT results were about average. All other results were below average. Food technology and graphics were the weakest subjects. In 2002, English language and geography results improved significantly though remain below average. Religious education results were good.

The standard of work is overall average in Years 7-9 and below average in Years 10 and 11. This does not indicate a decline but reflects improvement that takes time to work through and the increasing attainment of pupils when they enter the college compared to previous years. The National Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) Strategy, designed to raise the achievement of pupils between when they leave primary school and before they start GCSE courses has had, and is having, the desired effect; this school was a pilot and so has benefited for longer than many schools. Work remains below average in Years 7-9 in ICT, modern languages, music and physical education. It is above average in citizenship. In Years 10 and 11, work is average in many subjects, above average in art and design, and below average in music.

Pupils achieve well between starting and leaving school and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) achieve well between starting and the end of Year 9, very well between then and leaving.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Often better in lessons, but too many absences.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and often much better in lessons. Girls are closely monitored around the building; the school's aim is to move them towards self discipline
Personal development and relationships	Very good. All cultural groups get on well together and the many who take the opportunity to eat good meals at lunchtime do so in a very civilised manner. It is a pleasure to sit with them.
Attendance	Well below average, though slowly improving after massive effort by the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching of English and of science is very good and the teaching of mathematics good, in all years. Teaching is good in almost all other subjects, very good in citizenship and unsatisfactory in music. The teaching of art and design is also very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching has many strengths. Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly strong in English, science, modern languages and religious education, and also art and design and business education in Years 10 and 11. The most inspiring teaching is in English in all years and also in science in Years 10 and 11. English and science also assess work very thoroughly in all years, as do art and design and geography in Years 10 and 11. The assessment of ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, very well in English and in science in all years, and in art and design in Years 10 and 11.

The needs of all pupils are met well. The monitoring of achievement and the setting of targets for improvement is rigorous and focused on individual pupils; it cuts across cultural and special groups of pupils, whose overall performances are, nevertheless, closely followed by teachers. Pupils learn well overall and in almost all subjects; learning reflects the quality of teaching. Pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding very well in science in all years and in art and design in Years 10 and 11. They know very well how they are doing in science in all years; consequently they can better seek to improve themselves. They are consistently very interested in English (a result of inspired teaching), and in science in Years 10 and 11.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Enhanced by many opportunities to take up activities outside of lessons though opportunities for music are unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)	Good. The manager has successfully introduced the new Code of Practice. Effective procedures and systems are in place to support pupils and as a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)	Satisfactory. Pupils designated as EAL generally do better in this school than those whose first language is English. Support for pupils at an early stage of learning English is good in quality but barely adequate

	in quantity.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual development is satisfactory, social development satisfactory. There is not a daily act of worship but there are opportunities for pupils to reflect. Moral development and cultural development are both very good. The variety of cultures in the school is well reflected in the school's work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well overall. Pastoral care is a particular strength; pupils are very well looked after. Academic care is good; targets for improvement are too frequently based on pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science. Learning mentors play a very significant role in helping pupils do better. The school works satisfactorily with parents to help pupils do better and also supports parents when it can.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. Very good management and plenty of hard work support progress towards an excellent vision of a school full of pupils who behave and do well because they want to. Senior managers are always present around the school and pupils have a healthy respect for them. Curriculum, pastoral, and other key roles are mostly well managed, those for ICT and music are not.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work well, with and for the school. They have the well being of pupils at heart and meet all statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are excellent features; the evaluation of teaching is outstanding and linked to performance management so that how to improve is easily understood and improvement attainable. The rigorous evaluation of data provided to curricula subjects is not yet used consistently well by all.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall, though too much money is currently spent on too many staff. This will reduce when the sixth form closes completely.

Staffing is good. Accommodation allows learning to take place but refurbishment is necessary. Learning resources are satisfactory; the number of computers is well above average.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daughters like school. • Daughters make good progress. • The teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems. • The school expects children to work hard • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their daughters to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information provided about how well their daughter is getting on. • The school needs to work more closely with parents. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and also that reports about pupils' progress should improve. The school has a commitment to working closely with parents. There are many activities available to pupils.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM ELTHAM HILL TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Owing to the re-organisation of sixth form provision in Greenwich local education authority, the school had to stop taking students into Year 12 in September 2002. The school, parents and governors did not agree with this decision. The only students that belong to the school are the 23 remaining in Year 13. The school and governors considered it essential to provide for students who had started sixth form studies in September 2001 and wished to remain in the school to complete them. The cost of maintaining the staff necessary is being born completely by the school and is a significant part of a growing debt. Year 13 students follow a variety of courses, some of the classes being very small. All courses are at A2 level except for a vocational business course. All the students are former pupils of the school and consequently come from a range of backgrounds. They had average attainment on entry to the sixth form, rather higher than in previous years. The sixth form will close completely in July 2003. Some sixth form teachers, employed by the school, teach at a local sixth form college and among their students are girls who attended Eltham Hill when in Year 11. These students are on the roll of the sixth form college.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The school cannot provide the broad range of extra activities characteristic of a thriving sixth form. Students sign in and out of school when they have classes and have access to school facilities when they need them; all agreed that their needs are well met. Standards of work of current students are variable but mostly above average. This does not reflect past A-level results that were well below average overall. The reason for this is that current students started the sixth form with better GCSE results than in previous years and leadership and management are very good; consequently students are helped to improve and do well. Current students are generally making very good progress. Small classes, very good teaching, and their own very positive attitudes help them do so. It seems clear that post-16 results should be better in 2003 than in recent years. The sixth form has always been expensive, as it needed more students in most classes. The cost of providing for the few students remaining is very high and consequently the sixth form is not cost effective and adversely affects the value for money offered by the whole school.

Strengths

- The level of support offered to students.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning.
- The very good attitudes and high aspirations of students.

What could be improved

- Students in very small classes need to have links with students in other schools and colleges so ideas and problems about work can be shared.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Students learn well because of good and very good teaching and standards are better than in previous years.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Chemistry	Good. Students learn at least well and often better owing to good and better teaching. Standards are higher than in previous years; pupils started with better standards.
Business studies	Good. Very good teaching means students learn very well. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily and show a great deal of enthusiasm.
Drama	Good. This is the most successful A Level subject in terms of examination results, though taken by very small numbers. Students achieve well because of their enthusiasm for the subject and consistently good teaching.
English literature	Satisfactory. Standards have varied over recent years but are below national averages. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features, and students of very mixed abilities are benefiting from the course.

In an A level biology lesson and in an A level media studies lesson, teaching and learning were very good and standards above average. In an A level ICT lesson and in an A level art and design lesson, teaching and learning were good and standards average. In an A level French lesson, teaching and learning were very good and standards well above average; in a parallel German lesson, teaching and learning were good and standards above average. A Year 13 sociology lesson was taught well and standards were average.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are very well supported by both their class teachers and the managers responsible for them. Small classes means close attention is paid to each student's academic needs and they are both encouraged to find out about opportunities available to them when they leave and helped to do so when necessary. Each student is well known to senior managers, who care for them very well.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The closing of the sixth form is being very well managed as far as ensuring that students do not suffer as a result of it; there has been no disruption to their studies or slackening in the way they are cared for pastorally or academically, or apparent reduction in the quality of teaching and learning they experience; it is very good. Staffing is very good and accommodation and resources satisfactory. To provide properly for students in Year 13 costs a lot of money as teachers have had to be retained. Unfortunately the school has to pay this and this is an issue of concern to governors. Some staff time is "sold" to another institution and this is good practice and demonstrates that the school is doing its best to off set high costs.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The small groups that let teachers support and teach them well.• They feel comfortable in the school as it has much improved in the last two years, particularly the attitudes and behaviour of pupils they mix with.• Their common room, which provides some social time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those in very small groups sometimes feel a little isolated in their subject.

Inspectors agree that students are looked after and taught well. They are also aware that having few students in a class makes sharing ideas and academic problems with other students difficult. The school has listened to suggestions about how to provide some opportunities to students and the situation is likely to improve in the near future.

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".

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

There are many technical terms used in the following sections. Where possible these are explained in brackets after them. The explanation may have been made in an earlier section of the report than that you are reading. Some frequently stated terms include:

“accelerated class” – these are classes in Years 7-9 that contain pupils who did well in end of Year 6 national tests and have been grouped so that targets for further improvement can be made higher and pupils’ and teachers’ expectations raised.

“non-accelerated class” – these are classes made up of pupils who did not do as well as their peers in (accelerated classes) in Year 6 national tests.

Class 70 and Class 80 – these are classes made up of lower attaining pupils who have special teaching provision – essentially a class teacher for much of the time and specialists for practical based subjects, such as physical education.

Key Stage 3 Strategy – this is a nation-wide attempt to improve how well pupils do between leaving primary school and the end of Year 9, as it is perceived that learning ‘slows down’ in Years 7, 8 and 9. This school was a pilot of the strategy and has been using it for several years. It began with English and mathematics and now includes science, modern foreign languages and ICT.

“three-part lesson” – a feature of the Key Stage 3 strategy, effectively the novel idea that a lesson should have a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning states learning objectives, often on a white board at the front of the class, the end is a plenary that tests out whether pupils know what they should have learnt in the middle.

National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy – two other strategies, begun in primary schools, that are picked up by the Key Stage 3 strategy, one to raise standards in literacy, the other standards in numeracy. All subjects should contribute to both.

“value added” – a measure of whether pupils are doing as well as statistics predict they should or not. It is desirable that results in tests and examinations indicate value has been added – effective learning has gone on in the intervening time between them.

Ethnic groups – the official designation *English/Scottish/Welsh* is sometimes shortened to *British*.

English as an additional language, shortened to EAL – refers to pupils who may use a language other than English at home, which may reduce their capability in English. An EAL co-ordinator has responsibility for ensuring at least those pupils at an early stage of learning English are appropriately supported in lessons and work.

SEN, most often spelt out – special educational needs – refers to pupils with particular learning or behavioural challenges. Can also include gifted and talented pupils – those who exhibit performances better than most of their peers. A SENCO – special educational needs co-ordinator - ensures that provision for SEN pupils is secure and meets with significant national requirements. The SENCO may not always be responsible for the gifted and talented.

Educational Inclusion – a concept that schools are required to meet or at least show they are making significant progress towards effectively enabling all pupils, from whatever social or ethnic background, facing whatever challenges to learning they might have, to have the same opportunities as their peers and to receive whatever support is needed to enable them to make the best of those opportunities.

Terms used in the school:

Curriculum manager equates to the more common term *head of department*

Year manager equates to the more common term *head of year*

Principal equates to the more common term *headteacher*

Vice principal equates to the more common term *deputy headteacher*

Curriculum support worker – an adult who is not a teacher who works with individual pupils and/or alongside teachers to help pupils, with learning challenges, learn. Abbreviated to CSW. Funded from SEN money.

Learning mentor – an adult who is most often not a teacher who works with individual pupils to help them do better. Funded from Excellence in Cities (EiC) money.

Tutor – a term commonly used to represent a teacher in charge of a registration group. Such *form* groups are often the first call for *pastoral* support from a pupil before help is sort from a *year manager* (head of year). Pastoral support is associated with sorting out personal and behaviour problems and offering advice and guidance that is broader than advice about academic work. A tutor may also be used to offer such academic advice.

Excellence in Cities – EiC – a government-funded initiative to help raise standards in, originally, inner city schools. Now extended to many urbanised areas.

Education Action Zone – EAZ – a government-sanctioned and funded local initiative comprising a group of schools within a given area. Funds flow into the area and some are devolved to schools for resources. The zone director enables support and advice to be given to schools to help initiatives to improve education and standards.

Note: The school uses the term *students* for all children in the school. In order for references to be clearer in this report, and to ensure consistency across all reports, the term *pupil* is used for those children in Years 7-11, and *student* is reserved for those in the sixth form.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the section on standards in the summary report, as what is reported there is not necessarily repeated here. Details about standards will also be found at the beginning of each subject report and also through examples given in those reports. The last report said that pupils achieved satisfactorily and absence and behaviour problems restricted their achievement. Most behavioural problems have been solved or are effectively contained. There is still a problem with persistent non-attendance by a significant minority of pupils. However, though these absentees do not achieve satisfactorily, many other pupils do very well for themselves and the school does all it can to try to improve attendance. Consequently, overall, pupils now achieve well, owing to much better teaching.
2. The overall attainment of pupils when they start at the school in Year 7 has fluctuated over recent years as pupils come from many different primary schools and from several local boroughs. This year, increased demand for places has enabled the local education authority (LEA) to get a balance and Year 7 is of average attainment. Years 10 and 11 in particular, were of below average attainment when they began, and were well below average in some subjects. Absence and behavioural problems in their first few years also reduced progress they might have made. Consequently, standards appear relatively higher among younger pupils. All pupils who come to school on a regular basis are now achieving well overall, some very well. The aspirations of pupils and parents also play a significant role in pupils' achievement. This is a girls' school and parents and carers choose to send girls to it. For 40 per cent of pupils, mainly of Black ethnic groups, this means significant and often difficult bus journeys; parents chose the school because they believe their charges will do well in it, and want them to do well. In consequence, many do so. Girls who live locally may attend the school for the same reasons or because parents do not want a mixed school. Absence and lower achievement appear to be more significant among those pupils who live closest. The school is using all strategies and support available to it to raise the aspirations of all pupils so that they do as well as they can. For example, target-setting (giving pupils academic goals to strive for and helping them reach them), involvement with parents, as in mathematics, and raising self-esteem to make pupils want to do better. There are clear signs that these are working, though it takes time and older pupils have been influenced less.
3. Though there are many strengths in pupils' standards of work and achievement across the curriculum, for example in science and modern foreign languages, there are also weaknesses. Music is the one subject where achievement is unsatisfactory and this is historical; it was recognised in the last report. Significant improvements are needed. Another area is ICT. This has improved significantly since the last report but unfocussed management is of concern. In the haste to establish an examination course, demanding of time and resources, some Year 8 and Year 9 pupils, the most able according to end of Year 6 national tests, are not acquiring all the skills, knowledge and understanding expected within Years 7-9 and this aspect should be addressed. The school needs to establish what pupils know when they start in Year 7. Such *baseline* information is necessary if pupils are to make sufficient progress from then onwards, without being either held back or overwhelmed; prior attainment measured just on end of Year 6 national tests is inadequate. Assessment information has been used well in the 'catch-up' programme in English; in 2001, the Year 7 pupils who took part in the programme made good progress. On entry to the college, seven were either working below Level 3 or had not achieved a level. By the end, these pupils had moved up by three or more levels; one pupil reached level 4C, 16 made steady progress. (The expectation is that pupils will begin Year 7 on Level 4 or above).
4. The school and LEA monitor GCSE examination results carefully by minority ethnic background. Value-added information is provided for each subject department. The results graphs show that minority ethnic groups are performing better than the English/Scottish/Welsh group from the end of Year 6 to the end of Year 9 and from then until the end of Year 11. Graphs for science and

mathematics show relative underperformance by minority ethnic groups, but in English all ethnic groups perform well except the majority white British. The school is very aware of the problem of the underachieving white group, which can be linked to low aspirations and poor attendance. The co-ordinator keeps records of performance that include the targets set by the school. One Chinese pupil has made remarkable progress in both speaking and writing in the six months she has spent in England. Sixty-five per cent of pupils are expected to achieve target levels in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examinations. Wherever possible, pupils with adequate literacy levels in both speaking and writing are encouraged to take a GCSE examination in their home language. In 2002, 18 pupils took examinations in a range of languages, including Turkish, Persian, Italian, Dutch and Arabic, and 14 gained an A*-C grade.

5. Pupils use good oral skills across the curriculum. For example, they use good debating skills in mathematics. Pupils write for a range of purposes across the curriculum but whilst the higher attaining pupils are secure in using technical features correctly, most pupils are not skilled in writing accurately; hence, there are errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Overall, pupils' presentation of work is neat. Pupils demonstrate below average but improving numeracy skills in most subjects. Nowhere is a lack of these skills perceived as a barrier to the girls' learning or understanding. In business studies, for example, Year 10 pupils analyse company balance sheets and break-even points in study units on finance. In geography, younger pupils cope readily with data collection and presentation, grid references and contours. Older girls use calculators well when analysing data. In science, Year 9 pupils are effective when calculating the cost of electricity for various domestic uses although they have some difficulty when asked to manipulate formulae.
6. ICT is increasingly used by pupils and is helping to raise standards though it is not yet used well in all subjects. In geography pupils produce good leaflets and computer presentations about earthquakes, using information gleaned from books and from the Internet. Graphics and design and manufacture software is well used by pupils in design and technology. In science, pupils used sensors attached to computers effectively to measure quantities and log results during experiments. There is also good use of computing in the learning resources centre, with software to help pupils with special educational needs to learn both literacy and numeracy skills. Use of interactive whiteboards in English, ICT, geography, mathematics and science contributes to the increased application of ICT across the curriculum.
7. Teachers are provided with information on the pupils with special educational needs and this contributes to the ethos of care, support and inclusion of all. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and learn satisfactorily or better in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and physical education. However, in their music lessons, apart from class 70, the progress of pupils with special educational needs, as that of other pupils, is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their GCSE examinations, with all achieving at least one grade G pass and others achieving 5 A* to G grade passes. There are no data available to show how well those pupils identified as gifted and talented have done in GCSE examinations or data to show how they are achieving. Their progress in lessons is broadly the same as their peers and reflects the quality of teaching.

Sixth form

8. Standards in examinations in recent years have almost always been well below average. 1999 was unusual in that examination standards were average. Small numbers taking a wide range of subjects means that comparisons with national standards for each subject are most often meaningless. In 2002, A-level results that can be compared were Business studies (below average); communication studies (very low); computer studies (below average); drama (well above average); English literature (well below average); and sociology (well below average). Pupils entered on courses in past years were not necessarily selected on the basis of how well they had done in GCSE. It is not possible to establish how well individuals achieved based on their prior attainment. It is also academic now as the only students remaining are the few in Year 13. These started in the sixth form two years ago with higher prior attainment; most did well in

GCSEs. As a consequence of this and very good teaching standards of current work are mostly above average and students' achievement in any single course is at least satisfactory.

9. Standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT appear to be appropriate; the standard of written work seen is certainly good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The attitudes of pupils' towards school are good. Most demonstrate a good work ethic and determination to succeed. The school aims to raise pupils' aspirations and enable them to make informed choices about their work and future options. The school has recently put on special days on raising awareness of women's achievement and responsibilities. Pupils are highly motivated to take part in events organised by the school such as the forthcoming production of Joseph, musical concerts and representing the school in sporting competitions. Pupils from ethnic minorities, or with special educational needs, are fully integrated into the school community. In lessons, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are positive on the whole. They respond well to the help and support they receive and are keen to make progress in, for example, withdrawal lessons, the support option group in Year 10 and in classes 7O and 8O. Where pupils with special educational needs receive extra support from curriculum support workers (CSW's) in lessons, other pupils accept this and they themselves benefit from the extra help available. Year 11 pupils with statements of special educational need are fully aware of their special needs and said that they were appreciative of the extra help and support they had received since joining the college.
11. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. The school is a socially harmonious community where pupils from all cultures mix freely together. Teaching staff respect and value pupils for their individuality and help them to achieve their potential in as many ways as possible. Pupils respond positively to this and develop during their time at school into confident young people. They are happy to approach members of staff if they are experiencing difficulties with their academic work or have personal problems. There are many opportunities for collaborative or group work to further develop pupils' social skills and they willingly share and support each other in their learning. Pupils are encouraged, through debate, to express their feelings on a wide range of moral and social issues. The level of debate is of a high level, particularly in citizenship lessons, where a wide range of topics are discussed. They listen with sensitivity to the views and opinions of their peer group that may differ from their own.
12. The standard of behaviour within the school is good. The school has successfully addressed the key issue on pupils' behaviour raised at the previous inspection. Behaviour in lessons was rarely less than satisfactory and in eight per cent of lessons excellent. Behaviour management by staff of some very difficult pupils is a strength of the school. The number of fixed term exclusions rose significantly two years ago to deal with the poor behaviour existing then; numbers are just a little over what they were at the last inspection now. Exclusions are monitored by minority ethnic group. Last year exclusions from the majority white group pupils were over twice the number of all other minority ethnic groups. Effective support strategies to support this group of pupils and to help them manage their behaviour more effectively are in place. The learning support unit and learning mentors effectively support the school in this area of its work. Pupils state that when incidents of bullying occur, when brought to the notice of staff, are always swiftly and effectively dealt with. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their actions and treat everyone with respect and the majority of pupils respond to this.
13. The development of pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is good. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, pupils are confident and articulate young people who are able to express their feelings and concerns in a logical manner. During lunch and break times pupils organise themselves with minimal adult supervision. Prefects play an important role in supporting teaching staff in the day to day running of the school. Both the student forum and the year councils enable pupils to air their views and make a positive contribution towards improving the school environment and facilities for pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, such as warm up sessions at the beginning of physical education lessons, leading

assemblies, and running lunchtime activities. Two pupils recently received a 'Do the Right Thing' award for caring for others.

14. Attendance levels were broadly in line with national averages at the last inspection. The overall attendance level of pupils in 2001/2002 was 87.6 per cent, well below the national average but a slight improvement on the previous year. Unauthorised absence was higher than the national average for secondary schools but, apparently, lower than most similar schools in South East London. The attendance target for the current academic year has been set at 89 per cent. There has been a very significant improvement in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality since the previous inspection. The school has worked very hard over the last two years to raise attendance levels. The lack of a computerised attendance recording system hinders the school's ability to monitor and track the attendance of pupils quickly. For example, attendance is not yet monitored according to minority ethnic groups. Analysis of GCSE examination performance of pupils last year clearly showed a link between attendance levels and the number of passes, and grades achieved. Pupils with poor attendance achieved significantly lower than their predicted grades and the school has made pupils very aware of the connection between non-attendance and under-achievement in examinations, for example through notices round the school. Lessons start punctually. The majority of pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day. The school meets all the requirements for the registration of pupils.

Sixth form

15. Students have very good attitudes to their education. Though the sixth form is closing, and there is only a small group of Year 13 students, they still enjoy being in school and show a serious interest in their work. Relationships with each other and their teachers are very good. Students are very pleased with the good levels of support and the good teaching they receive. The sixth form has its own council and a common room committee but they have little involvement with the rest of the school.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. This section should be read in conjunction with the teaching section in the summary and with subject reports. Neither section reports on sociology, a subject just introduced to Year 10, which was briefly inspected. Teaching is very good, provokes lively debate, for example about what constitutes a 'family' and pupils contribute very well. Pupils acquired understanding of terms such as 'extended family' and were very tolerant of groups in society; sociology is providing very good support for citizenship education.
17. One hundred and forty three lessons were seen in Years 7-11. Almost all were satisfactory or better, around two thirds good or better and a third very good or better. Unsatisfactory lessons were confined to music. There are a much higher proportion of very good and excellent lessons in Years 7-9 than in Years 10 and 11, owing in part to more effort being needed by teachers to manage older pupils and significantly to more use of Key Stage 3 Strategy techniques in the first three years. In the last report, one in five lessons was unsatisfactory, so improvement since then has been huge. The main reasons for this improvement are the very significant improvements in attitudes and behaviour in the last two years: teachers can now largely focus on learning rather than controlling, and have effectively embraced teaching and learning techniques fostered by national strategies.
18. It is an expectation and College policy that all subjects adhere to the three-part lesson and include challenge and 'differentiation' (different work based on the ability of pupils) to meet the needs of all pupils. There is an increased awareness of selecting and using resources. Teachers now spend more time finding and matching resources to the needs of pupils and objectives than they say they used to do. Pupils have increased confidence to tackle text and sentence level work. Oral skills are also improved and this is linked to a higher level of social interaction as pupils work better in pairs and groups. Plenaries to lessons are often very good. Some low attaining pupils are so confident that they can write a written evaluation of their learning. The three-part lesson is now in place in most mathematics lessons, including those in Years 10 and 11. This ensures a greater emphasis on basic number drills and makes for better variety in

lessons. There is some good; very good and excellent direct teaching. Pupils interviewed said that they enjoyed their maths and that they enjoyed the variety in lessons which they now have. They particularly liked the opportunities to work on computers, which they feel enables them to get through more work more quickly. In English there is highly structured planning using the 3 or 4 part lesson, with concise learning objectives that teachers explain to pupils and that are linked to available resources. They return to these objectives at the end of lessons. At the beginning of lessons starter activities are varied, often interactive and are followed by varied teaching styles, which include whole class teaching, paired and group work. Plenaries are very structured and teachers and pupils work together to identify the impact of teaching on learning. Some plenaries involve a game, for example using flash cards (true/false) or have key words. In English, in 2002, a higher proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in national tests at the end of Year 9 and one pupil reached Level 8. There was also a marked improvement in the GCSE examinations in English and English literature. The quality of teaching, including booster classes, revision packs, target setting, and the use of assessment by teachers to drive standards up, made a significant contribution to the improved results. Discussion with Year 8 pupils indicates that the starter activities are 'right for them', 'they put their brain into gear', 'they are stimulating' and 'we learn a lot about spelling'. Pupils are more aware of their learning as they understand the objectives and know the purpose of learning a particular topic. It is also relevant that teachers select resources that are relevant and stimulating. For example, the choice of literature texts to reflect the cultural heritage of pupils and controversial news items for media assignments. In mathematics "catch up" lessons the teaching of lower sets and middle attaining groups in Years 7-9 is good overall and pupils' mental mathematics has improved. Low attainers are better at basic skills, especially multiplication tables. Pupils are of the opinion that catch up lessons increase their confidence, and give them an incentive to work harder as they are rewarded with merit marks, which they can exchange for a gift. They are also helpful and contribute to them achieving their target grade; they are given an information sheet with National Curriculum levels on it.

19. Good practice and resources are very well shared by teachers. The school has a "Leap Week" when teachers are encouraged to experiment with new ideas, for example, music in art and design, interactive whiteboard work in science, methods of sharing knowledge in history, the use of traffic light cards to indicate understanding, in a number of subjects. Reviews and evaluation of these techniques are brought to a teaching and learning group meeting and disseminated. Advanced skills teachers help their colleagues develop their ideas or use them in different ways. This very active development of teaching and learning is obviously raising the quality of education in the classroom.

Inclusion

20. The school has a strong commitment to equal opportunities for all and seeks to support and mentor all pupils to raise overall achievement in academic performance. Teachers' style, language and questions involve all pupils well. Teachers' expectations are appropriately high for all groups, except in physical education, where in accelerated groups the pupils are not challenged sufficiently. The EAL co-ordinator interviews and assesses late arrivals to the school and keeps careful records of their literacy levels in their home languages. She provides departments with good records of those who are underachieving in English, and has done some training of teachers. Twenty-six pupils with English as an additional language receive some form of support, of whom ten are given priority for particular support, because they are in the early stages of learning English. The co-ordinator focuses on support in the core subjects and also effectively teaches pupils individually.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in both special withdrawal groups as well as in ordinary lessons and supported by both curriculum support workers (CSW's) and individual support teachers. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) also teaches small group and individual literacy support sessions and one class, 70, benefits from a dedicated class teacher whilst at the same time attending practical lessons, in for example, physical education. Class 80 also benefits from similar provision but with more specialist teacher input. In an excellent music lesson, taught by a non-specialist, class 70 pupils were totally engaged throughout the lesson and responded very well to the teacher's appropriately high expectations.

In a gymnastics lesson, though there were some social tensions within the group, the teacher successfully ensured class 7O pupils were engaged in aspects of planning, performing and evaluation of each other's performance. In a mathematics lesson, very good quality teaching ensured that class 7O pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of graphical

representation of data. In a Year 8O English lesson, pupils benefited from a very good range of activities that helped motivate them and consolidate and develop their learning through the reading of a class text, "The Great Gilly Hopkins".

22. The quality of support in lessons from CSW's is effective, for example in English lessons the work of them is pivotal, especially in ensuring positive attitudes and behaviour. In a Year 10 support option group, the CSW not only targeted pupils with statements of special educational need, her support and guidance of all other pupils in the group was also very effective. The quality of this provision could be improved further by providing opportunities for whole group teaching of basic skills.
23. The work of the CSW in literacy support lessons is enhanced through the use of an interactive computer program; pupils worked hard and made good progress. The effectiveness of her work enabled other pupils to make good progress in the Year 7 'catch-up' literacy session observed (a lesson to able low attainers to improve to where it is perceived they should be – part of the National Strategy). The SENCO uses her good subject expertise in the 'phonographix' (a particular method to improve literacy) reading and spelling sessions to effectively challenge pupils to do better; as a result of her strategies pupils are making good progress.

Basic skills

24. Literacy skills are taught well. In geography, teachers encourage pupils to take part in role-play, make presentations and contribute to debates, and in art and design, pupils' analytical oral skills are developed when they are asked to compare works from different periods. All departments contribute to developing pupils' text level work by focusing on subject specific words in oral work and in displays. Pupils are also encouraged by teachers to read aloud in subjects such as history and geography, which makes all pupils focus on the work in hand, and all learn correct pronunciation of difficult words. Skills of skimming and scanning are promoted in art and design to identify key points in texts. Teachers make good use of writing frames (supported worksheets) in history to encourage correct and full answers to questions, and in mathematics pupils have to use sentences accurately to explain their answers. However, in modern foreign languages, the accelerated groups in Years 7 and 8 are not required to do enough writing of longer pieces of work. Overall, teachers' constructive marking is increasing pupil's awareness of writing accurately. Examples of good teaching of numerical skills are to be seen in most departments. In ICT, for example, teachers are effective at showing pupils how to use formulae in cells when constructing spreadsheets. In art the girls' sense of space and shape is developed well. In science the aspects of mathematics associated with the drawing of graphs is well taught as a tool for representing the results of experiments.
25. Teachers' application of ICT in subjects across the curriculum varies both in standard and extent. There is no effective co-ordination across subjects and developments have occurred mainly as a result of individual teacher initiatives. Teachers, in subjects other than ICT, are not contributing to the assessment of ICT skills in Years 7 to 9. The recent improvement in the numbers of computers is encouraging teachers to do more; the ratio of pupils to workstations is about twice the national average. English, ICT, mathematics and science have rooms fitted with interactive whiteboards, which teachers are putting to good use by making learning interesting. Music does not have specialist equipment for composing and this helps prevent pupils doing as well as they should. ICT is applied well by teachers in business education, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages and science. In all these subjects, pupils are encouraged to use word processing and publishing to improve the presentation of their work and routinely research topics on the Internet. Physical education and religious education teachers also well use the Internet for research.

Sixth form

26. Twenty-one lessons were seen. All were satisfactory; half were very good. Most had few students, some only one. Though this may appear to make teaching easier, judgements were based on the interaction between student(s) and teacher and how much learning went on. While assessment of written work is much reduced, lessons are necessarily very intense; a lot is expected of a teacher with only one student and teachers are meeting expectations. Single students in lessons do have the disadvantage of not being able to feed off each other or share problems and one student made particular mention of this. The best teaching reflects excellent subject knowledge, for example very high expectations of students in biology and chemistry are led by the teacher's acute understanding of the work in hand; high standards of work in French relate to the passionate native speaker who teaches it. Most teachers also ensure a beginning, middle and end to every lesson, a mature version of the Key Stage 3 strategy; students understand the purpose of the lesson, get plenty of teacher or self driven activities in order to get to grips with it, and have opportunities to go over answers and detail, both during the lesson and at the end. An English literature lesson was satisfactory rather than better because of the inappropriate seating of the small but not untypical group; opportunities for paired and small group work were missed and the topic treated in a didactic way that failed to impress or enthuse. Throughout Year 13, all work is very well marked and small classes ensure plenty of dialogue about work and how to improve it. Key skills, (literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT), are incorporated into lessons as appropriate; there is no separate programme.

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

27. As a technology college working within an education action zone, the school has been involved with a number of initiatives designed to make it easier for all pupils to make the best of subjects offered and improve the standards of their work. The school is successful in establishing a wide and appropriate curriculum for pupils from many social and cultural groups. More is offered than just lessons; lunchtime and after school activities are very good. Citizenship is a new subject within the National Curriculum and is already a strength of the school; pupils enjoy it and learn a lot about both their rights and their responsibilities. It also very effectively includes personal, health and social education (PHSE), such as sex education. The school has very effective links with local schools, agencies and business, and these help to make pupils' learning more effective.
28. The school has a strong commitment to promoting inclusive education and works hard to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The curriculum access support team (CAST) is central to this aim. However, in trying to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can some anomalies occur because it is not possible for everyone to do everything. For example, able pupils in Year 9 follow more subjects so do less physical education, and less able pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a study course to help them get to grips with academic work, but consequently they cannot do French or German and have less physical education because of constraints in the timetable. The study course is effective and supported by learning mentors (adults who are not teachers but have had training in support work). Very close monitoring of pupils' progress by the school allows mentors to be provided to pupils who will most benefit from their help.
29. Good alternative provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs who are disapplied from the National Curriculum. The correct procedures are fully in place to enable pupils to take advantage of the study course, for example. Where appropriate, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) organises special arrangements in examinations to help support those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils identified as gifted and talented generally find themselves in the accelerated classes when younger, though talented pupils who did not do well in national tests may not. Good quality extra work is also provided out of lessons for these pupils and there are some opportunities to take GCSE courses earlier than usual. Extra-curricular

provision, both at lunchtimes and after school, also extends learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs.

30. Since the last inspection the length of the school week has been increased and now better supports the requirements of the National Curriculum. Religious education now meets statutory requirements for Years 7-11. Careers education has been improved and is now good. The support for pupils with special educational needs is better and is now good. There has been a significant improvement in links established with industry and the community.
31. The curriculum for Years 7-9 is good and is broad and balanced. For English and science it is particularly effective. The school has created two accelerated classes in each of Years 7-9 and these broadly meet the needs of higher attaining pupils, based on Year 6 National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science. Other classes are generally of mixed ability, though a group of lower attaining pupils is taught separately in Years 7 and 8 and have fewer teachers to improve continuity and ensure that support is more consistent. These arrangements work effectively for most pupils in most subjects, though some pupils do think they are expected to work too hard in some subjects they are not particularly good at. About half the pupils follow courses in both French and German. ICT is less well provided for in these years as there is increasing emphasis on pupils following an applied GCSE course from Year 8 and planning is not good enough; consequently pupils are not sufficiently covering all the work that they should.
32. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 provides a wide range of courses, including vocational courses, which offer something for most pupils. All pupils follow an accredited ICT course. An applied science course began in September 2002 for pupils likely to find dual award science (two GCSE's) too demanding; pupils are making good progress in it. Sociology is also a new course in Year 10; one lesson was observed, which was very good.
33. Provision for music is unsatisfactory in Years 7-11 and pupils do not achieve well enough. There are some musical activities outside lessons - small ensemble planning, a recorder group and junior and senior choir, - but they do not draw well on the range of cultures within the school. The Gospel Choir is a notable exception and this is supported through the education action zone and run by people who visit the school. The use of ICT across the curriculum is variable, with some particularly good practice in science and geography, for example. There is none used for any significant purpose in music. There are plenty of computers available around the school; teachers need to use them still more and encourage pupils to do so too.
34. The development of good literacy skills is given a high priority at senior management level and in effect in all departments. Despite the positive impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy on teaching and learning, departments underuse the library as a learning resource centre and there is less reading across the curriculum since the last inspection. The English department is planning to develop independent reading and library skills. The school has been involved in piloting the National Numeracy Strategy for over three years. Full audits carried out in 2000 and again in 2001 have identified opportunities for developing the girls' numerical skills in each subject area. There are departmental policies across the curriculum for teaching numeracy which are effective, and, for the most part, adhered to.
35. Pupils have good opportunities to get careers advice and guidance from a company employed to provide it. The careers library is satisfactory and is about to be improved. Almost three-quarters of pupils in Year 8 take part in "Take Your Daughter To Work Day" and older pupils, in Year 10, have a well-structured work experience. Work experience placements, as far as possible, match the career aspirations of pupils.
36. An extensive range of activities is available in physical education including netball, athletics, dance, fitness, and aerobics. A school production takes place each year. There are club activities for Turkish and Somali pupils. A large Christian group meets each week. A few of the clubs are run by pupils themselves, for example, art and dance. Homework and revision clubs are available in most subjects.

37. The school works well with organisations such as the South Green Education Action Zone and the Excellence in Cities programme. These links and its technology school status have supported improvements to the curriculum such as, the learning mentors scheme, and improved provision for ICT, including increased use of ICT in science. Links established with a local football club, the local sports development initiative and local firms in support of a "Health, Beauty and Fitness Evening" are very good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There is a school policy and the majority of departments have identified where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education could be improved further.
39. Although the school still does not comply with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, the wider provision within the school for exploring issues of spirituality has improved and is now satisfactory. There is a *thought for the week* and good examples are to be found in some lessons. Assemblies and PHSE often have linking themes and students are given some opportunity to reflect on, for example, the significance of *Thanksgiving* in America.
40. Provision for pupils' moral education is very good because there is an active programme designed to promote a sense of right and wrong. The mentoring system, for example, helps with the consideration of bullying and its consequences. In religious education, there is a strong accent on the treatment and consideration of others; good examples are found in most subjects.
41. Social education is good. There is a thorough citizenship programme and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. There are many opportunities for students to work together in most subjects. Charity work is promoted in all years and individuals show initiative in recommending causes to support. The team sports and other extra-curricular activities that the school provides make a very good contribution to team work and balance well the elements of competition and cooperation.
42. The provision for cultural development is very good. There is a range of opportunities for pupils to develop in art and design, modern foreign languages, drama and religious education. In English, pupils from minority ethnic groups get the opportunity to write about their cultural heritage and do so with pride. A room is set aside for those pupils who are fasting in Ramadan. This year, the school held a Multi-Cultural day to celebrate the diversity of the local community. There is little evidence of provision to be found within ICT and science.

Sixth form

43. As the sixth form is being discontinued there is no specific sixth form curriculum, including statutory religious education. Students remaining in Year 13 have been given the opportunity to complete their studies. This is at great expense and there is no money available to enhance this provision with other courses and activities that require staffing. Key skills, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, are incorporated within A2 subjects as appropriate. Students are able to join in school based activities if they wish, for example drama productions, and there are good links with local universities to help students decide on education after the sixth form.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. This is a caring school where the personal and academic needs of individuals are identified and appropriate support provided. The very good relationships between staff and pupils make a significant contribution towards the quality of support that pupils receive. All individuals and groups are equally well supported and cared for in most subjects, but in geography on two occasions, pupils with English as an additional language were seen to be struggling with the level of language and making little progress. The staffing time allocated for pupils with English as an additional language is low, especially for the ten pupils who are receiving extra support.
45. The educational and personal support and guidance that pupils receive is very good. Care is given to the transition of pupils from primary school to secondary school. The very good relationship that tutors and year managers establish with their group contributes to their ability to monitor the personal development of pupils. The Year 10 manager is leading in the use of assessment data to identify pupils who are not meeting their predicted grades for GCSE and interviewing them to

plan strategies to support their learning. This is an example of the good practice that is being developed within the school. A mentoring scheme in Year 11 helps pupils

to work to raise their GCSE grade from a predicted D to a possible C. Careers education raises pupils' awareness of the need to consider the importance of making appropriate choices when deciding on which subjects to study at GCSE, further education or the world of work.

46. Meticulous analysis of attendance data extracted from registers allows the school to monitor attendance levels overall but the lack of a computerised attendance recording system makes the work more tedious than it needs to be and hinders some rapid analysis. Rewards are given for high levels of attendance as well as improved attendance. The end of term raffle prize of £75 of vouchers is also appealing to parents to encourage them to ensure that their daughters' attendance level is high. Parents are contacted on the first day of absence if the school has not received notification through a computerised call service. This service is a very effective and efficient use of additional funding and has significantly reduced the number of unauthorised absences. A home-school liaison office, which includes the school's attendance officer, and the police officer attached to the school, meet with parents to support them in ensuring the regular attendance of their child. An education welfare officer, from the local authority, has been working effectively with the school for about a year.
47. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good overall. Pupils know and understand what constitutes acceptable behaviour. A range of strategies, such as daily reports and pastoral support plans, are in place to support pupils. The rewards system is used to reinforce positive behaviour and attitudes. Tutors monitor incidents of unacceptable behaviour but the current system of recording these incidents makes it difficult for both year and senior managers to have an overview of the number and frequency of these. A significant number of pupils have behavioural difficulties. Strategies for the early identification of these pupils, and effective support systems to ensure they are able to remain in classes, are in place.
48. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The ethos of the school promotes mutual respect for all. This is borne out by pupils who felt that if incidents occurred the procedures ensured they were effectively dealt with. Incidents are recorded and overseen by senior management. The school has revised its equal opportunities policy and has produced a good anti-racist policy in line with statutory requirements.
49. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good overall. The arrangements for child protection are excellent. Close links with the relevant support agencies have been established. A good range of healthy food is available for pupils and those who are in receipt of free school meals have to eat a main meal and cannot spend their entitlement on snacks. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory.

Educational inclusion

50. The learning support unit (LSU) and learning mentors make a significant contribution to the support and guidance that pupils receive. The LSU runs a range of courses that helps pupils to learn how to manage their behaviour in lessons more effectively, raise their self-esteem and provides study support sessions. The LSU Manager has also run in-service training for staff on behaviour management. Support strategies to help pupils to return to mainstream education are in place and effective. Many pupils experience social and emotional problems that are outside the scope of the school. However, lack of support from external agencies often means time has to be spent dealing with problems that are not directly related to pupils' educational difficulties. This reduces the time available to other pupils and currently they have to go on a waiting list for an appointment with a learning mentor.

Assessment

51. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The results of external examinations are systematically analysed. They are discussed at departmental reviews with senior management to identify strengths and weaknesses and devise strategies to improve pupils' achievements. The achievement of minority ethnic groups is monitored closely and the school has been devising strategies to address any differences in performance. The separate identification of minority ethnic groups and tailoring the curriculum accordingly partly explains the good progress they are making.
52. National Curriculum test results from primary schools, and data from the school's own assessment procedures, are used to build up a profile of pupils' attainment when they enter the school. This forms a baseline for tracking their progress over their time in school. Art and design, ICT and modern languages do their own baseline testing at the beginning of Year 7, while other subjects are linked to English, mathematics and science (core subjects). The data are fed into a commercial computer program and pupils' academic targets are set for the end of Year 9. A weakness in this process is that linkage with the core subjects means that like is not compared with like; pupils' performances in the core may not reflect their capabilities in design and technology for example. All curriculum managers need to be further encouraged to set subject-specific baseline assessments.
53. Predicted grades for both end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations enable teachers to set related targets for pupils. Most pupils are aware of their predicted grades and the level they are currently working at, which help in securing their involvement. The results of value added analyses are often shared with pupils so that they are aware of why pupils in the previous year did well or poorly. For example those pupils who were absent a lot, or failed to give in work, most often appear in the bottom half of graphs; they achieved unsatisfactorily. The new assessment system in Years 10 and 11, "Track Master", monitors pupil performance against target grades and the information is shared currently with Year 11 parents.

Assessment of pupils with special educational needs

54. Transitional and annual reviews are effective and support pupils with statements of special educational needs as they move through the school. Annual reviews draw upon a wide range of professional opinion and also consultation with parents or carers and pupils. The school meets fully curricular requirements as outlined in pupils' statements of special educational need. The school has effective relationships with outside specialist agencies.
55. Individual education plans (IEP's) are in place for all pupils at 'action plus' (a way of defining the level of need required) and above on the School's register of special educational needs. IEP's are reviewed on a regular basis and targets subsequently modified or changed. Targets set are generally clear, concise, challenging yet attainable by pupils. IEP's are informative in that they also detail how pupils can achieve these targets, thus helping teachers and CSW's effectively plan their lessons.
56. The SENCO is able to draw upon a range of assessment data in order to identify those pupils who need support and place them appropriately on the school's list of special educational and other needs. The recent introduction and use of ICT are helping data collation. However, there is, as yet, insufficient analysis of these data to enable the SENCO to show clearly how pupils are making 'adequate' progress or demonstrate any 'value added'.
57. The Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative fosters the identification of gifted and talented pupils and there is an appropriate list that identifies the requisite proportion of pupils in this category. However, the joint co-ordinators of gifted and talented provision in the school have carried out no analysis or assessment of how well gifted and talented pupils are progressing or of any value added as a result of the school's provision.

Sixth form

Assessment

58. Assessment procedures, such as marking and tests, are very good as teachers are both experienced and are mainly teaching small numbers. Consequently the dialogue between teachers and students is frequent and often intense; work and answers are discussed thoroughly. Students are very well aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The only shortcoming is that students in particularly small classes do not have opportunities to compare and contrast their standard of work with that of others.

Advice, support and guidance

59. The school provides effectively for the needs of its Year 13 students. Subject teachers closely monitor their work and attendance. Students are supported with their applications for higher education and other career choices. Two students, for example, spent a week last summer at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Others, through an EiC initiative, took part in introductions to medicine and music degrees with their parents at Greenwich University.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves are good. Thirty parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection and 38 per cent of parents completed the questionnaire on parents' views. This is a good return.
61. The parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting felt their children liked coming to school, were expected to work hard, were making good progress and that teaching is good. They would feel comfortable about approaching the school if they had any concerns. They felt the school is well led and managed. Their daughters were helped to become mature and responsible. The concerns they expressed were about the information they received about their children's progress, the ability of the school to work closely with its parents and the range of activities for pupils outside of lessons. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive comments. The team felt that the range of activities outside lessons was very good.
62. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the progress of their children, is satisfactory. Parents receive a half-yearly progress review and an annual report. Annual reports do not ensure that parents can understand what their children have learned. Academic targets set for pupils are not subject specific and do not help both parents and pupils identify clearly how work can be improved to raise standards. A range of letters is sent home to parents when concerns arise about such things as attendance or behaviour as well as letters of congratulation when pupils have achieved well. The regular newsletter keeps parents informed about the daily life of the school and its achievements.
63. The school works hard to involve parents in the education of their daughters. Most parents respond to this, but there are a significant number who do not. Attendance at parents' meetings is not high and attempts to provide parenting classes, clinics and other events has been unsuccessful. Parents are telephoned prior to meetings to encourage their attendance. A Turkish club for pupils is held at the school and links have been made with their families through this initiative. The use of interpreters helps to build effective links with families for whom English is not their first language. The multicultural day held last summer was a great success, with parents sharing their own cultural experience with the school community. This event was well attended, owing in part to school governors telephoning parents to specifically invite them.
64. The contribution of parents to children's learning is satisfactory. The parent teacher association organises both social and fund-raising events. Information evenings are held for parents. For example, parents of Year 7 pupils were invited to a maths fair to help them understand how to support their daughters' work. The school actively seeks to engage the parents as learning mentors, including both white and black 'working-class' women. The school has links with Turkish and other minority ethnic groups and has worked closely with them on multi-cultural days. Parents of different ethnic groups help and support on geography field trips. The improving results attained by pupils in external examinations are due in part to the support of the majority of parents. However, there is a significant number of parents who do not ensure that their daughters attend school on a regular basis.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The school is very well led by the principal and vice principals. All three are relatively new to the school, the principal just beginning her third year. Prior to these appointments much had been done to move the school forward, the school became a technology college, and some of the issues in the previous report had been addressed. However, the attitudes and behaviour of a significant number of girls two years ago, as described by staff, students and governors, was poor. New and inspired leadership has turned that aspect of the school round, raised the aspirations of pupils, and made the school a popular choice for parents. A high proportion of these are from neighbouring boroughs, not local estates. Some financial debt is the result of past decisions by the local authority, and an increasing debt is due to the sudden decision to end sixth form provision at the school. Consequently, though managers, including most middle managers, promote high standards and teachers most often teach well or better, enabling pupils to learn well, the need to recover 'debt' may affect adversely some future developments.
66. The principal, senior managers and volunteers from among the staff take on all monitoring of pupils during breaks, lunchtime and after school. Pupils appreciate this as "they can see they care" and value the support they receive when getting onto buses. The principal has made Eltham Hill a safe school and a school where learning goes on. The school also embraces whatever support is offered and the police officer attached to the school is doing an excellent job both in ensuring that pupils have support when they need it and in fostering very good relationships between the police and young people. The school also makes best use of national and local initiatives. The South Greenwich Education Action Zone works well with the school and in the three years of involvement with it the director of the zone says the school has "modernised", raised the aspirations, expectations and self-esteem of pupils, raised the expectations of parents and outsiders, and improved how it uses ICT. The inspection team agrees with the views of the director, though the use of ICT has still got to improve further. The Excellence in Cities (EiC) funding and organisation has helped ensure staffing and resources to help individuals overcome difficulties or do much better, for example through mentoring. Investors in People (IIP) status helps the school value people, improve its management and largely keep its staff; though there has been some difficulty recruiting teachers for some subjects, this school does not have the chronic problems experienced by some city schools. The school also embraced the national Key Stage 3 Strategies, being a pilot school. This has been significant in improving teaching and learning.
67. Governors well understand the nature and position of the school and fully support the principal, in whom they have every confidence. They effectively meet all their statutory duties. The governing body has several members with an educational background and they and others have taken advantage of improved training. Governors are linked to school departments and are well informed through the intense self-review the school engages in. Both governors and managers understand financial difficulties facing the school, partly because of generous staffing at all levels, and accentuated by the loss of the sixth form. They are resolved to deal with the situation in a way that minimises the effect on current and future pupils. Governors and managers also understand that poor attendance by a significant minority of pupils is an outstanding issue and many school resources have been directed towards improving it; they welcome the recent attachment of an education welfare officer appointed by the local education authority.
68. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are very good overall and have excellent features. Academic standards are monitored by ethnicity; academic targets are set taking into account pupils' prior attainment. Taking action based on the data is improving and sometimes very good, for example in science. The use of ICT to analyse academic data is not as good as it could be and data is entered too infrequently into the database as yet, though systems are due to improve shortly. Current systems to analyse attendance data are not efficient as software is not up and running; again, this will be improved shortly. Teaching is rigorously monitored by senior managers and through the increasing use of middle managers. Excellence is recognised and used to develop other teachers through, for example, the employment of advanced skills teachers. A teaching and learning group is fostered by one vice principal and teachers who have tried out innovative methods in "leap weeks" (times when teachers can do something different, try things out, experiment), share their experiences with others and these are documented and recorded so other teachers can try them out. Teachers with significant weaknesses are given improvement

plans with measurable targets and support programmes are put in place. Performance management is very well integrated into teaching and learning; teachers' performance targets are related to standards and improvement and they have been given the tools with which they can measure and analyse performance. The 2000-2003 school improvement plan is very well monitored and many targets have been met. For example "improve management of student (pupil) behaviour". The inspection revealed that the school is well aware of both its strengths and areas for development; there were no surprises for the school or governors. The school evaluation document produced by the principal prior to the inspection was also first class and accurate.

69. The school makes good use of its financial resources, though it does receive considerably more money per pupil than most schools because of extra funding through all the initiatives it is involved in, the fact that it is a technology college, and the ethnic diversity of pupils. Financial resources could be more efficiently deployed, particularly with regard to staffing. The number of pupils per teacher is much lower than in most schools, consequently the time teachers spend in front of classes is low. The school employs more teachers and support workers than expected in a school this size. The number of senior managers is also high. The school has done its best to offset the high cost of providing sixth form teaching to the few Year 13 students left in the school; spare teaching time has been sold to a local college. However, this causes its own difficulties with timetabling and travel time and meets only a small part of additional costs. The school and governors are well aware of the high cost of the school and are taking steps to reduce it as conditions permit, for example the final closure of the sixth form. Otherwise they are following criteria of best value well. They compare their school with others, challenge themselves quite harshly about how they do things and consult very well with pupils through the school council. They do experience problems consulting with parents, though impressive telephone calling, by governors, to all parents is encouraging more to come into school for special events. They have accepted competition considerations; their sixth form has closed owing to more economic provision elsewhere, though this was not a popular decision. They seek to provide good services economically and in the best interest of pupils. For example, the school site manager deals with repairs and maintenance, the school dinner contractors provide a healthy meals option and no particularly unhealthy food is provided; costs of meals are kept down through encouraging high numbers to take them rather than being subsidised by selling high cost junk food.

Educational inclusion

70. This area of the school's work is well co-ordinated and there is very good use of the specific funds that the school receives. Weekly meetings of the curriculum access support team ensure that the needs of pupils causing concern are discussed and appropriate support strategies put in place. Good use is made of the learning support unit, home-school liaison officer and learning mentors. The lack of administrative support for these groups and individuals increases their workload. Most subject heads of departments are aware of differences in pupils' performance according to ethnic group, except in music. For example, action to address differences in performance by group has been taken in geography; teachers provide academic targets for pupils who are on the D/C borderline for GCSE, and the curriculum has been changed to make it more relevant to more pupils. In English, test and examination results have been analysed carefully according to group membership, science has good strategies in place and is monitoring pupils' performance by group and the mathematics head of department is just beginning to do the same.
71. The co-coordinator of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is in the school for four days a week. She has the assistance of one classroom assistant and one other assistant provided by the Turkish community, who has just joined the school, but who will remain only until Christmas. This is low provision, given the overall percentage in the school of 21.5 per cent of pupils with English as an additional language. The money provided for EAL is low and there is no room for meeting and teaching pupils in this area of provision. Over time, pupils with EAL do well, but there are instances where they make insufficient progress in lessons because of inadequate support. The effect is minimised by generally good teaching and a significant amount of very good teaching, and the attitudes of the pupils themselves, who most often want to do well.

72. Overall, the quality of leadership and management of the special educational needs department is good. The special educational needs department has maintained the positive aspects mentioned in the previous report and, since the appointment of the present SENCO, has made good progress. Procedures have been improved, staffing levels increased, the provision of IEP's rationalised, provision to support those pupils identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties improved and funding has been re-allocated to the special educational needs department. Improvement planning and documentation is effective in guiding the work of the special educational needs department. However, the department handbook requires some refinement to ensure that it reflects fully the new Code of Practice. The SENCO deploys CSW's and individual support teachers effectively in order to provide the required support for the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Individual support teachers and CSW's are deployed effectively across a range of subjects and teach in withdrawal sessions. On the whole, this helps provide the breadth and level of support required for those pupils with special educational needs on the CAST list. CSW's are dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to working with pupils with special educational needs. They have a good range of experience and expertise and have attended and are attending appropriate courses to enhance their professional development. This has a very positive effect on the quality of their support for pupils identified as having special educational needs. There is effective monitoring and evaluation of their work.
73. There is an experienced governor with responsibility for special educational needs. The governing body, however, has not yet reviewed the role of the SENCO in relation to the changes introduced by the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. The school uses funding for special educational needs appropriately and spends well over what money comes in. A lack of sufficient administrative support results in inefficient use of the SENCO's time and expertise because she has to complete many routine administrative tasks. The special educational needs department's base provides a very pleasant learning environment with very good ICT resources, including commercially produced programmes to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

74. Staffing is good. Many curriculum managers have been with the school for some years and others have tended to stay. It is a school that teachers like working in, particularly since improvements in behaviour began two years ago. This stability has provided a framework on which improvements in standards can be based; staff development pays off when teachers are still there to put it into practice in the classroom. Technical and language support staff are good and enable teachers to get on with teaching better. Some subjects are taught in part by teachers who are non-specialists. However, this is not the sole reason for any significant weaknesses in teaching. The school very well supports new teachers and student teachers get on well. The school is very well suited for the training of new teachers as innovation and development of teaching and learning are central to it.
75. Accommodation is satisfactory, with good features. For art and design it is very good, purpose built space is airy and has good light, and the central area is being developed for large scale three-dimensional work. Mathematics has sufficient specialist space, a specialist ICT room and very good storage. For music, accommodation is unsatisfactory; it is drab and the environment does not help pupils to learn.
76. Resources for learning are satisfactory, overall. The learning resources available recognise different cultures, and stereotyping is challenged in many subject areas, including English, mathematics and science. In geography, teachers use some very good videos, and illustrations in textbooks are good. Good technician support in science ensures that equipment is well used. There is an exceptionally large number of computers but they are not used efficiently enough except in the special educational needs department, where their dedicated machines are well used. Resources are inadequate for music, especially those concerning ICT and other technological support.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

77. Leadership and management of the small remaining sixth form reflect the leadership and management of the school. The essential requirements of Year 13 students are met. Teaching and learning are very good overall and most often the best teachers available are used.

Resources

78. The small sixth form is very well staffed and often provides one-to-one teaching now. Resources and accommodation are adequate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. The school has improved significantly in recent years and managers and governors are well aware of what they still need to do. However, to improve further they should:
- (1) Continue with all their excellent efforts to improve attendance and, in addition, ensure computer based systems to record and analyse information are used as soon as possible
(Paragraphs 2, 14, 46)
 - (2) Improve the overall provision for music by improving management, raising standards of teaching and learning, improving the curriculum, improving resources and accommodation, and fostering more opportunities for pupils to make and enjoy music out of lessons.
(Paragraphs 3, 33, 161, 162)
 - (3) Improve the management of ICT overall, and particularly ensure that the use of ICT by teachers and pupils continues to improve and makes best use of the high numbers of computers available.
(Paragraphs 3, 6, 25, 31, 152)

Sixth form

- (1) Enable links between students In Year 13 and sixth form students elsewhere, so that those in very small teaching groups have opportunities to share ideas and problems related to their work with their peers.
(Paragraph 26)

In addition to the issues above, the principal and governors may wish to consider the following areas within their action plan.

- (1) How the deficit budget is managed so that current pupils do not pay for past problems and local re-organisation.
(Paragraphs 65, 67, 69)
- (2) Improving the annual reports to parents about their daughters' progress so that they better inform them about work done and improvement needed.
(Paragraph 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	143
	Sixth form	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7– 11							
Number	8	36	53	42	4	0	0
Percentage	6	25	37	29	3	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	11	8	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	52	38	10	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than four 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	901	23
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	276	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	190	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	230

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	75
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.2
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	N/a	169	169

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Girls	103	74	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (70)	42 (40)	49 (47)
	National	66(64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (19)	20 (17)	17 (18)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Girls	97	71	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	57 (65)	42 (46)	49 (44)
	National	67(65)	70(68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (34)	17 (11)	26 (15)
	National	32 (31)	44(42)	34(33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	N/a	159	159

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Girls	67	151	158
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	42 (41)	95 (85)	99 (92)
	National	51.2 (48)	86.8 (91)	95.7 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38.7 (34.8)
	National	N/a (39.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	45	24
	National		n/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	N/a	21	21

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	N/a	11.7(10.8)		N/a	4.0 (10.0)	
National	N/a	N/a		N/a	N/a	

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	1	0
	National		N/a

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	548	48	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	5	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	85	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	3	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	20	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	78	6	0
Black or Black British – African	0	9	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	36	5	0
Chinese	6	1	0
Any other ethnic group	199	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	4	0

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)	60
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	650

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	23.2
Key Stage 4	24.4

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	3,493,692
Total expenditure	3,554,222
Expenditure per pupil	3,730
Balance brought forward from previous year	-£20, 711
Balance carried forward to next year	-£81, 242

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28.5
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	924
Number of questionnaires returned	354

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	47	6	2	3
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	44	9	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	47	11	4	4
The teaching is good.	34	54	4	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	46	16	4	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	40	5	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	28	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	27	45	16	3	8
The school is well led and managed.	40	47	3	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	45	5	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	43	11	4	12

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is a strength with much that is very good or outstanding.
- The use of assessment data.
- The positive attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- Teamwork and the capacity to sustain improvement.
- Strategies to raise standards.
- Leadership and management provide very clear direction.

Areas for improvement

- Writing skills.
- Access to ICT.
- The accommodation.

80. On entry to the college standards of attainment in English is below average. Over several years, attainment in the National Curriculum tests have either been average or just below average. The 2002 results were below the national average and below previous results, which were in line with the national average. Although below average, the school achieved its targets and there was an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels including a level 8, the highest level. The results were above average for similar schools and are improving in line with the national trend. English results in the national tests are above those of mathematics and science. When attainment on entry is taken into account, achievement is good.
81. The 2002 GCSE English and English literature results were below the national average. However, there was a marked improvement in the results, particularly in English literature and all pupils entered achieved a grade in line with the national average. This represents good achievement for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, pupils' achievement based on their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 is good. However, whilst most minority ethnic pupils are achieving well, white British girls are not doing as well as can be expected. Analysis of results and discussion indicate that this is attributable to irregular attendance, and the sometimes negative attitudes towards learning, which are adversely affecting their performance in the subject. The department is monitoring performance closely. The English results were higher than those in science and mathematics.
82. From work seen during inspection, standards are in line with the national average but are slightly better in Years 7-9 because these pupils have been exposed to more explicit teaching through the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Standards are rising because of the consistently good quality teaching and emphasis on using the strategy framework for teaching English and the positive attitudes that teachers have engendered in pupils towards the subject.
83. Speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils are very alert and adept at answering questions and expressing their views. They listen well to each other and pupils from all ethnic groups contribute well during oral work. Overall, girls speak confidently and display good communication skills when explaining their ideas and opinions. The higher attaining pupils are articulate and argue points well when taking part in discussions.
84. Standards in reading and interpretation of texts are above average for the higher attaining pupils and satisfactory for lower attaining pupils. On entry to the college, a significant number of pupils are two to four years or more behind their chronological reading age. These pupils achieve well in developing their understanding of texts because of the intensive support provided through the Progress Units (part of the strategy) and in lessons. For example, a teacher taking classes for

lower attaining pupils with special educational needs ensured that they engaged well with literary texts by using a range of activities, including role-play and discussion to increase their understanding of the characters and plot. This was well illustrated in the Year 8 lesson on Paterson's *Gilly Hopkins*. As a result, pupils began to analyse the text and use quotations to support their views. By Year 11, pupils with special educational needs respond well to more difficult texts as illustrated in a statemented pupil's response to Well's *The Red Room*: "*The power of darkness cannot be under-estimated...it is all too much for the narrator....*" Reading and interpretation of texts are a strength of pupils' learning because of the emphasis teachers place on close reading and text level work. Pupils are reflective readers and move from the explicit to the implicit meaning of texts. The higher attaining pupils grapple with difficult ideas, as seen in Year 7 pupils' response to '*We are going to see the Rabbit*'. These pupils read with insight whereas the middle attaining pupils do not sustain their interpretation. Overall, pupils handle non-literary media assignments well.

85. Standards in writing are below average overall, but are good among the higher attaining pupils, who are confident and assured writers. They use an extensive vocabulary, structure their work well and use punctuation marks to emphasise meaning. Weaknesses in writing prevent pupils from achieving the higher grades as the quality of expression and technical errors mar their work. Proof reading skills are not used rigorously. Nevertheless, pupils make very good use of writing frames and mapping to plan and organise their ideas. They respond well to the detailed marking of their work and as a result, writing skills are improving.
86. Teaching is consistently good and the overall quality is very good. There was one excellent lesson. The quality of learning is not as consistently good as teaching because pupils do not always well apply skills they have been taught in class in their written work. Teachers know their subject very well and use the Key Stage 3 Strategy to structure lessons. They maintain a sharp focus on improving text and sentence level work in order to improve the quality of pupils' written expression and interpretation of texts. Planning is a strong feature of the department's work and there is effective matching of work to meet the wide ability range. The same curriculum but modified resources and teaching approaches are therefore delivered to all pupils. This was well illustrated in Year 11 where pupils worked on a short story '*Veronica*'. Whilst the higher attaining pupils were expected to mostly work independently on their response, other pupils were taken through a series of activities to increase their critical response to the text.
87. Teachers use concise learning objectives, lively and interactive starter activities and detailed plenaries, which involve pupils summarising their learning, taking part in discussion or games using true/false cards or key words. Teaching is often refreshing and in the excellent lesson, it was exhilarating, as pupils were driven to think and respond critically to a difficult poem outside of their cultural experience. The teacher made excellent use of the smartboard, group work, feedback and a range of fast moving activities, which led to Year 7 pupils achieving standards, above all expectations in their analysis of Nichol's '*De Man*'. Curriculum support workers play a pivotal role supporting pupils with special needs and those learning English. Marking is very good, as is the use of homework to extend pupils learning.
88. Leadership and management of the department are very effective. Very good teamwork underpins the efficiency of the department and there is a shared and clear commitment to improving standards. Teachers are very clear about their responsibilities and the Advanced Skills Teacher plays a key role in instigating new approaches to teaching and learning. Monitoring is rigorous and data on examination and test results are used to improve provision and standards in all areas of the subject. The attention to detail and improving results are reflected in the coherent development plan and audit of the subject. The very good schemes of work reflect strategy as well as literature from other heritages. This is thought to be having a positive impact on the achievement of black African and Caribbean pupils in the literature examination. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' overall development and has a good range of extra-curricular activities. While the department makes good use of the smartboard, it is unable to exploit the use of ICT in English because of limited access to computers. Rooms for English are not adjacent to each other and staff

constantly share and use non-specialist rooms. For instance, lessons are often taken in an unsuitable computer suite next door to the drama studio where the noise is intrusive.

89. Since the last inspection, standards have improved and the department has made good progress in tackling the issues identified. Given the strong leadership and effective teamwork, the department has the capacity to sustain improvement. Literacy in other subjects is dealt with in the sections on “How high are standards?” and “How well are students taught?”.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards are rising after a period of decline.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good with some that is very good and excellent.
- The department is now fully staffed after a period of turbulence.
- The department works well as a team.

Areas for development

- Standards attained by older pupils are still below the national average.
- Poor attendance impedes the progress of some.
- Assessment data are not used to sufficient effect.
- Teachers find it difficult to cope with the range of ability in some teaching groups.

90. In recent years the department has been through difficult times. The major difficulty has been to recruit qualified and competent staff. A new, hard working, curriculum manager, who is committed to raising standards, was appointed last year. He is well supported, particularly in the organisation of the department, by two competent deputies. The department as a whole benefits from the expertise and enthusiasm of a former mathematics curriculum leader as overall line manager. The teachers are united in their quest for improvement. The situation has therefore improved markedly and is set to improve further although this is not, as yet, reflected in external examination results.
91. Pupils scored well below the average in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 when compared to results in both all and similar schools. Results for 2002 improved but were still well below national standards.
92. The work of pupils in Years 7-9 seen during the inspection was better than is reflected in the tests and is approaching that seen nationally. The improvements are occurring because the staffing of the department is now stable and teaching is good. Current standards represent good achievement for pupils in Years 8 and 9. When they entered the school in Year 7 their attainment in mathematics was well below average. By Year 9 more able pupils can work out the values of fairly complicated algebraic expressions involving fractions and square roots by substitution. Average pupils can multiply an algebraic bracket by a scalar and find the third angle in a triangle given the other two. Year 9 pupils in lower ability classes can organise a given set of data into a tally chart and use it to draw up a frequency diagram but are sometimes unsure of the difference between the mode, median and mean of that data.
93. The 2001 GCSE results were below average but higher than those for pupils in similar schools. These results compare unfavourably with other subjects in the school. 2002 results are similar and there has been no improvement in recent years. Poor attendance has been and remains a factor leading to lower results. In spite of this, the comparison of pupils' results at GCSE with their attainment in national tests in Year 9, two years before, is favorable; their achievement is good.
94. The work of pupils in Year 11 is below average. There are a few pupils whose work is so good that they are being entered early for GCSE. These are likely to get very good grades. They handle standard deviation well and can estimate solutions to cubic equations by graphical

methods. By contrast, middle and lower attaining pupils find algebra difficult and do not draw accurately enough to be able to solve problems involving scale diagrams. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well and are making good progress in lessons providing they attend school regularly. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, although a small number were fully attended, absence figures of one in three were not uncommon.

95. No lessons were less than satisfactory. Teaching was very good or excellent in one lesson in three. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Most lessons are well planned and taught with clarity. Pupils are well managed and there is often, but not always, a good range of activities provided to keep the pupils interested. Most teachers, however, find it difficult to combine direct teaching, as recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy, with work of sufficient variety and scope to challenge the wide range of ability in many of the classes. This range is caused by the manner in which the school organises its teaching groups. The school is rightly reviewing its arrangements for setting by ability in recognition that the current position is problematic.
96. Pupils' work, whether done in class or at home, is usually well marked with helpful advice and comments which enable them to see what they need to do to improve. The department also has to handle a wealth of data from test results both internal to the school and from outside, provided by the government and the local education authority. These data are, as yet, not being fully exploited either to benchmark individual pupil performance or to inform sufficiently specific targets for individual pupils' improvement in mathematics.
97. The use of the three-part lesson, as recommended in the National Strategy for Numeracy, is well developed and is now paying dividends in securing improved results. Most lessons begin with a short activity which introduces or reviews skills needed for the main body of the work to follow. In general this is well done. The summary at the end of lessons is, however, less consistently handled. Quite often insufficient time is left to exploit what should be an opportunity to review and confirm the work that has been covered. There is also a tendency for teachers to dominate this part of the lesson unduly and not provide the pupils enough of an opportunity to contribute their own thoughts and ideas or reflect upon what they have learned.
98. Teachers of mathematics make a good contribution to improving pupils' literacy skills. The key vocabulary for each lesson is displayed in the same relative position on white boards in every class at the start of every lesson. This vocabulary is explained and used so that the children become well versed in it. ICT is well used and supports the girls' learning effectively. In one of the classrooms there is a network of 17 computers in one of the classrooms that is very well used, particularly for younger pupils. This classroom has an interactive whiteboard which was seen employed most effectively in an excellent lesson for Year 7 pupils on plotting points with positive and negative coordinates.
99. The last inspection of the school reported unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons by a significant minority of pupils. Behaviour in lessons now is very good and supports girls' learning well. This stems in large part from pupils responding very well to the good teaching they receive but there was no unsatisfactory behaviour even when the lessons were relatively unexciting. Relationships in the classroom, both between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are very good. The teachers clearly care about their pupils and their work. The quality of relationships does much to contribute to pupils' good progress.
100. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers' work is supported by classroom observation on at least one occasion each year and there is regular monitoring of marking and record keeping. Informal visits to classrooms help the manager get a picture of what is going on but more formal monitoring by him is now needed to support performance management.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Very good use of assessment data to inform target-setting.
- Very good teaching.
- Clear direction and promotion of high standards.
- Good relationships in class.
- Good use of ICT.

Areas for Improvement

- Multicultural dimension to science teaching is underdeveloped.
- Very good practice in teaching is not adequately shared in the department.

101. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 9 pupils, results were well below the national average but close to the average in similar schools. Attainment in science has generally been a little higher than in mathematics but not as good as in English. Science results dipped in 1998 but began to recover in 1999 and have since paralleled the national trend of improvement. Pupils' attainment on entry three years ago was well below the national average and therefore pupils' achievement from Year 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Standards of work seen in Years 7-9 are broadly average, much better than previous test results indicate.
102. The 2001 GCSE examination results in science are below the national average for double award science. However, in comparison with schools with a similar background, the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C grades was well above the average and indicates that achievement between Year 9 and 11 was good. GCSE results have improved very slightly between 2001 and 2002 and national and similar school comparisons are probably the same as in 2001, though cannot be verified at the time of writing. The standard of work in Years 10 and 11 is broadly average.
103. Pupils' overall achievement in science by the end of Year 11 is good. They enter the school with attainment that is well below the national average. By the end of Year 11 they gain GCSE results that are slightly below the national average. These are significantly better GCSE results than might be expected in relation to pupils' attainment on entry to the school. This good achievement is possible because teachers expect a great deal from pupils, set demanding work and teach very well. The key to the success of the lowest attaining and pupils with special educational needs is the constant encouragement they receive and the range of learning activities. These enable them to work in ways which help them concentrate and provide opportunities to reinforce, in different ways, what they have learnt. The school piloted the Key Stage 3 National Strategy for science last year, which included an emphasis on literacy through science teaching. This contributed improvements in approaches to learning.
104. During inspection one half of the lessons seen were very good or better, with one that was excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They plan their lessons carefully and choose activities that match the needs of the particular group. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 10 thoroughly enjoyed being analytical chemists in an applied science lesson. They are unlikely to forget the detective-like approach to chemically identifying two unknown salt samples. Such memorable experiences are particularly important for a group who find it difficult to understand and recall abstract ideas.
105. Teachers sometimes make use of very good resources to catch and hold pupils' attention. For example, in a Year 11 lesson with high attaining pupils effective use was made of the interactive whiteboard to reinforce pupils' understanding of chromosomes and cell division. Effective questioning was then used to assess pupils' gaps in their knowledge and then consolidate their understanding. When teaching is very good, there is often a fast pace. Pupils in a low attaining group in Year 7 initially could not recall the principle of diffusion stemming from a demonstration. A clear but very swift 're-cap' from the teacher had them hanging on her every word.

106. Teachers mark pupils' work very carefully. Their comments provide pupils with plenty of praise and encouragement and, even more importantly, they also give clear information about how the work could be improved. In a few cases, though, marking is regular and gives encouragement, but does not give enough guidance to pupils on how they can improve their level of work. Good practice needs to be shared more effectively across the department.
107. Most pupils have very good attitudes to their work in science. When teaching is good or very good, pupils enjoy their learning and maintain high levels of concentration. However, some pupils do not respond as well as they should to a satisfactory, if slightly slow moving, lesson. Although the teacher does manage these pupils just sufficiently to enable them to complete the activity and learn what they are required to learn, much more progress would be possible if pupils were willing to listen when asked to do so rather than continually trying to chat or 'switching off' from the lesson.
108. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The curriculum manager leads a lively and energetic team of teachers. Curriculum support assistants and technicians are well used to support their work. All share a strong commitment to enabling pupils to enjoy science and to achieve the best possible standards. The handbook provides very good support for teachers. Assessment data are gathered extremely well and used in an exemplary way to look for underachievement. The results of value-added analyses are shared with pupils and parents. Very good displays in the laboratories and corridors celebrate pupils' achievements and promote science education. What is conspicuous by its absence, though, is a multicultural dimension to science teaching, an emphasis one would expect to find in a school of this type.
109. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Teaching is much better than it was at that time. From the work seen in lessons, and from the analysis of pupil's notebooks, pupils' learning is also much better. The curriculum manager has been in post for around 18 months; his vision and drive ensure there is a clear focus on improvement and strategies to raise standards. The development of a multicultural dimension to science teaching, and effective sharing of good teaching practice are areas for further improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The very good teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning in Years 10 and 11.
- The contribution to community projects such as 'Eltham Lights Up' in which multi-cultural and global perspectives are celebrated.
- The standard of display, which inspires pupils to do good work.

Areas for development

- The use of ICT needs to continue to develop.

110. Attainment on entry is below average. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessment indicates standards to be in line with all schools and the inspection confirms this. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE examinations in 2001 was well below the national average as was overall attainment. There is a similar picture in previous years and in 2002. However, results have improved in 2002. A greater proportion of pupils attained A*-C grades and A-B grades; all pupils, in a very large entry, passed. Pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs progress as well as their peers, and the extra activities provided in lessons and after school for the most able pupils have a positive effect on the quality of their work. Very good display both celebrates pupils' attainment and inspires other pupils to do better. Some excellent work is seen in Year 7 where drawing and colour wash work is beautifully executed. In Year 8, portrait work is celebrating pupils' own cultural heritages, and in Year 9 good quality expressionist painting is

inspired by Klee's work. There is some very good pastel work in Year 9 too. In work in Years 10 and 11, above average overall, surrealist lips provided a memorable image to carry from the inspection. Excellent flower drawing and painting shows parallels with the work of Georgia O'Keefe, even though the pupil concerned has never come across her work.

111. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7-9, very good in Years 10 and 11. The best teaching is characterised by good relationships, where pupils' strengths and weaknesses are well known, and a sense of common purpose is created. Planning and preparation are good, with clear targets set and shared against criteria for success. Expectations are high, but on occasion too high for some pupils who become frustrated at their own lack of success. Organisation and management are effective, and potentially difficult pupils managed well; pupils therefore learn well. In the best lessons the teacher's passion and enthusiasm are transmitted effectively, and pupils' responses are very positive. Questioning and feedback in lessons is good, both reinforcing and extending awareness and learning. Literacy work in art is very good, and spatial awareness is well developed by teachers to support numeracy work effectively.
112. The attitudes of pupils towards work are good in Years 7-9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are often bubbly and talkative, but respond well to good, well-planned activities and teachers' instructions. They are open and positive, listening well and working hard. Most are keen to answer questions, and help each other a lot. A good working atmosphere is created in most lessons, and fun and delight in learning are often present.
113. Teachers use resources from outside the school such as 'artists in residence' and the 'Eltham Lights Up Festival', very well, and pupils share their enthusiasm for such projects. At the very end of the inspection the Christmas lights were turned on in Eltham and pupils brought their lanterns, made in art and design, back into school. They were obviously very pleased with themselves despite the showers. Art supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well; pupils learn about and experience art as an important expression of their cultural identity.
114. Leadership and management are good. Responsibility for planning is shared, but the system works well. Teaching and learning are monitored well. The assessment of pupils' work is good and includes pupils assessing their own work against clear guidelines. Assessment is linked well to the National Curriculum levels, so pupils and teachers know how well they are doing against national expectations. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and includes appropriate historical and world content. The use of ICT is satisfactory.
115. Improvement since the last inspection is good. All the issues have been resolved, and the developments in the use of ICT already in hand are such as to ensure significant further improvement in this area of the departments' work.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The excellent leadership and vision of the curriculum manager which has led to the development of an excellent citizenship programme.
- The teaching staff's enthusiasm and dedication to the concept of helping pupils leave school as broadly informed young people.
- The excellent curriculum which has made an important contribution to the very successful introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject.
- The obvious positive effect the course is already having on pupils' behaviour in the school.

Areas for improvement

- The development of an assessment structure to monitor and inform pupils of their progress.
- Pupils need opportunities to evaluate the influence of each module on their outlook and lifestyle.

- Further development of the contribution made by other subject areas to citizenship.

116. At this early stage in the course pupils display a good or better knowledge of the areas already covered. They are enthusiastic and enjoy the content of the modules, particularly those concerned with lifestyles and relationships. Learning is good or very much better in these classes. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Year 11 and no written work was

available. Since the beginning of September, Year 11 pupils have concentrated on the need to apply for places in a choice of sixth form colleges. Lessons have covered telephone and application techniques, and the completion of records of achievement.

117. Pupils of all ability groups make good progress owing to the ability of all teachers to employ strategies to enable the pupils to understand the aspects under discussion, and careful choice of resources. Pupils also benefit from their own positive attitudes to the subject. In a lesson about puberty, pupils defined key words clearly and read aloud to the remainder of the class. Discussions on various aspects were held in a mature manner and pupils expressed themselves confidently, encouraged by the atmosphere of trust and respect for each other's feelings set up by the teacher. In a separate lifestyle lesson, the teacher skilfully enabled a vibrant and meaningful discussion on a variety of topics connected with boy/girlfriend relationships to take place. Pupils' contribution to the discussion was excellent. Similar activities contributed to pupils' ability to express mature opinions about the need for moral courage against racism. Pupils make good progress in developing an understanding of what it feels like to be subjected to racism through effective use of role-play. A lesson on drugs was equally well planned, with a variety of activities designed to increase pupils' knowledge about different drugs and their awareness of the different effects the drugs have on people. Pupils matched definitions of drugs with their names, and confidently read the definitions out to the remainder of the class.

118. Teaching is very good overall; some lessons seen were excellent. Teachers challenge pupils by skilful use of questioning, broaden pupils' understanding through activities which further develop their knowledge and plan lessons very well to give pupils access to a wide range of appropriate resources. They have a wide range of experience in teaching related subjects and are dedicated to the concept of helping pupils leave school as broadly informed young people. Teachers have the ability to set up professional relationships with pupils, which encourage them to feel able to discuss knowledgeable the wide range of topics covered in the curriculum.

119. Leadership and management of the department are excellent. Under the curriculum manager's direction the subject has been removed from form time and allocated one lesson per week. Other subject areas are also beginning to make a worthwhile contribution. These include a trip to the bank of England organised by the mathematics department. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place. Work in the classroom is already having a positive effect on the behaviour and attitudes of many of the pupils. All departmental staff have had and are still attending training sessions on the effective delivery of the subject and a training session for the whole of the teaching staff in the school is to be held next March. Contributions from outside speakers and groups play a prominent part in both the success and presentation of the subject. These include the Big Fish Theatre Company, Alcoholics Anonymous, and The Samaritans. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of prominent people, including councillors and members of parliament, who are showing an interest in making a contribution to this subject area.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Procedures to monitor and involve pupils in their progress are good.
- Well above average test results in resistant materials.
- Identification and support for pupils with learning difficulties.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at GCSE need to rise.
- Targets for pupils' improved achievement need to be based on design and technology capability, not capability in other areas of the curriculum
- Good teaching practice needs to be better shared
- ICT needs further development in teaching and learning.
- Pupils who are gifted and talented in *design and technology* need identifying and developing.

120. GCSE examination results in 2001 were below those achieved nationally. 2002 results are below those for 2001 and well below those achieved nationally. In Years 10 and 11 pupils can choose to study in one of three material areas for GCSE: food, graphics or resistant materials. Results for food in 2001 were lower than those of graphics and much lower than those of resistant materials. Resistant materials results were well above those achieved nationally. In 2002 results in food are still much lower and results for resistant materials remain above those achieved nationally. Food and resistant materials courses now followed are full GCSE courses; they were half courses before 2001. The department has underperformed overall, in relation to other subjects in the school, and in relation to national averages; this is because of the very low attainment of pupils following the food technology course.
121. In 2001 pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 was below the national average, as judged by teachers' assessments. In 2002, assessments are well below those in 2001 and those recorded nationally. The department has been working to develop the design and technology capability of pupils with well below average English, mathematics and science attainment. Attainment for the current Year 7 is now average as far as English, mathematics and science are concerned, so their potential for higher attainment in design and technology has increased, but pupils' lack of experience of design and technology in primary schools means that their capability is still below average when they start at this school.
122. Standards of work in Years 7-9 are broadly average. Achievement by Year 9 is good when you consider the below average design and technology capability on entry to the school. Pupils have a good range of experiences planned for them, including resistant materials, mechanisms, graphics, food, electronics, systems and control, computer aided design and computer aided manufacture. Pupils produce a good range of products including a pocket game, a flower holder, an 'automata' mechanical toy, a mini-light, and a novelty money box. Design work is valued within the department and in a good Year 8 lesson pupils had the opportunity to feed off each others' creativity in an introductory activity. Pupils worked against the clock to produce eight designs, many of the new designs coming out of the sharing of pupils' design ideas. Design work is generally well annotated and of good graphic quality with a range of presentation media used. The use of ICT work within design and make activities requires further development to ensure that the work is fit for the purpose and includes forms and conventions in packaging designs. There is a range of good quality exemplar work displayed in the classrooms and throughout the technology department corridors and in Year 8 there is a two-day whole-school focus based on an identified technology theme.
123. In Years 10 and 11 standards of work are broadly average. Achievement is good for these pupils, when their below average attainment as assessed by teachers at the end of Year 9 is considered. In all material areas pupils confidently organise themselves for the work ahead. In a well planned food lesson, pupils confidently organised their equipment and prepared their ingredients. They selected, modified and produced a good range of high quality items including bread, red lentil and vegetable hash, saffron and almond slices and chocolate chip brownies. Pupils produced these using detailed plans and carried out effective testing and evaluation at the end of the lesson.
124. Attitudes and behaviour are good. However, in one Year 10 graphics lesson a small number of pupils were rude and challenging to the teacher. The teacher did not allow their behaviour to slow

the progress being made by other pupils in the class and they were dealt with appropriately using the behaviour policies and practices of the school. Pupils work well together and support each other in their work and are conscientious in the way they clean up in all material areas. Many pupils are keen to finish and improve work done in lessons and they are able to work through break times, part of the lunch time and also attend after school sessions during the week. They can do this because of the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers to pupils' success.

125. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching in lessons seen was at least satisfactory and some very good teaching was seen in resistant materials technology. Where teaching is good, teachers have good classroom routines, relate well to pupils and have good management practices. They have good subject knowledge which is used to support pupils well in 'design and make' activities. Objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of most lessons and good use is made of white boards to illustrate key points. Teachers know which of their pupils have special educational needs and what their difficulties with learning are. These pupils are supported well in lessons and they generally make good progress. However, one Year 10 pupil with English as an additional language was new to the school. She was making less progress than she should because of the communication difficulties between the teacher and the pupil. Marking is variable in quality across material areas, but at its best is encouraging and provides clear direction on how pupils should improve their work. It is possible, however, for some confusion to exist between effort grades and National Curriculum levels. Levels awarded are sometimes high and targets for Year 7 pupils were far too high. This is because the targets are based on achievement in another area of the curriculum, (for example, science), and not on pupils' design and technology capability. The department has already started to collect work to exemplify standards expected for design and technology work. Homework is used effectively within design and technology to both prepare for and extend the work in lessons.
126. Where pupils have personal improvement plans, these are well used in classroom organisation and in monitoring progress towards their improvement targets. Some classes have curriculum support workers allocated to them; they work effectively with individuals, small groups or whole classes to ensure that pupils make good progress. In a well planned Year 7 lesson, for pupils with special educational needs, pupils were using a range of materials developed by the teacher to help them plan the making of a plastic photo frame. Pupils were able to slowly describe what they were doing and use technical terms for tools and equipment appropriately. They also used hand tools with confidence although they had not used them before. Gifted and talented pupils are identified within the school but not in relation to design and technology capability, so it is not possible to comment on their progress.
127. There is a clear contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills through the use of word walls in classrooms showing technical terms in all material areas. Design work is well annotated and pupils are always keen to participate in speaking and listening opportunities. Numeracy skills are developed well in the calculation of material costs, measuring and marking out work, but the use of ICT skills for effective and efficient research, and in the presentation of results are underdeveloped.
128. Leadership and management are good. Important issues for attention identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed and improvement has been good. A full complement of well-qualified and creative staff and the good overall teaching means that the department should continue to improve. The curriculum manager has produced a very detailed handbook, schemes of work and improvement plans. Examination performance is also well analysed. Improvement plans clearly identify appropriate priorities for the department. These include the improvement of performance of those pupils choosing to follow the food option in Years 10 and 11 and improved communication with parents or guardians where pupils fail to meet coursework deadlines. Assessment practices are well developed and allow pupils to participate in recording how well they are doing. Lesson observation takes place but could be developed further to share good teaching practice. The department has supported local schools by offering master classes in design and technology for some primary pupils. The curriculum is enhanced well through a range of external links including visits to a restaurant at Billingsgate fish market, the design museum and to architectural and electrical engineering institutions.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Interesting materials to stimulate pupils' imagination and creative skills.
- Pupils' enthusiasm.
- The emphasis on written work and the constructive evaluation of pupils work.

Areas for improvement

- The attitudes that some girls have towards the subject.

129. Pupils in Years 7-9 achieve well in drama because of their enthusiasm and energetic approach to using their creative skills. Standards in drama are good in Years 7-9 and satisfactory in Year 11. Whereas the 2001 GCSE results were above the national average, the 2002 results were below and well below for girls nationally. The dip in results is largely due to temporary supply staff teaching pupils in 2001. The department now has a full complement of specialist teachers and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are working in line with the standard expected nationally. There are, however, occasions in Year 11 when some pupils do not achieve as well as expected because a significant number of white girls are unfocused and do not take the subject seriously or display the skills expected for pupils in the second year of the course. Teachers are presently working with parents and monitoring girls closely.
130. Most pupils work enthusiastically and work hard to meet the requirements of the subject. The accelerated groups in Years 7-9 reach good standards in their use of stylised and naturalistic drama. Pupils use good oral skills for choral speaking and work as a team to present synchronised movements as seen in Year 8 lessons where they skilfully interpreted their understanding of dreams. Overall, they display a good understanding of the use of movements and gestures as well as the use of their voice when portraying different characters. They have an increasing awareness of drama skills through critically evaluating their work, which ends with every performance. Year 11 pupils work well on developing characterisation based on their reading and interpretation of a playscript. The written course work focuses on the examination criteria, with pupils critically reviewing their work.
131. In most lessons teaching is good, in a few teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is carefully planned and makes good use of the three-part lesson (an element of the Key Stage 3 strategy) with interesting starter activities, which are used to stimulate pupils' imagination. The plenary is used well to summarise the taught skills. Planning is supported through knowledge of the subject and interesting schemes of work. Pupils are effectively challenged to be creative in their interpretation of stimulus material. There is a constant approach to revising technical skills and sharpening evaluative comments by focusing on drama conventions. Homework is used to extend pupils' knowledge of the subject and increase their critical skills. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy through the attention given to a range of written work and developing pupils' oral skills. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good when there are insufficient strategies and resources to captivate the small but significant number of girls who are not focused on their learning.
132. The subject is well led and specialist teachers work with teachers from the English department to deliver the drama curriculum. There is a comprehensive handbook and detailed schemes of work. Since the last inspection, the accommodation has improved and the department has two well-equipped studios. Pupils now have a double lesson; attention is given to developing their critical and evaluative skills as well as using their voice well when in role. The subject is a popular GCSE option and attracts a large number of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Achievement in Years 7-9 is good and improving.
- There is very good use of ICT in all years.
- Fieldwork and other visits are very good and enrich the curriculum.
- Teaching is mostly good or better and all lessons are well planned.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results in Years 10 and 11.
- Clearer objectives for all pupils need setting at the beginning of lessons.
- The variety of work needs to be broader to better meet pupils' needs.

133. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate standards to be close to the national average for girls. Inspection confirms that the standard of work in Years 7-9 is average. There has been a significant improvement in standards since 2000, reflecting good quality lesson planning, the introduction of accelerated classes, the appointment of a new curriculum manager and an improving variety of assessment techniques. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 have weaknesses in the completion of work, literacy and presentation. Higher attaining pupils produce very good detailed written work. All pupils can collect and analyse data and produce satisfactory to very good maps, diagrams and basic graphs. Overall, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils achieve well.
134. In 2001, the proportion of pupils attaining GCSE grades A*-C was well below average. In 2002, the proportion increased but remained well below average. The proportion that passed, almost all, was higher than national. A significant number attained a D grade; focusing on similar pupils in 2003 would move results closer to average. There has been an improving trend in results since 2000. Pupils now achieve well by the time they leave school. Most pupils respond well to questions in class and their writing, maps, graphs and diagrams are satisfactory overall. Higher attaining pupils produce some very good written work. Lower attaining pupils do not always complete their work and absence means they do not catch up.
135. Pupils listen well overall, concentrate on their work and take an active part in lessons. There is good collaborative work in many lessons and pupils show respect for their teachers and other visitors in and around the school. These good attitudes support both teaching and learning.
136. Teaching and learning are good overall. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and most good or very good. Good lesson planning, a variety of tasks and probing questioning in many lessons ensure that pupils take an active part in their own learning. In a Year 11 lesson on trade, the class had a wide ability range; two pupils were well supported by a specialist language support teacher and two others were receiving good learning support. Very good questioning by the teacher developed pupils' understanding of key words. Clear worksheets, a very good video, and the well-informed teacher ensured that pupils learned concepts very well. The requirement to write a newsletter article about 'fair trade', the best to be published in the school newsletter, fostered high level work from more able pupils. In a Year 7 lesson there was very good use of resources to investigate the local area. Pupils were supplied with a land use map, an aerial photograph of the local area with marked locations and a worksheet. Pupils learned new skills and had to manage resources. Careful questioning ensured pupils understood the work and produced correct answers. Pupils were highly motivated by the task and absorbed in their work. Models of volcanoes and settlement sites, written news reports and travel logs show how teachers foster creativity. Computer based presentations about the Rochester by-pass and photographs of flood modelling at the Earth Institute Laboratory demonstrate a very good use of ICT and the value of outside visits to pupils.
137. Leadership and management are good. A committed and enthusiastic specialist leads the department and all teachers are well qualified. There are very good assessment and self-assessment procedures for pupils and information about how well pupils are doing is used to adjust lesson planning to better meet pupils' needs. Pupil friendly guides to National Curriculum levels of attainment and GCSE grades are provided and schemes of work are under revision to ensure that all pupils improve literacy and numeracy skills and get ICT experience, in addition to geographical skills and knowledge. Marking is monitored but needs further improvement to ensure that constructive comments are given to all pupils and spelling corrections are made.
138. Since the last inspection teaching and lesson planning have improved, the use of ICT is now very good, fieldwork is clear and well-planned and visits to other museums and other institutions are a positive innovation. However, standards still need to rise further, so improvement is satisfactory rather than good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are now good and contributing to rising standards.
- Leadership and management are good and improving provision.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are good and allow good learning to take place.

Areas for Improvement

- Too many pupils in Years 10 and 11 are absent from lessons.
- Standards in GCSE need to rise.
- ICT needs to be used more by pupils and teachers.

139. Standards in Year 9 are in line with those expected of pupils of the similar age. Those in Year 11 are below those expected. Teaching is good, and because of this, pupils make good progress. However, standards in Years 10 and 11 are too low.
140. GCSE results in 2001 were well below average. Results in 2002 are similar. The poor attendance of a significant number of pupils contributes to low standards. Also, staffing issues in the last two years, which involved a succession of short-term teachers, resulted in pupils not being taught consistently. Many pupils did not achieve as expected, because of the inexperience of teachers and a significant number of them failed to submit coursework for GCSE. At the time of the inspection, these issues had been resolved and the situation improved. The numbers of pupils choosing the subject in Year 10 has increased.
141. The behaviour of pupils in Years 7-9 and Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils are interested in their learning because of the challenges set by their teachers. Pupils in Years 7-9 show more independence because of higher expectations of teachers for them to carry out appropriate research and to make decisions in their learning. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are rather more reliant on direction from the teacher.
142. Pupils achieve well by Year 9. Good progress in lessons is due to effective teaching. In Year 7, pupils understand that there were hierarchies in Roman society and are confident in the use of AD and BC to denote dates. They can use contemporary accounts and archaeological evidence to piece together the events in Pompeii at the time of the volcanic eruption. Lower attaining pupils in Year 8 recognise some similarities and differences in contemporary portraits of Elizabeth 1st. In Year 9, pupils understand that the emancipation of the slaves in 19th century America did not ensure equal rights and can explain the difference between "equal provision" and "equal rights". More able pupils can assess the reputation of President Woodrow Wilson in the light of his views on segregation.
143. The progress of those pupils who attend regularly in Years 10 and 11 is good. However, during the inspection, significant numbers of older pupils were absent. By Year 11, pupils know that medical treatment of wounded soldiers improved during World War 1 and can compare the use of alcohol and opium to the later developments of chemicals such as ether and chloroform in surgery. They understand the reluctance of some people in the 19th century to use these newer anaesthetics because of the moral belief of childbirth being associated with the Christian idea of "sin". Pupils can gather information and use evidence to support their views on such ideas and write about them in a structured way. They are better at getting information from books than carrying out broader, more sustained, independent research.
144. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils from Afro-Caribbean, Somali and Asian backgrounds also make good progress but, a higher level of absenteeism, more common among white British pupils in Years 10 and 11, adversely affects the standards of their work.

145. The quality of teaching and learning are good. All lessons were at least satisfactory and some very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good because of the effective strategies employed by teachers to manage pupils' behaviour. Well-qualified teachers are able to interest pupils in their learning through using strategies appropriate to the abilities of pupils. Teachers take account of pupils' literacy work elsewhere when requiring written answers. Pupils' thinking skills are also developed so pupils are helped to learn and remember what they have done. While marking in pupils books is regular, more use could be made of sharing assessment criteria with pupils so that they are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. While pupils are encouraged to use ICT for research and word processing, this needs to be developed further to enhance pupils' learning in lessons. A good range of visits is organised to places of historical interest to help pupils understand the times they study.
146. Leadership and management are good. The senior management team, through a line manager, effectively supports an acting curriculum manager. This has resulted in an improvement in standards of pupils' behaviour, the effective introduction of the literacy strategy and the increase in the number of pupils choosing history as a GCSE subject. Targets are set for pupils' achievement, based on English, mathematics and science results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 9. These are effective in raising pupils' aspirations and the expectations of teachers. The acting co-ordinator monitors standards of teaching effectively and has devised an action plan, which shows that the strengths and areas of improvement are well understood.
147. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, as has the provision for the higher attaining pupils. The number and quality of textbooks have also improved; they meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. The need to raise attainment at GCSE remains.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The management of pupils and the planning of lessons are very good.
- The quality of the computing facilities is excellent.
- Pupils' know very well how they are doing in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of pupils in all years.
- The assessment of pupils work in terms of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9.
- The management and co-ordination of the subject.

148. Standards are below average. The attainment of pupils in ICT when they start at the school is variable and often significantly below average; the current Year 7 has better standards overall than previous years. Pupils' work shows that by Year 9 standards remain below average. Overall, however, they achieve satisfactorily. In Year 10, two-thirds of pupils take a GCSE in ICT and the remainder a GCSE in applied ICT (a replacement for GNVQ at intermediate level). In 2001, just over half of pupils attained A* - C grades at GCSE and one in nine pupils passed with a minimum grade - results which are broadly in line with the national average. In 2002, results were significantly lower. In 2002, the GNVQ course was completed for the first time. Fewer than one in three pupils attained A* - C grades and seven out of ten pupils failed to complete the award. These results are poor. However, the progress being made by pupils in the current Year 11 is better. Pupils make further progress by applying ICT well in business education, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics, and science. Most pupils are becoming effective and independent users of ICT. Achievement is broadly satisfactory.

149. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well integrated in lessons and make satisfactory progress with additional help from teachers and curriculum support workers in some lessons. In a good GNVQ lesson in Year 11, a pupil with learning difficulties and a Turkish-speaking pupil both made satisfactory progress in designing a pleasure ride using computers with the help of two effective learning assistants. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in their individual assignments in Years 10 and 11.
150. Pupils' learning is always satisfactory and often good. In Years 7-9 pupils learn a good range of ICT skills including the use of word processing, graphics, publishing, spreadsheets, databases and the Internet. An inappropriate start is made to the GCSE course in applied ICT in Years 8 and 9, which curtails some of the basic work on ICT skills. Pupils' work showed that in Year 7 last year they had used word processing and publishing effectively to produce anti-smoking literature. Pupils in a good non-accelerated Year 8 lesson could manipulate data in a spreadsheet well and in a good accelerated Year 9 lesson pupils produced a business letter well as part of their work on the GCSE course. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn to apply their ICT skills to more complex applications and understand the social impact of ICT in society well. In a GCSE lesson, in Year 10, pupils developed a hyperlink between a computer presentation and a spreadsheet satisfactorily as a part of their work on presenting information. In another Year 10 lesson, pupils created a brochure for "fiery" fireworks and linked it with a spreadsheet containing types and costs of fireworks very well. In a good revision lesson in Year 11 pupils worked on handling information as a part of their GNVQ course.
151. Teaching is good overall but varies. Teachers have secure knowledge and plan work well. They are effective in involving pupils in learning by asking them questions in lessons and giving good help and advice in practical activities. Course materials are used effectively. There is good use of self-assessment to make pupils aware of their progress. Good use is made of the electronic white board to give demonstrations. When teaching is less effective, teachers do not always hold the interest of pupils or fully understand the software they use, causing pupils to lose concentration and go off task. There is a need to give more support to the newly qualified teachers. Teachers implement the school's literacy and numeracy policies satisfactorily. An effective start has been made to implement the new Key Stage 3 National Strategy related to teaching ICT. Pupils' work is marked and recorded well but the procedures for assessing students' attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels is inaccurate; teacher assessments are wrong.
152. The former head of business studies has recently been appointed director of business and ICT and has not had time to implement changes that are needed. The ICT curriculum manager works part-time and the application of ICT in other subjects is reviewed by an assistant principal annually. There is a lack of focus in leadership and management and the present arrangements are unsatisfactory. The department has passed through a difficult period. The lead GNVQ teacher left during the last year and there have been difficulties in recruiting specialist teachers. As a consequence, examination results have fallen in 2002. The computing facilities are excellent. Changes since the last inspection are satisfactory; standards are broadly similar but pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and the computing facilities are much better.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Overall, pupils achieve well in GCSE examinations; results are among the best in the school.
- Teaching is good overall and is often very good, even excellent.
- Pupils behave well in class and their attitudes towards languages are mostly very positive.
- The leadership and management of the department are of very high quality.
- The programme of exchanges and other extra language activities is extensive.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils with special educational needs in the large mixed-ability classes in Years 8 and 9 are sometimes not catered for appropriately.
- The programme for ICT is not fully integrated into the schemes of work in Years 7-9.
- Pupils not following a GCSE course would benefit from some form of certification at the end of Year 9.

153. In 2001, GCSE results in German were above the national average for all pupils at grades A* - C, and in line with the average for girls. Pupils achieved well to gain these results, given their below average attainment in language-based subjects on entry to the school. Furthermore, the entry rate for German was above national figures. Pupils who took GCSE examinations in French achieved satisfactorily, despite their results being below the national average and well below the average for girls. Numbers were smaller than in German, and the pupils' overall attainment in tests at the end of their Year 9 had been lower than in German. GCSE results in 2002 in both languages were broadly similar to 2001 and confirmed the trend of good achievement in GCSE examinations over the past four years.
154. In Year 9, standards in lessons and other work seen are below average. This, however, represents satisfactory achievement, because pupils enter the school with below average standards in language-based subjects. The higher attainers in the two Year 9 accelerated groups started a second language in Year 8. They have continued with both French and German in curricular time that is relatively short for the study of two languages. Currently, the higher attainers take two languages from Year 7; this represents improved provision compared to that at the last report. Higher attainers develop their languages skills steadily and consistently, especially in German. In Year 9, they write short accounts of, for example, holidays, and long descriptions of their family and school, often with good standards of accuracy and detail. Many of these pupils demonstrate good standards of recall of words they have met before in reading and listening passages. Most of them are confident in talking part in short dialogues about themselves, and a significant number, when spoken to, can recognise the past and even future tenses and make real efforts to answer. In the groups of middle and lower attainers, standards are very varied. These pupils take part well in intensive language sessions learning new vocabulary, but when spoken to individually, are much more hesitant. In writing, they mostly present their work well, but find it difficult to write freely without close guidance from their teachers. Pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, generally make progress as good as others in the class. A few in Years 8 and 9 find the work difficult without the extra support of teaching assistants. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 and 2 confirm the overall picture of attainment above.
155. In Year 11, standards in lessons and other work seen are average. Standards in German are slightly higher than in French, because there are more higher-attaining pupils. Pupils achieve well to reach these standards. This is because the teaching in both languages is good, and often very good, and more time is allocated to languages at this stage. The modular structure of the examination syllabus provides a close framework for pupils of all attainment, and pupils benefit greatly from the continuous assessment of their reading and listening skills in different topic areas. In addition, the written coursework element helps pupils to prepare and redraft their work carefully. Under these circumstances, the higher-attainers in particular achieve well. They become much more familiar with a range of tenses, and absorb new vocabulary and structures well to express their ideas and opinions clearly. Pupils make good progress in speaking lessons, especially when they prepare for the recordings about themselves. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as others in the group. Pupils with special educational needs in the upper and lower groups make more varied progress, often dependent on their own attitudes towards the subject.
156. Teaching is good and often very good, even excellent. The teaching and learning policy in the handbook is very comprehensive, and several teachers have developed successful and imaginative new activities and approaches in response to the Key Stage 3 Strategy pilot. The foreign language is the medium of communication in the vast majority of lessons and teachers concentrate well on encouraging all pupils to take part and use the language themselves. The up-to-date and stimulating textbooks are very accessible to the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to further effort because they can understand what is required of them. Teachers manage their pupils very well, and ensure high standards of attention and behaviour, so that pupils can concentrate and make progress. In a German lesson, higher attainers successfully learned the future tense by listening carefully to the teacher and recorded work, and then reporting on what they had heard with good, confident accents. Only in one lesson did a small number of pupils misbehave, and this interruption was quickly overcome. Teachers set homework regularly and

use the workbooks effectively, with pupils working at different levels. Most teachers recognise the value of vigorous, whole-class approaches with intensive language practice to engage the interest and participation of the middle and lower attainers. In one Year 10 French lesson with a group of mostly lower-attaining pupils, the teacher very effectively revised the topic of weather, using a wide range of gesture, mime and language games, and flashcards. In another Year 10 lesson, however, middle and lower-attaining pupils were expected to understand revision of the future tense by reading the rules of grammar, rather than being shown carefully how to form it with graduated visual aids. Paying attention to the particular needs of the lowest attainers is an area requiring improvement in a small number of classes. Mini-whiteboards (simple devices to allow pupils to show responses to questions) would profitably extend the wide range of resources teachers already have.

157. The management of the team of very committed teachers is of very high quality: the head of department gives a very clear sense of direction and leads by example in teaching skills. Target setting is developing very well and most marking is regular and consistent, with good attention to literacy skills. The programme of exchanges and other language activities, involving the valuable foreign language assistants, is extensive. The use of ICT is not fully developed and integrated into the schemes of work, and the entrance to the language area lacks display. Although teachers work very closely together, there is no reciprocal observation of colleagues within the department, to share and even further extend the best examples of the good practice that already exists.

MUSIC

Overall the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The quality of instrumental tuition.

Areas for improvement

- The standards of teaching.
- The curriculum and the assessment procedures.
- The limited range of both instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for ICT.

158. Teacher assessments show that by the end of Year 9 in 2001, the attainment of pupils was just above national expectations. Teacher assessments in 2002 however, show attainment to have fallen below this year's national average. In 2001, only one pupil took GCSE, achieving an A grade. Nine pupils sat the GCSE examination in 2002, all of whom achieved grades between A*-C. Small numbers mean that comparisons with national figures cannot be made.
159. Standards seen in Years 7-9 are below those expected nationally. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of musical experiences. Changes in staffing and the use of unqualified teachers have partly contributed to a failure to raise standards far enough. Although pupils sing with obvious enjoyment, their practical skills are underdeveloped. No use was seen, either in lessons or in work scrutinised, of any composition work using computers. This prevents pupils from receiving their full National Curriculum entitlement and from achieving as well as other pupils in composition. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have no access to work from previous years as new work folders have been started this year. This means they are unable to revisit previous compositions with a view to developing them further. There is no difference in attainment between the different ethnic groups in the school or those whose first language is other than English. Pupils with special educational needs mostly study music alongside the remainder of their class and attainment is in line with them. One class of pupils with special educational needs receive two lessons a week from a visiting teacher in which they participate with obvious enjoyment, and rise to meet appropriately high challenges. Very little extension work is offered for the more musically able pupils.

160. There are no pupils studying music at GCSE level in Year 10. Standards seen in Year 11 are below expectations. Pupils do not have the access to outside instrumental tuition enjoyed by the previous years' candidates. Consequently, pupils' performing and composing skills are generally below those required by the examination board. No listening activities were observed as lessons were dedicated to composition work which requires the direct attention of the teacher.
161. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Less than half of lessons seen were satisfactory. One was excellent. In this lesson pupils participated in a series of related activities, which progressed from those of the previous weeks, resulting in very good learning. The teacher's enthusiasm was matched by the pupils' desire to achieve well and enjoy the boost given to their self-esteem through good performances to the remainder of the class. Generally, however, teachers' subject knowledge and musical experience is good, but how pupils learn has not been thoroughly thought through. Consequently there is often no related progression from one activity to another or from lesson to lesson. Copying material from the board still features in some lessons and in others the teachers talk too much. This reduces the time available for practical activities and the invaluable opportunities for pupils to perform to the remainder of the class and participate in class evaluation. Appropriate homework is set, but too much lesson time is spent enquiring why pupils have not completed it. Assessment follows the school policy, but does not relate to National Curriculum levels. The need to convert module marks to fit these levels at the end of Year 9 is time consuming. Quality of instrumental tuition is good, although the range of instruments and breadth of extra-curricular activities offered does not reflect the wide range of ethnic groups in the school. One particularly successful extra-curricular activity is the South Greenwich Gospel Choir. Pupils benefit from direction by trained singers and the obvious pleasure the activity gives them is indicated by the effort the pupils put into the rehearsals and the spare time they devote to the regular concerts.
162. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection little progress has been made on the issues raised. Standards at both key stages are still low, with those in Year 11 being a result of lack of appropriate challenge and limited composing opportunity in Years 7-9. While the topics chosen for study in Years 7-9 are appropriate, the opportunities they present for establishing and reinforcing concepts are often missed through lack of initial planning. More rigour is required in using assessment to promote pupils' learning and influence curriculum planning. The accommodation is in need of redecoration and refurbishment to replace the torn curtains with vertical blinds. Resources are unsatisfactory, with no access available to musically dedicated computers. Keyboards require modernising, and the limited range of percussion is in need of expansion, renovation or renewal.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 7- 9, enables most pupils to make good progress in lessons and achieve well by the end of Key Stage 3.
- The great majority of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; this helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in which all can make progress.
- Good extra-curricular provision extends learning opportunities for pupils and contributes well to their personal development.

Areas for development

- The accelerated group in Year 9 are not making the progress they should be because they have less allocated curriculum time than the rest of the year group.
- There is no benchmarking of standards of attainment in physical education when pupils arrive in Year 7. Therefore, no subject specific targets being set.

- Newly developed schemes of work for Years 7-9 are not yet being consistently applied across the curriculum; hence not all pupils benefit fully from these.

163. Standards are below average by the end of Year 9 for all groups of pupils. Nevertheless, as a result of good teaching and learning, this represents good achievement since standards on entry in Year 7 are well below that expected for pupils of this age. In gymnastics, for example, pupils' body tension, poise and the overall quality of their movement are not well developed. The more physically capable have better body management skills but their range of movements is limited. For example, in their short sequence work, only a few are competent in the use of forward rolls whilst most prefer to use log rolls. Pupils continue to develop their skills and techniques throughout Years 10 and 11 and, by the end of Year 11, standards in the certificate of achievement course are as expected. In netball, for example, the more physically capable use height well to receive passes and turn in the air before landing and using the footwork rule correctly. In games, not all pupils are fully secure in their knowledge and understanding of the rules and the use of signalling and accuracy of passing is variable for all groups of pupils. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory.
164. Across all years, pupils have a secure grasp of the principles and procedures for warm-up activity and often lead this themselves. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, including class 7O, receive good support and make good progress. Physically talented pupils generally achieve well in lessons and are provided with further opportunities through extra-curricular activities and by taking part in school and district teams.
165. GCSE physical education has been an optional subject taken by some pupils. This year, in Year 10, pupils are following a short course GCSE rather than a full course. In 2001, a small group of pupils took GCSE. The proportion attaining A* to C grades was above the national average and represented good achievement. Results in 2002 were, however, more modest, in line with the national average and pupils achieved as expected. The small number of white girls did not meet their targets and achieved comparatively lower grades than other ethnic groups - medical problems and attendance issues being the reason for this. Results in 2002 have, nevertheless, continued the overall-improving trend in results since the last inspection. Present Year 11 pupils are learning well and making good progress. There is some good use of ICT by pupils to present their work, such as pie charts for evaluating personal weekly intake of fats, carbohydrates and protein. The quality of their written work is satisfactory. In their practical lessons Year 11 pupils are successfully improving their basic skills, techniques and sequence work in trampolining.
166. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 7-9 they are good and result in good progress in lessons for most pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when some unsatisfactory teaching was recorded. Where teaching and learning are effective, lesson planning provides for a variety of structured and progressive activities and helps ensure that pupils remain motivated. Lessons start promptly and efficiently, which results in pupils being quickly involved. In many lessons there is also good use of the board to highlight learning objectives and key terminology. Pupils respond well to this, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. In a very good Year 9 gymnastics lesson, for example, they worked well as pairs and small groups and showed clear respect for the capabilities of one another whilst working on large apparatus. Pupils also responded well to the high expectations of the teacher, which resulted in very good quality learning and improvement of their confidence. However, the unsatisfactory behaviour of some Year 8 pupils meant that time was wasted at the start of their gymnastics lesson and the late arrival of 'extra' pupils to a Year 10 dance lesson slowed the progress of those timetabled to take part. Teachers' demonstrations and breakdown of skills and techniques are often good and make pupils aware of what they have to do to make progress. Pupils are made aware of their capabilities because teachers circulate well offering constructive praise and criticism. In a very good Year 7 dance lesson, for example, the teacher intervened effectively to develop the quality of pupils' stretches during the warm-up activity. Effective questioning enables teachers to assess what they know and understand and also enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills. Homework is set for all classes and extends pupils' learning.

167. There are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluation by observing and coaching one another; thus they are not always deepening their knowledge and understanding of the activities as they should. Though few in number, non-participants are not always as fully involved, as they should be, for example, as part of whole-group demonstration of skills and techniques. Often, teachers tend to give a short evaluation at the end of lessons rather than to also ask pupils for their responses as to what they feel they have achieved; thus, pupils are not fully actively involved in assessing the quality of their learning. Also, the closed nature of questioning in, for example, a Year 9 gymnastics lesson for the accelerated group, meant they were not sufficiently challenged in this respect. Homework is not always consistently marked and teachers' comments about missing work are not always being followed up, pupils are therefore not always being made aware of what they need to do to improve.
168. The curriculum meets statutory requirements but not all pupils in Year 9 receive the same amount of lessons. Thus, those who only receive one hour per week do not have the same depth of understanding of those pupils who receive two hours. Newly developed schemes of work include reference to the teaching of basic skills but are not yet applied consistently across all lessons in Years 7-9. A good range of extra-curricular provision continues to extend opportunities for pupils. These include matches against other schools, tournaments and recreational activities. As a result of the continuing enthusiasm of teachers, eight pupils have achieved district representative honours and two have achieved county representative honours. The department follows closely the whole-school assessment procedures but a lack of subject benchmarking in Year 7 means there are no specific physical education targets being set. The joint heads of department provide satisfactory leadership and management of provision - good quality documentation and an improvement plan guides their work. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Standards in all years have improved since the previous report.
- The department makes a valuable contribution towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- There are not enough artefacts to support the curriculum.
- Classroom management of a small minority of pupils in Years 9 and 11 needs to be better.

169. Standards in religious education are generally in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. The overall good quality of teaching motivates pupils and most achieve satisfactorily.
170. In 2002 two thirds of pupils obtained grades A*-C in the GCSE short course examination and pupils achieved satisfactorily. All 17 pupils entered for the full course gained A*-C grades and they achieved well. These are good results. The full course takes place after school as part of extra provision.
171. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 are now working towards at least a GCSE short course examination, with an increasing number opting to take the full examination. Standards of attainment are about average for those pupils studying the short course and above average for those studying the full course.
172. Most pupils recognise that religious education involves the active acquiring of knowledge and understanding about various aspects of world religions. Pupils can talk about religious issues well. Able pupils, especially, write extensively in confident prose. For example, pupils have

written a short letter to God asking all the questions that each individual would like to know. The subject makes a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a systematic study of Christianity and the major world religions. Good opportunities are given for the discussion of beliefs and values and for pupils to make comparisons between what they believe and the beliefs and values of others. In Year 11, pupils discuss arguments for and against the existence of God and then write, at length, their own opinions based on their findings. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress due to the support they receive.

173. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Strengths lie in teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The overall good relationships in the majority of lessons help to raise pupils' self esteem and enable them to speak out and join in discussion with confidence. Pupils are well managed in most lessons and teachers make every effort to integrate those with poor attendance when they return to lessons. However, in two lessons seen, the management of a small minority of pupils who were not working was ineffective and this resulted in interruptions to the learning of all pupils in those lessons. Ongoing assessment in lessons and of work seen in Years 7-9 is overall satisfactory. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a good understanding of what they know and what they need to know; they are reminded of their targets and what they need to do to improve.
174. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The curriculum manager is part of the working party on the development of the revised locally agreed syllabus and this shows in departmental planning which looks forward to the introduction of end of Year 9 levels of attainment.
175. Since the previous report, the department has made good progress. The school now provides religious education for all pupils in Years 7-11. Sets of books have increased and meet the needs of pupils including those with special educational needs. There are still too few artefacts to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. All groups are encouraged to use ICT for research and the ICT room is booked frequently. Overall, the behaviour of pupils has improved.

BUSINESS

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good.
- Pupils' concentration and quality of independent learning are very good.
- The computing facilities are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards attained in GCSE need to rise further.

176. About four in every ten pupils opt to take the subject in Years 10 and 11. The attainment of pupils when they start the course, based on English, mathematics and science test results, is below average. In 2001, over one in six of the pupils who took the GCSE in business studies examinations obtained A* - C grades and one in nine A* - G grades - results which are above the national average. In 2002, the results were disappointing and well below the national average; only four out of ten pupils obtained the high grades. The group who took the examinations in this year contained many pupils with low prior attainment. In addition, the attendance of some was erratic and other pupils joined the course late.
177. Standards of work seen range from average to above average. Pupils' achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in lessons and make good progress with extra help from teachers. The individual assignment and unit-based work enables gifted and talented pupils to develop appropriately as independent study is well supported.
178. A new GCSE in applied business has been successfully started in Year 10. In this course pupils learn by undertaking units on investigating business, people and finance. In a good lesson pupils used ICT well to create their portfolios to show how a large supermarket chain meets its aims and objectives. Pupils make frequent visits to the local supermarket to learn about its business. In Year 11, a GCSE in business studies is currently running; pupils learn about business organization, marketing, sales, finance and people. In a very good lesson pupils learnt how to interpret and produce a balance sheet in an innovative way. Pupils carrying flash cards, showing

types of income or expenditure and amounts, moved around the classroom to produce a balance sheet. They found this work interesting and consequently learnt very well.

179. The quality of teaching and learning is always good and some times very good. Teachers' introductions to lessons have good technical content. They involve pupils in learning by asking them good questions and by giving good help and advice when pupils are developing portfolios. Teachers use textbooks and other course materials well. They emphasise key words and use ICT to research topics and present work very well. Teachers are relaxed and their relationships with pupils good. Consequently pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, they concentrate on the work in hand and work well on their own when they need to.
180. The department is well led by an experienced curriculum manager. The computing facilities and other learning resources are very good. There was no report on this subject at the time of the last inspection so improvement cannot be judged. There is a commitment to improve.

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

In the inspection, five 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
Computer Studies	2	0	74	0	13	0.00	1.75
German	1	100	82	0	13	1.00	1.85

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
Mathematics	4	100	87	0	43	6.00	5.80
Biology	4	50	88	0	34	1.50	5.25
Chemistry	3	33	90	0	43	0.67	5.90
Physics	3	100	88	0	40	4.67	5.67
Business	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.00	10.45
Business studies	9	89	92	11	32	4.44	5.50
Computer studies	7	86	86	0	23	3.43	4.62
Art and design	2	100	96	50	46	7.00	6.57
Communication studies	7	57	93	0	31	1.71	5.53
Drama	7	100	99	57	38	8.00	6.59
Geography	1	100	92	0	38	2.00	5.74
History	3	33	88	0	35	0.67	5.45
Sociology	5	60	86	20	35	3.20	5.32
Other social studies	1	100	87	0	34	6.00	5.34
English literature	15	87	95	13	37	4.13	5.91
French	3	0	89	0	38	0.00	5.59
German	4	100	91	50	40	7.00	5.81

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

181. Only Year 13 is taught in the school. Provision for Year 12 is through another institution. The focus was on mathematics and chemistry but biology was also sampled. There is no provision for physics. In biology, one lesson was observed, teaching and learning were very good and standards above average. The five students had excellent attitudes and very competent at independent work.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their teaching encompasses a range of activities.
- Relationships are very good so that question and answer sessions are productive.
- The subject is well organised with teachers sharing their teaching of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- The small group means there is very little opportunity for students to share ideas and problems.

182. Standards of work seen are above average and students achieve well. These standards result from good teaching and the students' positive attitudes to the subject. The quality of learning overall in mathematics is also good.

183. A level examination results in 2001, although an improvement over previous years, were slightly below average. The department has operated an inclusive approach to entry to the A-level course so that standards on entry have been broadly average. In the light of this, progress made by the small group of students was good.

184. Students in Year 13 show good understanding when dealing with the new topic of integration. Good use of prior knowledge is employed to integrate exponential functions and to relate these functions to their graphs. Graphic calculators are used to good effect to reinforce learning and to confirm calculations relating to areas under curves.

185. Teaching is good overall. Teaching is shared between two experienced members of staff, each teaching from their strengths. They have good subject knowledge, very good relationships with students and plan lessons very well. Each lesson contains a range of activities that helps maintain pace and interest. Despite the small numbers in classes, progress is not constrained by the lack of pupil to teacher interactions; these are helpful to the student. Students did say that they miss others with whom to share ideas and problems.

186. Management of the subject is good. Monitoring of students' progress is thorough and adjustments are made to the teaching of lessons in the light of information gained. The department is also responsive to the needs of the individual, tailoring programmes which are germane to later studies, such as statistics, rather than mechanics for someone hoping to enter medicine.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Students have a good grasp of concepts and make good use of prior knowledge.
- Teaching is good. Lessons involved a well planned sequence of activities.
- Relationships are very good allowing students' interactions to support learning.

- The subject is well organised with teachers sharing delivery of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results remain below average.

187. Standards of work are above average and students' achievement overall, in the light of their standards when they begin in the sixth form, is satisfactory. These standards are achieved because teaching is good. Students' good attitudes and relationships contribute well to learning in chemistry.
188. A-level examination results in 2001 continue the pattern set in earlier years, being below the national average. Those in 2002 are similar. In past years, the department operated an inclusive policy towards students wishing to follow the A-level programme so that standards on entry were average. The current Year 13 was dealt with differently and standards on entry were good.
189. Standards of work meet expectations. Students in Year 13 correctly employ standard (IUPAC) rules to name multi-substituted phenols and display good manipulative skill when undertaking an organic preparation under open reflux conditions. In one exercise there was some hesitancy in naming the different products obtained from the oxidation of primary and secondary alcohols but generally students make good use of prior knowledge when confronted with an unfamiliar situation such as the reactions of 2:4 dinitrophenylhydrazine.
190. Teaching is at least good and often very good. The advanced skills teacher provides undoubted enthusiasm as well as very good practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very good relationships with students. All lessons are thoroughly planned, offer a variety of activities related to the lesson objective and provide good opportunities for discussion, which students respond to with interest. The pace of work is brisk and the material chosen is appropriately challenging. Students' attitudes are very good; they are well motivated and display good intellectual effort.
191. Management of the subject is good. The sharing of teaching groups allows the staff to teach from their strengths. The scheme of work meets the all of the subject requirements.

BUSINESS

192. Both A-level business studies and AVCE business courses are taken. As student numbers are small both were looked at and are reported on in the section below.

Business Education

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good.
- The attitudes, concentration and independence of students in lessons are very good.
- Learning resources are very good.

Areas for improvement

- There is none that can be made in the short term. Results in 2003 should be better than those in 2002.

193. Standards of attainment when students entered the sixth form were average. The number of students taking courses is small. In 2001, nine students took A-level, one obtained an A grade and eight passed. Results were, overall, below average. Results in 2002 were better. Nine students took the examination, two obtained A and B grades and all passed, a result broadly in line with the national average. Most students attained their target grades. In 2001 an AVCE in business course was completed for the first time, but few students were involved and

comparisons cannot be made. Four students currently on the course are making good progress and achieving satisfactorily. Students use numbers and quantities routinely and their numeracy skills are good.

194. Learning is very good. In the A-level course students learn marketing, finance, people in organisations, operations management, external influence on business and objectives and strategies, well. In Year 13, in a very good lesson, students held a very effective discussion based on things they had learnt from textbooks about cash flow and working capital. In the AVCE course, students learn by developing portfolios on business at work, competition, marketing, human resources, business finance and ICT in business. Students can consider working capital, current capital and fixed assets very well. In another very good lesson, students used ICT competently to develop their portfolios for the unit on human resources, including learning about the rights of employees and contracts of employment.
195. Teaching is very good. Because there are small numbers of students in each lesson, teachers and students develop a good rapport with each other. Working relationships are very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, introduce topics well and involve students in learning by asking questions as lessons progress. They give students much useful and helpful advice in lessons, particularly when students are developing their portfolios. There is very good use of ICT to research topics on the Internet and improve the presentation of work. On the AVCE course, teachers have developed a good tracking system to ensure that students complete units on time and understand their progress. This helps to motivate students well. Teachers place good emphasis on key word and concepts.
196. The department is well led by an experienced director of business and ICT. Her colleague very ably supports her and both share a good commitment to the work. They are disappointed that the sixth form has to close. The computing facilities and other learning resources are very good. There was no report on this subject at the time of the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

197. During the inspection one lesson was seen. Four students were seen learning effectively about recovery from disasters in which computing facilities and data are destroyed. Teaching was good and as a result students responded very well.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

198. The focus was on drama. An art lesson was seen too; teaching was good and standards average. A very good lesson in media studies was also seen; standards were above average. As English teachers taught this, brief comments about it will be found in the English section too.

Drama

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

Strengths

- The quality and consistency of teaching.
- The good studio and theatre accommodation provided.

Areas for development

- There is none that can be made in the short term.

199. The number of students taking A-Level has remained low over the past four years. In 2002, only three students took the A-Level examination. Although the number was too small for meaningful

comparisons with national standards these students did well, two gaining Grade B and one Grade C. Currently, five students are preparing to take A-Level in 2003. All passed AS-level in 2002, with one B, three Cs and one D grades.

200. Drama is taught throughout the school from Year 7. It is a popular option in Years 10 and 11. In recent years 40 to 50 students have regularly taken GCSE, with results that compare very well with the national averages. In 2002, 60 per cent gained A*-C grades and in the previous year 76 per cent, a little above average. It is surprising, in the light of these good records, that so few students have chosen to take A-Level.
201. Current work indicates that good standards attained in previous A-Level examinations are being maintained. The five students in Year 13 and the four in Year 12 are keen and committed. They have sound understanding of the examination requirements and are building on the good drama skills acquired in their earlier work in the school. This term, students have been to London to see productions of both plays being studied.
202. Students in Year 12, collaborating on the interpretation and direction of a scene from *A Streetcar named Desire*, approached the task thoughtfully, improvised confidently, and evaluated their work well. In another lesson they were energetic and imaginative in portraying characters from *Animal Farm*. Year 13 work on *Macbeth* shows fluency and range in improvisation, though their reading of the Shakespeare lines is less convincing. In a telling short piece on child labour, which they had devised for their examination assessment, voice and movement were skilfully used to present people and places.
203. Drama is well managed by an experienced head of department who shares the sixth form teaching with one other drama teacher. Both are confident subject specialists who use their knowledge and enthusiasm effectively with students. Two good and two very good lessons were seen. Lessons are carefully prepared with close reference to examination specifications and there is good use of outside resources. In a very good Year 13 lesson, a crisp introduction set the tune for an animated lesson. The teachers' interventions were timely and well judged and always encouraging. In a good Year 13 lesson the teacher again gave a clear informative introduction to the task but not enough time was allowed for evaluation and the teacher moved on to the next task rather quickly.
204. Two carpeted studios and a large hall with stage provide good accommodation for drama lessons and for the regular school productions, in which sixth form students work with others from all years. Drama makes an important contribution to extra-curricular activities and to the confidence and personal development of students throughout the school.
205. Improvement since the previous report is satisfactory. Above average standards and good progress have been maintained.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

206. The focus was on English literature. A lesson of German and a lesson of French were also seen. One student follows both languages and has benefited from work experience arranged in France. Teaching and learning were very good in French and standards well above average; in German teaching and learning are good and standards above average.

English

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

Strengths

- Good departmental leadership and management.

Areas for Development

- Improvement in A-Level examination results.

207. From 1999 to 2001 there was a slight but steady increase in the number of students taking A-Level Literature from eight students in 1999 to the 15 who took the examination in 2001. Standards attained in A-Level examinations in recent years have varied, but have remained below average, though the results in 2000 came close to it. Since that year, attainment has been well below average. Twelve students took AS-level in 2002, three gaining a grade B and ten achieving a pass. Nine students are now completing A-Level in preparation for the examination in 2003.
208. The attainment of students on entry to the course is variable and not all have attained a C or above in GCSE English, the requirement in many sixth forms. It has been the policy of the department to encourage the entry of those students who are likely to enjoy and profit from the course and who can attain a pass grade, although it may not be a high one. This has been generally successful. Significantly, all nine students in the class now hope to go on to higher education.
209. Three English lessons were seen and also one in media studies, taught by an English teacher. Work on Marlowe's *Edward 11* showed that students understand the style and approach appropriate for A-Level discussion of character and motivation. Notebooks and essays include thoughtful analyses with relevant and well-presented arguments, several at B grade level. In discussion, good points are made, but sustained contributions are less frequent. In other lessons, students did not respond so readily to poetry; although there were some perceptive comments in a lesson, their understanding and enjoyment of Tennyson were limited, suggesting that different teaching styles might stimulate more interest. In contrast, some of the same students became very animated in a lively media studies discussion of stereotypes in the media.
210. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with one good and one very good lesson. In two lessons where teachers had arranged the small group in a circle for a seminar style discussion, interaction and interest were evident. In lessons where students sat in rows, they tended to be more passive, even reluctant. The best teaching struck a good balance between exposition and the encouraging of students' response and speculation. There was a sense of shared exploration, and students responded with obvious enjoyment and benefit.
211. Leadership and management are good, and the head of English and her team are keen to extend students' range and experience. While studying *King Lear* last year, students saw a very good production of the play at The Globe and were able to compare this with other performances watched on video. Despite the closing sixth form and the inadequacy of the sixth form library, the department is doing its best to maintain good standards of learning and student morale.