

INSPECTION REPORT

WOKING HIGH SCHOOL

Woking

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125270

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Turner

Reporting inspector: Mrs Gulshan Kayembe
2901

Dates of inspection: 20 to 23 January 2003

Inspection number: 252771

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Morton Road
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Surrey

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Nigel Karney

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

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8002	Lionel Farraway	Team inspector	English Drama	
30597	Robina Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1249	Joe Edge	Team inspector	Science	
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology	
10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	Citizenship Geography	
7465	Richard Brent	Team inspector	Special education needs Visual impairment unit	
4426	Terry Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
30695	Geraldine Dinan	Team inspector	Art and design	
8622	Heather Housden	Team inspector	Physical education	How good are curricular and other learning opportunities?
27662	Elizabeth Schofield	Team inspector	Religious education	
23499	Howard Seymour	Team inspector	Music	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woking High School has 1086 boys and girls on roll. It draws from a wide area of Woking and Horsell. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. The school roll has grown substantially over the last few years. The majority of students are white but about a quarter are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being Pakistani. Though a high proportion of students have English as an additional language, there are very few who are beginners in English; most are at later stages of learning but still require continued help to widen their knowledge and use of the English language. The proportion of students with special educational needs is about average though the number with a statement is relatively high. There is a special needs unit based on the school site and this has places for 12 students with visual impairment. The attainment of students on entry to the school is a little below the national average. A significant number of students have low attainment on entry and there are far fewer with high attainment than usually found in an average, comprehensive intake.

As the school is situated in an area of very high cost housing, it is not easy to recruit and retain staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school providing an effective education for its students. Standards are in line with national averages by Years 9 and 11 and students do well at the school. The good quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the progress that students make in their learning. Provision for personal development is very good so that students develop into mature, responsible and self-confident individuals. The management and leadership of the school are very good. The school caters well for a wide variety of needs though there is scope for improvement in the provision for students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Nonetheless the overall curriculum and good teaching ensure that all students are included well in a wide range of activities in lessons as well as out of lessons. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and the deputies which promotes a very positive climate for learning.
- Good teaching with much very good teaching. This enables students to make good progress.
- Very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this makes a major contribution to the very good personal development of students.
- Very good inclusion of students from all backgrounds in what the school provides and this results in very positive attitudes to school amongst students.
- Very good curricular enrichment as well as extra-curricular provision that attracts large numbers of students.
- Significant improvement since the last inspection.
- Good provision for students with visual impairment enabling them to make good progress.
- Very good opportunities for professional development. These very effectively support the continuous improvement of the school.

What could be improved

- Assessment systems and use of assessment in subjects.
- Some aspects of the provision for students with special educational needs.
- Provision by subject teachers for students with English as an additional language.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then it has made very good progress in improving standards and the quality of teaching. There has been a good trend of improvement in the results of national tests for students in Year 9. GCSE results have improved since the last inspection but not at such a good rate. The key issues from the last inspection have been very successfully tackled in the main, though the school still does not meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. ICT (information and communication technology) provision has improved markedly as has the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of systems for checking the work of the school by heads of departmental and senior staff. The school has done very well to continue to improve standards and provision despite staffing difficulties. The school's capacity to improve further is very good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	C	C	B	A

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

The results of national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above average in English and in line with national averages in mathematics and science. In all three, the results were well above the average of similar schools. GCSE results were above average overall. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C was average but the proportion gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to G was well above average, and for one or more GCSE at grades A* to G it was very high. The overall GCSE results were well above the average of similar types of schools. The school's performance is good when compared to schools locally as analysis of results shows that the school's value-added scores are above Surrey averages. In most subjects, GCSE results in 2002 were at least in line with national averages. In English and mathematics the results were in line with national averages but in science they were slightly below. Results were well above average in drama and physical education, and were above average in child development, food technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, including Urdu, and religious education but low in art and design. Girls are performing better than boys at GCSE level. The school's analysis by ethnicity shows that white British students and Pakistani students, many of whom have English as an additional language, achieve better results than expected based on their prior attainment but that the overall results of white British students are still better than those of Pakistani

students. However, results over the last three years indicate that the gap between the two groups is narrowing.

The inspection evidence broadly matches the most recent results. The overall standards at the ends of Years 9 and 11 are broadly in line with national averages. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is average by Years 9 and 11. Attainment is above average in art and design by Year 11, and in drama, history, ICT and physical education by Years 9 and 11. It is well above average in religious education by Years 9 and 11 but below average in geography and music by Year 9. In the remaining subjects, attainment is average by Years 9 and 11. Students achieve well overall though there are some variations amongst different groups. For instance, the progress made by students from minority ethnic groups is satisfactory through Years 7 to 9 but is good in Years 10 and 11 and better than that of white students. There is some underachievement amongst lower-attainers in English in Years 7 to 9. Progress made by students with special needs is variable, though overall it is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are every enthusiastic about school and keen to learn and do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in and out of lessons is good. The rate of permanent exclusion is low and fixed-term exclusions are about average.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students are mature and responsible. They show respect for one another and for their teachers and listen to others with interest. They reflect thoughtfully on views that are different from their own and are sensitive to the needs of others. Students recognise one another's achievements and applaud others' success. Relationships are very good and race relations are very successfully managed.
Attendance	Broadly average, though the rate of unauthorised absence is lower than the rate nationally. Punctuality to lessons is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and it is good in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is very good in art and design, drama, history and religious education and good in the remaining subjects with the exception of Urdu where it is satisfactory and music where teaching is unsatisfactory. Key features of teaching which contribute well to the learning of students include good planning and preparation, challenging and interesting work, brisk pace and very good relationships between students and teachers. On the few occasions when lessons are less than satisfactory, shortcomings tend to include inappropriate tasks, lack of sufficient match of work to students' needs, and ineffective classroom management leading to poor behaviour. Overall, work is reasonably well matched to students' needs though different work for students with differing needs in the same class is

not often provided. However, the generally good teaching and attention and support to individuals ensure that students learn. Where teaching is good or better, teachers ensure that all are included in the lesson through skilful management of relationships and behaviour so that students are well motivated, maintain good concentration and work hard. The teaching of numeracy and literacy is satisfactory overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are a wide range of subjects to opt for in Years 10 to 11. The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is very good as are links with the community and careers education. A good start has been made on implementing the programme for citizenship.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Specialist support is effective in meeting individual needs. The teaching by special needs staff is satisfactory. However, there is too little of it and subject teachers do not always meet students' needs in lessons as well as they could. The provision for students with visual impairment is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Support and teaching from specialist staff is good. However, there is much variability amongst subject teachers in the extent to which they provide work and resources to meet the English language learning needs of students, especially of those at the later stages of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. It is very good for spiritual and social development and good for moral and cultural development. Assemblies are of good quality. However, subjects could contribute more to moral development and to students' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for child protection and ensuring the health and safety of students. There are very good procedures for monitoring and encouraging good behaviour and attendance. However, assessment procedures and use of assessment to support learning and inform planning are underdeveloped.

The school has set up a very good partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The core leadership team, consisting of the headteacher and two deputies, provides outstanding leadership and creates an atmosphere where staff feel well supported and where they can perform to their best. New and trainee teachers flourish and middle managers are nurtured so that they quickly become effective leaders and managers of their own areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are actively involved and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They make a very good contribution to the work of the school and are astute in their questioning of staff.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The monitoring and evaluation work of the senior staff is very good and makes a positive contribution to the improvement of educational standards such as teaching. Self-evaluation is well developed at this level. However, not all middle managers check the quality of work in their areas as rigorously as they could.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Educational priorities are very well supported by finance. Spending is well monitored. The school pays good attention to the principles of best value. Overall adequacy of staffing and accommodation is satisfactory. The school is well resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The school expects students to work hard so they make good progress • The extra-curricular provision is good • There is a positive ethos which helps students become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed • They feel comfortable about asking questions and raising concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Behaviour of a minority of students

The overall views of parents are very positive. The areas of concern expressed by parents were few. The concerns about behaviour are not substantiated by the evidence of inspection, which indicates that behaviour overall is good. Inspection evidence does, however, confirm that there is some inconsistency between teachers in the amount and quality of homework set. Homework timetables are not always followed and this occasionally causes problems for students in managing their time.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results of a variety of tests, national and local, indicate that attainment on entry to the school is a little below the national average and distinctly below the average of local authority schools in Surrey. There are more students who are average or low-attainers than is the case nationally and fewer with high or very high attainment. In the main, boys and students of Pakistani origin have lower attainment on entry than do girls and white students.
2. Students make good progress over time so that when they take national tests in English, mathematics and science towards the end of Year 9, results are good given their prior attainment. In 2002, students' overall performance in these tests was above the national average. It was above average in English and in line with national averages in mathematics and science. The 2002 results were well above the average of similar schools. There has been a good trend of improvement in the results of national tests and this is better than the trend nationally.
3. Analysis of results of national tests taken at the end of Year 9 indicate that there are fluctuating differences between boys and girls in English and mathematics. However, whilst there is no distinct pattern in mathematics, in English the girls have done much better than boys in the last two years (2001 and 2002) when the gap between the results of boys and girls has been wider than the gap nationally. In science, girls' results have improved over time so that they have gone from being lower than those of boys to being in line with the results of boys.
4. Analysis of the results of national tests for Year 9 students also show differences in the performance of white British students and those of Pakistani origin. The performance of Pakistani students is lower than that of white students. Results for 2001 and 2002 show that Pakistani students are performing better in English and mathematics than in science and that they made better than expected progress in both subjects between Years 7 and 9. However, their progress was less than expected in science. In addition, the gap between the results of Pakistani students and white British students is narrowing in all three subjects.
5. Students' performance in GCSE examinations in 2002 was above the national average. The proportion of students who gained five or more GCSEs at grades in the A* to G range was well above the national average and the proportion gaining at least one GCSE in the range of grades A* to G was very high. Though the proportion of students who gained five or more GCSEs at grades in the A* to C range was only in line with national averages, students' performance was good given their starting points. There has been good improvement in the proportions of students gaining one or more, or five or more, GCSEs at grades in the A* to G range and steady improvement in the proportion gaining five or more GCSEs at grades ranging between A* and C. Overall, results were well above the average of similar schools. GCSE results have improved since the last inspection though the trend in improvement over the last five years has been below the trend nationally. This partly reflects variations and changes in the attainment on entry but is also in part due to difficulties in recruiting staff, particularly in subjects such as science and design and technology. In science, inappropriate curricular provision also had a significant and negative impact on examination results.

These issues have been tackled effectively with the result that standards in science observed during the inspection were much better.

6. The gap in GCSE results between boys and girls is becoming wider, with girls performing much better than boys. However, the gap between students of Pakistani origin and white students is narrowing. Though the overall results of white students are better, Pakistani students are achieving well given their prior attainment and have made good progress.
7. In 2002, GCSE results in almost all subjects were in line with national averages. In drama and physical education, results were well above average, and in child development, food technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, including Urdu, and religious education they were above average. Science results were a little below average. Results in art and design were significantly below average. GCSE results in English and mathematics were in line with national averages. In the GNVQ intermediate course in leisure and tourism, results were good. GNVQ courses in ICT and science have been introduced in the last couple of years and the first group will complete the course at the end of this academic year. Progress in lessons is good in both subjects, after a weak start for current Year 11 students in the science GNVQ last academic year.
8. Inspection evidence largely reflects the results of 2002 in national tests and at GCSE, though in art and design, the attainment of students by Year 11 is now much better than the 2002 GCSE results. Improved staffing and curricular provision in science has led to improvements in standards of work which are now in line with national standards by Year 11. They are also in line with the national average by Year 9. Current attainment in English and mathematics is in line with national averages by Years 9 and 11.
9. In English, students' speaking and listening skills are good and are a strength. Reading standards are satisfactory by Year 9 and good by Year 11. Though writing is in line with expectations by the end of Year 11, by Year 9, standards of written work are a little below average. Students make good progress in Years 7 to 9 in English but there is some underachievement of low-attainers because there is not enough focus on the development of wider vocabulary and basic writing skills. Average and high-attainers, in contrast, often make very good progress in English. Though students' progress in English in Years 10 to 11 continues to be largely good, it is not quite as good as in the lower school. This is mainly because insufficiently well-developed writing skills hold back the progress of lower-attainers. In mathematics, students have sound skills in number work and carry out mental calculations effectively. Their skills in investigative work are successfully developed. In science, students have a sound grasp of scientific ideas and their practical skills are effectively developed. Students make good progress in mathematics and science throughout the school. Examination of written work in mathematics indicates that progress in Year 10 is very good. Students make satisfactory use of literacy and numeracy in subjects across the curriculum.
10. Standards of work are average in most subjects and key stages. However, they are above average in art and design, which is a significant improvement on the 2002 results due at least in part to improved motivation of boys and the attention given by the school to addressing the weaknesses in students' work. Effective teaching and good curricular provision have resulted in standards also being above average in history and modern foreign languages by Year 11. Students make good, often very good, progress in drama, ICT and physical education and standards are above average in these subjects by Years 9 and 11. Inspirational teaching and very good overall provision in religious education result in well above average standards by Years 9 and 11. In geography, attainment is slightly below average by Year 9, partly as a result insufficient attention to

development of enquiry skills and opportunities for extended writing. Nonetheless, the progress made by students through Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory in geography, though it could be better. Though students reach average standards in music by Year 11, the standards of work are below average by Year 9 because students do not make sufficient progress. This is a result of weaknesses in teaching and curriculum. Students make good progress in most other subjects in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11. Very good progress is made in art and design, history, and religious education.

11. Students from minority ethnic groups tend to make satisfactory, often good, progress in Years 7 to 9 and good, sometimes very good, progress in Years 10 to 11. Most are of Pakistani origin and have English as an additional language.
12. Students with English as an additional language who are at the early stages of learning English (ie stages 1 and 2) make good progress and develop well their skills in the English language. This is because they are given good support from the specialist teacher. Those who are at later stages of learning English (principally the majority with English as an additional language and who are at stage 3) make more variable progress and this is reflected in the overall lower attainment of Pakistani students in national tests at the end of Year 9. Whilst these students are reasonably fluent in everyday uses of English, they are often in need of greater support for developing technical vocabulary and the use of academic English required in examination courses. The increased attention to the development of literacy across the curriculum helps these students, especially in Years 7 to 9, and the overall good and often very good teaching influences positively the progress that these later stage learners of English make. However, their progress is not as consistently good as it could be because their needs are not routinely planned for in all lessons. Students who are at stage 4 of learning English make very good progress and reach above average standards of work.
13. The school uses information satisfactorily from primary schools and its own tests to identify students with special educational needs and to set targets for them, including in statements. However, these tend to be literacy based and do not always cover the full range of additional needs. Students with special educational needs achieve well as a result mainly of good teaching and appropriate curricular arrangements, particularly in Years 10 to 11. Analyses carried out by the school of GCSE results show that overall good progress is made by most students with special educational needs. However, the quality of match of work to these students' needs is variable overall and this restricts achievement on a broader front, particularly for those with more complex needs. Students with visual impairment make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The attitudes of the very large majority of students to their learning have improved since the time of the last inspection and are very good. They are a strength of the school and have a significant impact on how well students learn. Students are proud of their school, they like their teachers and value the wide range of activities outside of lessons that are provided for them. Evidence during inspection confirms the views of the large majority of parents that their children like coming to school, are keen to learn and respond to their work with high levels of interest, enjoyment and enthusiasm. They respond to opportunities for discussion with confidence and are often sufficiently engaged with their work to ask penetrating questions that extend learning well. This is particularly so where lessons are planned to ensure that their individual needs for challenge and achievement are met. Students value the support given by their teachers through academic tutoring and with revision. Most students focus well on tasks set, persisting independently until they are complete. They ask for help only when it is really

needed and this effectively supports their development as independent learners. A few, usually boys, are less well motivated to work and this has an adverse impact on how well they learn. Homework set is usually recorded with care and completed effectively. Students' ability to research independently grows as they move up through the school in response to the high expectations of teachers. Most are confident in their use of computers for information retrieval and in Years 10 and 11 they take full advantage of the generous access they have to modern technology.

15. The response of students to the high expectations for their behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good overall and contributes effectively to how well they learn. Some parents expressed concern that on occasions lessons are disrupted because of poor behaviour. During the week of the inspection, although a few boys were observed to behave in an immature fashion, this was usually managed well by their teachers and only rarely slowed learning for others. During the last school year, there were 50 fixed-term and 2 permanent exclusions, mostly involving boys. The number of exclusions for the current year to date is broadly similar. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups that is excluded is broadly in line with their representation in the school as a whole. Some students do not respond suitably to the strategies used to improve their behaviour and this results in being excluded more than once. However, many return from exclusion and settle back in well as a result of the support and encouragement they receive. During break and lunchtimes students usually behave well; they move around the site sensibly, although there is sometimes thoughtless rushing on stairs. They behave very sensibly in the dining room and, despite the large numbers using these facilities at the same time, there is a cheerful sense of community and students socialise well. Students are courteous to staff on duty at lunchtime and clear up after themselves when they have finished. School premises and the materials and equipment used for lessons are treated with suitable respect. Both parents and students agree that there is little bullying. When it occurs the school deals with it quickly and effectively.
16. Relationships and students' response to the opportunities provided for their personal development have improved since the time of the last inspection and are very good. They feature as a strength of the school and contribute significantly to the positive learning environment in which students grow in maturity as they move through the years. Students like and respect their teachers and are in no doubt of this being mutual. It results in them being confident to share concerns and seek help where they need to. Those interviewed during inspection were clear that their teachers featured in what they liked most about their school. Students usually show high levels of respect and good will towards each other and this leads to an environment in which they are able to express opinions, ask questions and make suggestions without fear of ridicule. Students from the various groups that make up the school community invariably get on well together. Incidents of a racial nature, such as name calling, although few, are dealt with effectively by staff. Those from the visually impaired unit at the school spend much of their time within the mainstream school and very effectively integrated. Students are able to work well together, collaborating suitably where needed. Those involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme grow in personal maturity and responsibility. There is an increasing awareness of the needs of others, both locally and globally, through the work done in raising funds for charity and the choices about this that students are asked to consider. Year 11 prefects are respected by their peers and show high levels of maturity and responsibility in carrying out their duties. Students value their school council and the opportunity they have through it to make their views known and achieve change. The international links developed by the school and opportunities provided for residential experiences result in a steady growth in personal independence and effective social skills.

17. Levels of attendance are satisfactory overall at 91.7 per cent for the last school year. Although this is a small drop since the time of the last inspection when the level was 92 per cent, it is against the trend across schools nationally that has been for levels to rise. For the current year to date attendance is again 92 per cent. There is no individual year group where it falls below 90 per cent, and where this occurs in individual tutor groups it relates to students who persistently refuse to attend, long-term sickness and some parentally condoned absence. Some parents arrange family holidays during the school term and this has an adverse impact on levels overall. The school works well with the educational welfare officer (EWO) where needed to follow up unexplained absence. Unauthorised absence is below the national median at 0.3 per cent. Although a few students are regularly late at the beginning of the day and others are affected by the punctuality of public transport, the school day usually starts punctually and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The overall quality of teaching is good and it is better in Years 10 to 11 than in Years 7 to 9 though good in both cases. A high proportion of teaching is very good or excellent. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics and science. It is very good in art and design, drama, history and religious education. Teaching is good in the remaining subjects with the exception of music, where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, and Urdu where it is satisfactory. In almost all subjects, there are examples of very good or excellent teaching. In a small proportion of lessons the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Overall, there has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
19. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to help students understand key ideas and to promote relevant subject skills. In mathematics, for example, teachers are skilled in explaining new concepts such as the relationship between graphs and equations. In modern foreign languages, good use of the foreign language in lessons effectively promotes students' speaking and listening skills. Subject knowledge is also used well to plan and structure lesson content systematically so that there is planned, progressive learning for students. Overall, lessons are carefully planned and prepared, and clear learning outcomes are identified. These are usually shared with students so that they know what they are expected to learn. In most lessons there is good variety in the range of methods used so that students are kept interested in the work and are usually actively involved in their own learning. There are frequent opportunities for discussion, especially in subjects such as English, history and religious education. Students engage in these with enthusiasm and learn well through articulating ideas and views and debating them with others. In science, a wide range of activities are used to maintain momentum and spark students' enthusiasm. The variety of activities benefits students of all backgrounds as it provides for a wide range of learning styles.
20. Teachers' high expectations are well communicated to students in the majority of lessons and, as a result, students rise well to the challenges presented to them and work hard. Occasionally, in ICT and religious education, able students are not stretched enough and in mathematics the work given to students in different sets does not always challenge sufficiently the most able within that set. Pace is often brisk, and very good in lessons where teaching is very good or better. Consequently, much ground is covered in individual lessons and the overall pace of students' learning is good. Satisfactory attention is given to the development of literacy and numeracy in subjects across the curriculum. Whilst there are some good examples of development of technical

vocabulary, such as in science, there are also missed opportunities. For example, there is too much copying in geography and too few opportunities for extended writing.

21. Where lessons are unsatisfactory, or in some cases where they are no more than satisfactory, common weaknesses tend to be lack of sufficient challenge, pace and variety resulting in insufficient engagement of students. For example, in some modern foreign language lessons teachers do not do enough to address the passivity of students. Very occasionally, behaviour management skills are not well enough developed to ensure that there is an effective learning environment and lessons are disrupted. In some cases, as in some English lessons, methods and content are inappropriate for the needs of the group.
22. Marking is usually regular and often rigorous. However, in some subjects, such as science, there is insufficient feedback to students in marked work of how they could improve. Homework is regularly provided by most teachers, though in some cases it is not set often enough.
23. Though teachers rarely provide different work to students with differing needs in the same class, the generally good teaching, clear explanations, sound attention to the use of literacy and numeracy in subjects and careful individual support ensure that all students learn and make largely good progress. The very good relationships that teachers have established with students help to ensure a calm and effective learning environment. These factors further help all students to maintain a good focus on their work, to remain on task and to ask for help when they need it. In other words, the school has created a very good learning environment where all are included in the learning process. However, some fine-tuning of work provided and support for specific groups of students, such as those at the later stages of learning English, is needed to maximise their learning.
24. Students at the early stages of learning English are well taught because they receive good support from the specialist teacher. They are sometimes taught separately from others and again the teaching they receive in these instances is good. Hence early-stage English language learners make good progress. Teaching by subject teachers, especially for those at the later stages as they do not receive individual or other forms of support, is more variable. Subject teachers are not routinely planning for the needs of students learning English. There is not always enough focus on extending vocabulary, particularly technical and subject specific vocabulary, and modelling more complex uses of the English language. Hence, learners, especially later stage learners, often appear to be learning and understanding, but when it comes to applying new learning or explaining technical terms they are not always successful.
25. The quality of teaching for students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. There is satisfactory liaison between teachers and assistants but more could be done to strengthen the links between subject departments and special educational needs in the areas of closer matching of work to needs and schemes of work. Teaching seen of students with specialist staff was particularly good in science and mathematics lessons where the teachers had good experience of teaching students with special educational needs. They took close account of the students' learning difficulties and established a very good atmosphere within which they could work. Across the school, however, a minority of staff have difficulty in tailoring the work and learning materials to the needs of those with learning difficulties and this hinders their achievement.

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

26. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and the range and quality of curriculum opportunities for students are good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the vast majority of students effectively. Strong features include the international curriculum initiative and the flexibility of option choice subjects in Years 10 and 11. Whilst the curricular provision for ICT has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now largely good, some weaknesses remain. Overall arrangements mostly meet statutory requirements, but the use of ICT is underdeveloped in art and design, modern foreign languages and music. The flexibility of curricular arrangements and the open access to all curricular activities ensure that different groups of students and varied needs are well met by what is on offer. Where the school now needs to focus attention is in fine-tuning schemes of work to match the needs of different groups, in particular those with special educational needs and those who are at the later stages of learning English. Further planned developments for curricular provision largely centre on the school achieving success in its bid for Technology College status.
27. Curriculum provision Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Students study the National Curriculum as well as personal, social and health education and citizenship in extended tutor time. The curriculum is enhanced by the literacy hour in Year 7, drama from Year 8, and the opportunity to study two modern foreign languages from Year 9, increasing the range of languages offered to four: French, German, Italian and Urdu. The opportunity to study Latin is also provided to able students. ICT is taught in discrete lessons. Organisational arrangements, including the provision for the visually impaired and gifted and talented students, enable most students to be provided for effectively. There is a fast track group for the ablest students in Years 7 and 8. All departments contribute to the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills, although implementation is patchy. The numeracy strategy is satisfactory overall, but not well embedded in all subject areas. The effectiveness of the literacy strategy is also satisfactory overall.
28. Curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11 is good. Many departments offer a range of courses, which are well suited to the needs of the full range of abilities, and almost all students obtain their first choice option subjects. Apart from the core subjects, an extensive range of full GCSE subjects are offered which include, graphics, food, textiles, drama, child development and up to two modern foreign languages. In addition, short courses run in ICT, religious education and physical education. There is good provision for those who are not suited to an academic curriculum with college link courses and alternative accreditation through the Life Skills course. In addition, a number of GNVQ courses have been introduced: science, leisure and tourism and ICT. The school has a flexible approach to the timetable and curriculum in order to support students with special requirements. For example, three students are taking GCSE music during independent study time, which arises because students who take a full course in ICT, physical education or religious education have no timetabled lessons when the rest are taking short courses in ICT and religious education or recreational physical education. Students with special educational needs have additional support with literacy during independent study time.
29. There is satisfactory provision for students with special educational needs. Individual education plans are prepared appropriately, although there is sometimes an excessive emphasis on literacy targets at the expense of, for example, behavioural or numeracy objectives. There are sound arrangements for using these individual plans to help to

ensure that that individual needs are met whilst giving students full access to the curriculum. However, the formal and informal monitoring of individual educational plans, and their associated targets, is not regular or stringent enough. The provision in statements is implemented satisfactorily. Overall, given the numbers of students with special educational needs, the school's curricular response (such as arrangements for grouping students by prior attainment and the flexible curricular provision for students after Year 9) is good. As a result, few are dissatisfied with what they are learning and students are therefore motivated to behave well and achieve well. Provision for students with visual impairment is good. They are very effectively integrated into mainstream lessons for most of the time.

30. The overall provision for students with English as an additional language is satisfactory but there are some areas of weakness. There is little adjustment to the curriculum by subject departments to meet the needs of later-stage learners to ensure that they are acquiring and coping effectively with new vocabulary or increasingly complex forms of English language as they move up the school. Provision for early-stage learners is largely good and good use is made of one-to-one or small group sessions to support English language learning.
31. Provision for curricular enrichment and extra-curricular activities is very good. There is an extensive programme of clubs, lunchtime and after-school activities such as those through art, music and sport. Competitive sport is also provided for students with visual impairment. During the inspection period, over 100 activities were provided. Examples of these include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, school play rehearsals and an excellent dance band which performed one lunchtime during the week of inspection. In addition, the school offers a range of other support including technology, homework and learning support clubs. Gifted and talented students are provided for with clubs such as Master Classes in mathematics. A good range of trips and visits, including foreign exchanges, enhances extra-curricular provision.
32. There is insufficient curriculum time allocated for the teaching of personal and social education and citizenship though the school ensures that there is adequate provision for sex, drugs and health education. Whilst there have been good developments in provision for citizenship and there is a weekly extended tutorial where it is taught, not enough work has been done to identify and include the contribution of other subjects to the development of citizenship.
33. The school's links with the community are very good as it is active in developing such links. These are beneficial in both directions. A range of activities such as the Mayor's Appeal gives students opportunities for service and fund raising for others, whilst initiatives like Business Mentors bring valuable support from the world of work. This is particularly relevant to Year 11 students. The school's outreach in such ways is a valuable aspect of the wider educational provision.
34. The school sets high priority on the inclusion of all students, irrespective of ethnic origin, visual impairment or special needs in all that it provides. It monitors attendance, performance and participation of groups of students effectively and takes remedial action when any appear to be disadvantaged. For example, more Asian girls participate in extra-curricular activities as a result of measures taken.
35. The school has made good progress on the curricular issues identified at the last inspection. Apart from significant improvements to the curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11, ICT provision now meets statutory requirements and setting arrangements have improved in Year 9. Boys and girls are now taught together in both higher and

lower attaining sets. Although adequate provision is made for the more able students in many subjects, they are currently insufficiently challenged in geography and design and technology.

36. This is a caring school that places great emphasis on the personal development of its students. Overall, the schools provision for the personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is very good. It is a strong feature of the school and is consistent with the school ethos based on trust, tolerance, mutual respect and positive relationships where students can flourish. Although the school promotes personal development successfully in all aspects of school life, there is no school policy, as at the last inspection.
37. Provision for the spiritual development is very good, overall. There has been a noteworthy improvement in assemblies since the last inspection when this was an area for development. Although there is no daily act of collective worship, there is a weekly one for each year group. Assemblies are of a very high standard, with an excellent balance of music, speech and silence and make a major and effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students. During the inspection, 'Appreciating life' was the theme for the week for assemblies and tutorials. In assemblies observed, students entered to a visual focus (using Powerpoint) featuring school events such as the Year 9 Japan day, while the world famous wind band played. The theme was developed, with appropriate links to Christian and Muslim values, to show the shallowness of materialism. This contributed significantly to the spiritual dimension of students and their moral development, by actively encouraging reflection on the question: 'Of what value is something that can be stolen by a thief?'
38. Provision is excellent in religious education and good in almost all other subjects. In a science lesson observed, students gasped in amazement at the impact of dry ice on liquids. There are good opportunities for reflection in many religious education lessons, for example, when considering values and beliefs and the weekly Christian Union meeting contributes to students' spiritual development. Music develops a sense of personal fulfillment and 'up-lift' through the experience of performance. During the inspection, the school dance band gave a wonderful, moving performance, appreciated by students and staff alike whilst they dined.
39. Overall, the provision for students' moral development is good. There is a school code of conduct which makes expectations clear, encouraging self-discipline and acting responsibly towards others. Some departments, notably religious education, have their own code of conduct, including sanctions and rewards. Teachers give a strong lead in encouraging good interpersonal relationships and in distinguishing right from wrong. Good opportunities to discuss moral issues occur in a range of subjects, such as the study of environmental issues in science and geography. In many religious education and citizenship lessons, there are opportunities for students to debate moral and social issues. In addition, activities such as the visit to the battlefields of the First World War heighten students' awareness and understanding of moral issues. However, on occasion opportunities are missed, as in a Year 9 history lesson where the chance to explore the moral issue surrounding the use of gas in the First World War was overlooked. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with English as an additional language or special educational needs and students from the visually impaired unit, are fully involved in all aspects of the work of the school. Students contribute extensively to local, national and international charities.
40. The provision for students' social development is very good. Social issues are very well addressed in the programme of personal, social and health education, including those

relating to citizenship, human rights, politics, the environment and parenting. Responsibility is encouraged very effectively through opportunities to become a school or year council representative, to raise funds for charity, to act as receptionists and librarians, to be part of the prefect system in Year 11, to take sports leaders awards in Year 10, to join the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and take up membership of music groups, for example the school wind and dance bands. Students in Years 10 and 11 are given further good opportunities for taking responsibility by assisting at New Intake and Induction Days and through Year 11 students organising their own ball.

41. There are many very good opportunities for students to develop their social skills, both through discussion and collaborative work in lessons and through the extensive extra-curricular activities, visits and residential trips. Team fixtures and theatrical and musical productions help students to learn to work together in larger groups, as does the school council. Participation levels are high; for example, over 120 teams exist for boys and girls, with 56 per cent of students participating regularly in team games.
42. Provision for cultural development is good. The cultural diversity of the school is celebrated and a strong sense of respect and value for others' traditions and beliefs is engendered. The school actively promotes students' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures. Good racial harmony is a feature of the school. Cultural development is supported particularly well by subjects such as religious education, music, art and design, physical education, textiles, modern foreign languages, science, ICT and English. For example, in art and design, students study a wide range of artistic styles, including Aboriginal art of Australia. A range of religious festivals is celebrated and many places of worship visited. The school has invited the local Imam to visit and work with the school. The school promotes cultural understanding by allowing individual year groups to choose a continent and then a continent-specific charity to support with their fund raising. There is a school policy on internationalism and the school commitment to the importance of the global dimension culminated in the British Council International School Award Status in 2002. Only 41 secondary schools in England and Wales have achieved this level of award with Woking High School being the first one in Surrey. There are many school trips and exchanges, such as those to link schools in Italy, Spain, France and Germany. The music department makes a key contribution to the cultural development of students through a wide range of extra-curricular activities involving many students. In the annual music tours, students have visited and performed in Holland, Germany, Luxembourg, USA, Belgium, Italy and Spain. A group of Year 11 students visited Berlin for the International Debate Competition. Whilst students develop a sound overall understanding of the range of cultures in modern British society, more could still be done in subjects to focus in more depth on the cultural diversity of Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

43. The school makes good provision overall for the health, safety and welfare of its students. Students usually like their teachers and high levels of mutual respect ensure they are confident that concerns about any aspect of their lives can be discussed and resolved. This together with a well-planned introduction to the school before they start in Year 7 ensures they get off to a good start. There is a designated person with responsibility for child protection and effective information in the staff handbook on procedures to be followed in the event of there being a concern. Form tutors and year co-ordinators know the individual students in their care well and this supports them in monitoring their welfare. The school liaises very effectively with support services when needed and ensures that members of staff are suitably briefed on a 'need to know' basis. Although child protection procedures are included in the induction of new

teachers and at briefings at the beginning of the school year, this has not yet been extended to all staff. The school works closely with its educational welfare officer who effectively follows up concerns there have been difficulty in resolving.

44. Although suitable attention is given to health and safety in lessons seen, not all subjects have developed formal risk assessment procedures as required, for example physical education. In science, staff have good levels of awareness and meet health and safety requirements well. Risk assessment for the use of the premises by students is informal and requires further work before it matches fully the needs of the school. There are suitable arrangements for the regular testing of equipment and appliances used in school. Procedures for promoting high standards for the care of students going on trips and visits outside school are thorough. Arrangements to deal with first-aid emergencies and prescribed medicines are effective, although there is no medical room. Evacuation procedures are practised with sufficient frequency to ensure that staff and students are aware of what they should do in the event of an emergency.
45. Arrangements to promote high standards of attendance are very good and have successfully helped some students with poor levels of attendance. The school works very well with its education welfare officer to raise standards both of attendance and punctuality. It has also attracted funding for additional social workers, a youth worker and support for parents in dealing with children who refuse to attend. Form tutors and year co-ordinators monitor the attendance of individual students very well, they identify patterns of absence and where students have registered at the beginning of the day and are subsequently absent. Registration procedures are generally effective in ensuring the school has suitable records of those present, however, students who fail to sign in when they arrive after registration do not always help this. Lists of those absent at registration without explanation are produced for form tutors early in the day and, where there are concerns, the school telephones parents that morning. The school co-operates fully with a local initiative to reduce levels of truancy. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's attendance and asked for explanations where these are needed. Where absence has an adverse impact on learning parents are made aware of this in the reports they receive about their children's progress. The school analyses the data held on attendance to identify patterns of absence amongst both individuals and groups and takes action where possible to deal with identified problems. Despite these very good procedures, the school has not been successful in raising standards of attendance in line with improvements seen elsewhere.
46. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and promoting high standards are very good. The high expectations are communicated well to students and the code of conduct is displayed prominently in the school. There are clearly expressed procedures for staff in dealing with discipline problems, these are usually followed consistently and result in high standards overall. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 value the awards system and the letters received by their parents about their achievements. In subsequent years there is less enthusiasm for awards; however, the very positive relationships that students have with staff at the school result in most valuing their good opinion and striving to merit it. Strategies to manage students in lessons are usually used well and almost always effective in dealing with problems. The school receives support through a locally funded project to help students who are at risk of permanent exclusion. This is helpful in raising the self-esteem of some students and there are well-planned strategies to develop this project further through opportunities for taking responsibility; for example, training as mentors. Procedures for dealing with exclusion are in line with requirements and the school seeks to involve parents fully in finding a way through the difficulties that their children are experiencing. Procedures for dealing with the few cases of bullying are effective and those involved are subsequently monitored with care. The school takes

very seriously occasional incidents of a racial nature, for example name-calling, whether these take place in school or out, and deals with them suitably. At present there is no system in place for reporting these incidents to the local authority.

47. Arrangements for the personal guidance of students are good and are satisfactory overall for their academic guidance. Pastoral care is strong through the tutor system and is overseen effectively by year co-ordinators. There are high expectations for older students to lead by example and to be mindful of their responsibility to those younger than themselves. As they move through the school, there are increasing expectations for students to take responsibility, for example by helping with administrative tasks, taking responsibility for aspects of running the library at lunch times and as prefects. The school actively seeks to ensure that all students are able to take advantage of the broad range of activities planned outside the timetable, for example the many foreign residential visits made. This has involved ensuring that financial aspects are dealt with effectively and also addressing the concerns of some parents, that their cultural and religious traditions are observed. The school promotes healthy eating well, both in lessons and within its own dining arrangements. These also cater for students with a range of dietary requirements, either religious or through preference. The school nurse is regularly in school and available to students on a 'drop in' basis where needed. Students value the access they have to a careers officer for individual advice twice each week at lunchtimes. Opportunities for them to make their views known through the school council are valued, particularly since they are able to identify action taken as a result, for example improvements to school dining facilities.
48. The guidance and support given to students in their lessons is usually good. The school has identified various groups of students that need additional support and this has resulted in a range of strategies to meet their needs. These include, for example, booster classes for those falling behind with their work, targeted students receiving additional help in English, fast track groups and a mentoring scheme to support students identified as needing help to achieve their full potential. The various opportunities provided for students to revise prior to testing in Year 9 and GCSE examinations in Year 11 are valued. In some cases these strategies are very innovative, for example, in history revision sessions have been made available on the internet. Students do not always have a clear understanding of their own learning in relation to National Curriculum levels, although this is better in the core subjects.
49. The policy that guides procedures for assessing students and the progress they make has not been reviewed since the time of the last inspection and does not reflect current practice. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, the use made of information available is not and in some subjects assessment procedures are underdeveloped. There is considerable variation between subjects. Assessment is most effective in history, science, religious education, modern foreign languages and art. In these subjects it is usually regular and accurate with moderation to ensure consistency between the various staff involved. Where it is used effectively it is linked to National Curriculum levels, enables students to be placed in the right sets and supports teachers in planning lessons effectively to ensure all students are given suitable work. The school has a very effective database for assessment information that is regularly updated. There is a growing use of this by some departments to access information about both individuals and groups of students. The process of academic tutoring provides good opportunities for progress to be reviewed, initially between students and their subject teachers, and subsequently at a joint meeting that includes students, parents and form tutors. As at the time of the last inspection, targets that are set at these meetings, together with those suggested in the reports written

annually for parents, are not always sufficiently specific to be of real help in identifying for students and their parents how standards can be improved.

50. There is satisfactory liaison with outside agencies with respect to students with special educational needs and the school complies fully with the revised code of practice. Statements are up-to-date and the arrangements for ensuring that annual reviews are effective are satisfactory. Key staff are aware of the requirements of statements. Overall, identification, assessment, monitoring and accompanying review and target setting arrangements are unsatisfactory: they are neither sufficiently robust nor linked effectively to the whole-school assessment system. As a result, they are not detailed enough for those students with more complex needs. The effect of this is to make it more difficult both to measure progress and to plan the next stage of learning.
51. The home-school liaison officer provides very good care to Pakistani students and those amongst them with English as an additional language. There are weaknesses in assessment which result in some students with English as an additional language being mistakenly identified with special educational needs. There are new procedures to reduce the risk of this happening but they are not yet fully understood by key staff within the school, they have not been implemented and so have not yet had any impact.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The large majority of parents are very pleased with what the school provides and achieves, and inspection evidence confirms their positive views. They say their children enjoy coming to school, they are expected to work hard and that they make good progress. Parents particularly value the broad range of good quality activities provided outside lessons and the commitment of those members of staff who take the time to provide these. Overall, they have only few concerns. Some say that, on occasion, the behaviour of a few students disrupts their children's learning. During the week of inspection there was little evidence of this and behaviour overall was good. In the handful of lessons where a few boys displayed immature behaviour it was usually managed well and only rarely slowed learning overall for others. Some parents are not satisfied with the homework provided for their children. Inspectors agree that there is some inconsistency between teachers in the amount and quality of homework set. Homework timetables are not always followed and this occasionally causes problems for students in managing their time.
53. The effectiveness of the partnership which the school has developed with parents is very good and has improved since the time of the last inspection. Parents feel welcome in the school. They are encouraged to share concerns and say that these are usually dealt with very well. Parents of children transferring from primary school have good opportunities to become familiar with the school and their children's teachers before they start in Year 7. The prospectus, together with the report governors' produce annually, informs them effectively about routines, expectations and the school's performance. A lively and interesting newsletter keeps parents up to date with school news and events, and ensures they are reminded about key dates for their diaries. There is a 'drop in' clinic each month where parents may call in to see senior staff without first making an appointment. This is used effectively to raise and resolve concerns where needed. The school has actively sought to involve the parents of students from homes where English is not the first language by translating key documents, providing interpretation services where needed and through the support of a family liaison worker to resolve anxieties and misunderstandings that develop because of cultural differences. This has successfully increased the number of parents who come into the school to discuss their children's progress and also the levels of participation by their children in activities planned outside lessons. The school seeks to involve parents at an early stage in finding a way forward when any aspect of their children's lives at school causes concern. They are also routinely informed by a letter home, when there is occasion to celebrate achievements. There is a useful booklet that provides good information to parents of children in Year 9 about the decisions that need to be made for study in Years 10 and 11. In addition the school holds useful information events where needed, for example about study skills, National Records of Achievement and end-of-key stage testing. Form tutors check students' home/school books regularly and this supports a two-way flow of information well.
54. Parents are appreciative of the generous opportunities provided for them to meet with form tutors and subject teachers to discuss their children's progress. In addition to consultation about end-of-year progress reports there are two formal academic tutoring interviews. Levels of attendance are very high, particularly for academic tutoring when parents and their children are invited to review progress and agree future targets. These interviews are very popular and valued, although some parents find that written information about the standards their children have achieved is not presented in a sufficiently accessible manner for them to understand without explanation. Annual progress reports provide good information about attendance, attitudes to learning and

students' personal development. Specific information about what they know, understand and can do, with an evaluation of how this has improved over time, is less effectively communicated. Targets are set at the interviews students have with their subject teachers, the academic reviews and in progress reports and these are usually communicated to parents in annual reports and home/school diaries. These targets not, however, always sufficiently specific to ensure parents know what their children must do to improve their work, for example 'to continue to listen and act upon advice,' or 'maintain excellent progress'. This limits opportunities for parents to support the work of the school at home. Results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 are effectively communicated to parents, together with information that ensures they understand how well their children are doing in relation to expectations for their age.

55. The involvement of parents with the school has a good impact on students' learning. Most show high levels of interest in how well their children are doing and attend with alacrity meetings arranged for them to discuss this. The parent and teacher association is run by a small but very dedicated and enthusiastic group of parents and, although the social and fund raising events they run are not always supported well by all parents, they nevertheless contribute positively to learning with the monies raised. Parents respond suitably where their views are sought and help willingly where their support is needed, for example in invigilating for some tests and on the various trips and visits students make out of school. They have also given good support for the school in producing resources in Braille for the Visually Impaired Unit.
56. Parents of students with special educational needs are encouraged to co-operate in reviews of progress and are encouraged to help with their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher and two deputies, who make up the core leadership team, provide outstanding leadership. There is a very clear and coherent vision for the future development of the school. This is exceptionally well shared with all staff and governors, leading to a very good understanding of common aims and each person's role in achieving these. The school improvement plan encapsulates precisely and very appropriately the key priorities for development and hence articulates the direction for further development. The excellent leadership by the headteacher has also contributed to the strong commitment to improvement amongst staff and governors. This is a school where all are working in accord with one another and with a very clear idea of what they are expected to do to achieve identified goals. The core leadership team has provided the school with the direction and resolve required to overcome the significant issues in teaching highlighted in the last inspection report. The school has improved significantly from providing a barely satisfactory education at the time of the last inspection to now providing a good quality of education for its students. It has improved considerably its reputation in the local community and this is evident in the numbers of prospective parents making the school their first choice. Value-added data produced by the local education authority indicates that Woking High School does better than the Surrey average.
58. There is very good delegation of responsibilities to staff across the school and responsibilities are clearly defined. The overall contribution of staff with management responsibilities to the leadership and management of the school is good, and very good in many instances. The wider senior management team plays an effective role in supporting new initiatives and developments, and members of the team carry out their responsibilities well. Almost all heads of department provide at least good leadership

and management of their subjects and successfully promote high standards of work. Many provide very good leadership and management of their subject teams. Year co-ordinators have clearly defined roles which they carry out very effectively. This results in a positive school ethos where students know what is expected of them, academically and in terms of their behaviour and attitudes. Delegated responsibilities are very well managed through the line management structure and by the headteacher. There are clear mechanisms for accountability as well as support to enable staff with managerial responsibilities to work effectively.

59. The school's management of its performance is good. Senior staff are involved very effectively in on-going monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. There are regular subject reviews which lead to useful points for action to support continued improvement and development. There has been very good monitoring of tutorial periods to ensure that the new curriculum for citizenship is being delivered effectively. However, some heads of department are not monitoring as rigorously as they should. Examination performance is carefully analysed and appropriate action taken where required. Overall, there is a coherent and carefully structured approach to monitoring the work of the school so that weaknesses are quickly highlighted and action swiftly taken. Strong links between professional development, school improvement planning and teacher appraisal ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to school self-evaluation and the drive for continuous school improvement. New teachers, both those who are new to the school and newly qualified teachers, are given very good support so that they settle into the job quickly and are effective in the classroom. Training programmes for overseas-trained-teachers and those on the graduate training programme have been very successfully implemented and have ensured that the school has not suffered unduly from the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in an area of high employment and a very high cost of living. The programme for professional development for all staff is very well focused on key areas of need, such as the needs of students with English as an additional language and management of behaviour. Overall, the arrangements for professional development are very good and very well managed. However, the school has not yet developed systems to follow-up the longer-term impact of training on school provision and students' learning.
60. Governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities very well. The chair and vice-chair of governors provide a very good lead to the governing body. They are very actively involved in the work of the school. The chair of governors has produced a very useful paper on 'Effective Governance' which sets out a good model of delivery of the three key roles of the governing body: being a critical friend to the school; monitoring the school's work and holding it to account for the standards it provides and in meeting statutory requirements; helping to shape the overall direction of the school. Governors are fully involved in the development of the school improvement plan. There is a good committee structure and the committees are active in monitoring and supporting the work of the school. They are focusing on the right areas of work. Governors have a very good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, there is a very well organised structure where governors are linked to different departments or areas of the school's work, such as health and safety or ICT. This provides a good opportunity for them to ask searching questions and to become more familiar with the school. Governors provide very useful and full written feedback to the governing body following their visits to their linked area of the school.
61. Overall management of special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The deputy headteacher and an assistant co-ordinator for special educational needs offer willing and capable support. In particular, they help with the teaching of students with learning difficulties and the management of

behaviour. The school attends well to its statutory functions. The special educational needs co-ordinator was appointed after the last inspection but her current role is limited in terms of her responsibilities for whole-school teaching and curricular improvement. Overall, there remains a lack of strategic clarity within the organisation of special educational needs with regard to roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the special educational needs co-ordinator has a significant mainstream teaching commitment so that her role of monitoring and reviewing students' progress and setting targets is necessarily limited. As a result, those students with either more complex needs or challenging behaviour tend to be contained rather than having their problems addressed coherently over the long-term.

62. The specialist teacher for students with English as an additional language has provided intensive training for individual departments, but it is too early for senior management to have monitored the impact of this. There has not been on-going monitoring of the teaching and learning with a specific focus on students with English as an additional language.
63. The unit cost per student is high for the county but only in the lower quartile for London. There is sound control and allocation of the budget by the head teacher, bursar and governors. The working relationships between the staff who control the budget and governors are good and there is clear definition of roles and responsibilities. The auditors are happy with the accounts and have not raised any significant points in the recent audit. The principles of best practice are applied to all contracts. The chair of the governors' finance committee is concerned about the adverse effect the new formula for the allocation of funds to the school may have on the future budget. The problem of excess staff has been solved and there is now scope for some strategic appointments to support further developments. However, the extra cost of retention and recruitment of teachers and support provided to overseas-trained-teachers is currently high. The headteacher has empowered heads of departments to oversee departmental expenditure. Departmental budgets are allocated by formulae. The headteacher has a development budget in order to support new and good ideas.
64. The school is appropriately staffed, and the school has done very well to ensure that the school is adequately staffed given the difficulties of recruitment and retention in the local area. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall, and the school has done well to ensure that this is the case. Non-teaching staff provide good support to teachers and carry out their duties very effectively. The school is well resourced and ICT resources are particularly good, supporting well the development of students' ICT skills. However, there are insufficient computers in the art area to support regular use of ICT in the subject and there are few bi-lingual resources for students with English as an additional language. Accommodation is good overall. Recently, a new building for drama and music has been completed and the accommodation for ICT extended and improved. The school's buildings have been re-clad in the past two years. The priorities for the future are to improve the accommodation for science, where a new laboratory is needed, and for design and technology, as well as to re-site the English department and refurbish the library.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve the educational provision and further raise standards, the headteacher, governors and senior staff should:

- (1) Ensure that there are effective systems for assessment, including marking, in place in all areas of the curriculum and that effective use is made of them to inform planning by:
 - developing an up-to date policy on assessment;
 - ensuring that all departments have appropriate systems in place to assess students' progress;
 - making sure that students are fully aware of their progress in terms of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9;
 - making sure that assessment data and information is used to support planning and improvements in support/provision for students;
 - ensuring that all teachers mark work regularly and thoroughly so that students are given clear feedback on how to improve their work;
 - use on-going assessment of pupils in lessons to set different work for different groups of students.(Paragraphs 20, 22, 23, 48, 49, 54, 95, 98, 119, 126, 132, 138, 150, 156)

- (2) Build on improvements in the provision for special educational needs to strengthen it further by:
 - putting in place better links between subject departments and the special needs support staff;
 - improving assessment systems and procedures;
 - making sure that all subject staff are planning for the learning of students with special educational needs;
 - improving the management of special educational needs.(Paragraphs 13, 15, 29, 50, 61)

- (3) Further improve the provision for students with English as an additional language by:
 - establishing more effective planning by subjects so that they can effectively meet the needs of students with English and an additional language;
 - developing teachers' knowledge and understanding as to the needs of students with English as an additional language;
 - ensuring that the systems for identifying students with English as an additional language and who may also have special educational needs are effectively in place and used;
 - developing schemes of work and related resources to ensure that there is effective support in lessons across the curriculum;
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning for students with English an additional language.(Paragraphs 12, 23, 24, 30, 51, 62, 75, 80, 129)

Minor issues:

- (1) Work towards meeting the requirements for an act of collective worship.
(Paragraph 37)
- (2) Put in place formal risk assessment procedures.
(Paragraphs 44, 157)
- (3) Extend the citizenship curriculum by identifying the contribution of individual subjects.
(Paragraphs 32, 116)

- (4) Provide opportunities in all subjects for the development of students' understanding of the cultural diversity in British society.
(Paragraph 42)
- (5) Improve the use of ICT in art and design, music and modern foreign languages.
(Paragraphs 26, 110, 144, 148)

Special needs unit for visually impaired students

66. There are nine students with a visual impairment and three who are blind in the unit. Ten have statements of special educational needs and the unit is an integral part of the local authority's overall inclusive provision for special educational needs.
67. Attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11 cannot be judged because the groups are too small for valid comparisons to be made. However, school and local authority data indicates that attainment varies between individuals according to the extent of their individual needs but is overall around the national average.
68. Achievement is good and many students are successful in GCSE examinations: in 2002, the three students with visual impairment all gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. In English, throughout the school, students make good progress in their speaking and listening and attain good standards. Although the necessity to master Braille hinders the reading fluency of blind students, they make very good progress over time and older students have a shrewd appreciation of examination texts. Mathematics is a challenging area for students with a visual impairment but standards are good because good teaching enables them to use specialist equipment, for example, for measuring angles. Similarly in science, students are taught through other adaptations, such as speaking thermometers so that, by the end of Year 11, they are able to carry out experiments independently and with confidence.
69. Teaching by departmental and school staff, learning assistants and mobility officers is good. Braille is well taught by capable teachers, and learning assistants are developing their competence in the medium, thus enhancing their ability to contribute to students' learning. Teachers and other staff work effectively together and this high level of co-operation enables students to achieve well in their mobility, Braille skills, and their use of low-vision aids and computers. Inspectors observed teachers and assistants confidently using different textures and sizes of print related directly to the students' visual needs. All staff expect students to learn to be independent in what they do. This results in students wanting to do things for themselves. During the inspection, for example, a blind boy was selected for the school's rugby team. Generally good assessment is made of what students can do and this is used well to plan what is to be taught next. The information is shared well so that the needs of the students are met both in the department and in mainstream classes. As a result, students build step by step on what they already know and can do and this encourages them to try to do even better. Personal and social education is taught well across the school and students are valued as individuals. This leads to strong and effective relationships being established which motivate students to concentrate and try hard so that their learning benefits.
70. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place, which is enhanced by a range of additional specialist features, including mobility training, teaching of Braille, the expertise of therapists and extended support within the department. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum are also good. The school enables students to participate in a very good variety of learning opportunities outside the classroom,

including goal-ball and cricket. Currently, however, there are no opportunities for work experience.

71. The department provides a high level of care for its students. The personal development of each individual is particularly well assessed, monitored and evaluated. Arrangements for academic development are less well developed, partly because of weaknesses in overall school systems. Adults take a genuine interest in the personal development of individuals and provide support and guidance to help them develop further.
72. The last inspection report commended the work of the department and standards have been maintained. The quality of leadership and management is good: necessary administration is efficient and staff are clear about priorities. The department has a secure strategic grasp of the developments necessary for further improvement, including the need for continuing professional development in visual impairment. There is, therefore, a good capacity within the present systems for continuing improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	153
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	12	50	44	42	5	0	0
Percentage	8	32	29	27	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Years 7 to 11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1086
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	147

Special educational needs	Years 7 to 11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	38
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	160

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	136

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	61

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	115	102	217

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	82	86	81
	Girls	85	72	72
	Total	167	158	153
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (64)	73 (71)	71 (66)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	35 (31)	43 (45)	33 (33)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	71	82	82
	Girls	82	76	74
	Total	153	158	156
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (58)	74 (70)	73 (68)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (33)	37 (35)	30 (31)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	81	86	167

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	30	79	81
	Girls	52	83	86
	Total	82	162	167
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	49 (46)	97 (94)	100 (99)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41.5 (37.5)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
788	46	2
0	0	0
50	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	2	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
158	9	0
10	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
8	0	0
57	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Years 7 to 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55.49
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.57

Education support staff: Years 7 to 11

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	563

Deployment of teachers: Years 7 to 11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75
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Average teaching group size: Years 7 to 11

Key Stage 3	27
Key Stage 4	21.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	2935311
Total expenditure	2953312
Expenditure per pupil	2861
Balance brought forward from previous year	175904
Balance carried forward to next year	111196

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	30.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	47.93
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.00
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.00
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.00

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1086
Number of questionnaires returned	192

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	52	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	52	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	57	9	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	58	9	2	3
The teaching is good.	25	67	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	53	7	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	39	1	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	33	2	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	36	55	4	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	41	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	53	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	43	3	1	2

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents at the meeting expressed concerns that able students may not be being stretched enough.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Standards are rising at a good rate.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 make good progress.
- Resources are good and well organised so that they effectively support learning.
- The development of speaking and listening skills is good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop curricular provision to improve the progress made by lower-attainers (who are mostly boys) especially in relation to development of basic writing skills and widening vocabulary.
- Improve the management of reading in Years 7 to 9.

73. The current Year 7 group entered the school with literacy standards just below the national average, whilst most students for whom English is an additional language entered with standards of literacy below the norm for the year group as a whole.
74. The proportion of students achieving the expected Level 5 and the higher Level 6 in the national tests taken in 2002 by Year 9 students was above the national average. This was an improvement over the previous year and has improved over four years. A higher percentage of girls achieved Levels 6 and 7 but both boys and girls achieved standards above the national average and have improved steadily over four years. Students did better in these tests in English than in mathematics and science and achieved results that were well above the average of similar schools nationally. In these tests in 2002, more British white students attained higher grades than Pakistani students.
75. Standards in the classroom are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. A comparison between students' test results at the end of Year 6 and those at Year 9 in 2002, shows that students make better than expected progress and this is reflected in the good progress made by most students in the classroom. However, analysis of the test results by ethnicity indicates that whilst both British white and Pakistani students made more than the expected progress between Years 6 and 9, the progress made by British white students was greater than that of Pakistani students, many of whom also have English as an additional language. Most students with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment attending mainstream classes, are well supported in Years 7 to 9. They make good progress and achieve standards commensurate with their capabilities. However, lower attaining students, of whom the majority are boys and include many with English as an additional language, do not always make sufficient progress and there is a measure of underachievement in the standards they reach. The main reasons for this are the curriculum provision and teaching styles which do not always sufficiently match their needs.
76. The underachievement amongst many lower-attainers in Years 7 to 9 is carried through to Years 10 and 11, where their below average literacy standards become increasingly insufficient to meet fully the demands of GCSE courses. A consequence is that through

Years 10 to 11, students do not make the same good progress in writing that they do in speaking and listening and speaking. The percentage of students achieving A* to C grade passes in GCSE English language and literature in 2002 was broadly in line with the national average. In both these examinations, the percentage of girls gaining A* to C grades was above the national average for girls, whilst boys' results were well below their national average. The percentage of students achieving A* to C grades rose in 2002 and was better than in the previous two years in English language, whilst in literature it has been broadly similar for the last three years. The percentage of boys attaining the higher A* and A grades in the GCSE English language examination in 2002 was in line with their national average whilst girls were well above. The percentage achieving these grades in English literature in 2002 was below the national average.

77. The results of GCSE examinations are reflected in the classroom. By the end of Year 11, attainment is in line with national averages and higher attaining students make more progress than lower-attainers though overall progress is good especially in the areas of speaking and listening and reading. Progress in writing is satisfactory in Years 10 to 11.
78. Speaking and listening skills are above national expectations by the end of Year 9, and are well above by the end of Year 11. Students listen well and respond in class discussions articulately and appropriately. By the end of Year 9, most are competent speakers, capable of presenting a point of view clearly and confidently. By Year 11, most students show a sensitive understanding of different points of view and argue a case cogently using standard English in formal situations. Not all classes have sufficient opportunities to discuss issues and further develop extended speech, but speaking and listening skills are a strength of the school and their development is enhanced by extra curricular debating opportunities.
79. Reading is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9 and is above by the end of Year 11. Most lessons begin with a reading session but the management of reading is not secure. Teachers do not always check the appropriateness of what students read or the progress they make. Few students in Years 7 to 9 keep reading records and select books from the school library. The management of reading in Years 7 to 9 is an area for development.
80. Writing is marginally below national expectations by the end of Year 9 but is in line by the end of Year 11. There is a noticeable divergence in standards by the end of Year 11 between higher attaining students and lower-attainers. This is in part due to the slower rate of development of English for those students who are at the later stages of learning it as an additional language, and lack of focused development of vocabulary for lower-attainers. Most lower attaining students' ability to express themselves well both orally and in written work is affected by a limited vocabulary. In contrast, there is some excellent writing in a wide range of forms produced by students in all year groups and some very good GCSE course work. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 does not provide sufficiently well for the development of secure writing skills. There is not a continuous and progressive basic skills programme integrated into the current curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and current assessment procedures do not provide an adequate audit of students' writing skills. Thus the specific learning needs of individuals and groups are not sufficiently well identified to enable teachers to set students appropriate learning targets. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced into Year 7 but it is taught in different class groups, separately from other English lessons, hence opportunities to build literacy skills continuously in English lessons are missed.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In Years 7 to 9, it ranges from a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching to some very good teaching. In Years 10 and 11 all

the teaching is at least satisfactory, most is good and some is excellent. Lessons and sequences of lessons are very well planned, allowing students to build upon their previous knowledge. In a Year 9 lesson, students discussed issues of parental control and family relationships, which they later related to their continuing study of 'Romeo and Juliet'. Teachers' good command of their subject and high expectations of students engenders confidence and they respond well in class discussions. In Year 11, students discuss poetry, exploring and sharing ideas and developing a sensitive critical appreciation. In most classes, relationships are positive and behaviour is good. Students try hard; they enjoy English lessons and contribute significantly to their own learning. Most teachers use the study of literature very effectively to promote the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 9, students study the disintegration of Macbeth's moral values and in Year 11 students explore a cluster of poems from other cultures.

82. Not all lessons are equally successful. In some classes, composed mainly of lower attaining students, the content of lessons and the tasks provided do not sufficiently match the needs of different ability groups. In some cases the text provided is too difficult to read or the writing tasks provided are too difficult, whilst in others students with a limited vocabulary find difficulty expressing themselves clearly. Where this is the case, some students' behaviour is unsettled and some suffer from low self-esteem.
83. The leadership and management of the department are good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching, and standards are rising. The curriculum now includes ICT, and the National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactorily introduced into Year 7. Resources are very good and are well organised within the department but there are insufficient books in the library for the size of the school.

Drama

84. This report is drawn from a small sample of lessons observed, scrutiny of students' written work and discussions with teachers and students.

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

Strengths

- Standards are high and performance in GCSE examinations is well above average.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- There is very good promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The provision of extra curricular activities is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop further the assessment procedures in lessons.

85. Although there are no drama lessons in Year 7, by the end of Year 9 students have made good progress in the development of drama skills and their attainment is above national expectations. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported within mixed ability groups and make good progress in achieving standards commensurate with their capabilities. By the end of Year 9, students have been introduced to a range of dramatic forms such as monologue, flash back and forum theatre. Students develop performance skills effectively, creating short improvised scenes and developing characterisation through

techniques such as hot-seating. Students are developing research skills very well as a stimulus to producing their own drama.

86. The proportion of students attaining A* to C grade passes in the 2002 GCSE drama examination was well above the national average and has improved significantly over the past four years. These results are reflected in the attainment and progress made in class where, by the end of Year 11, standards are well above the national average. There are some gifted and talented students making excellent progress. Students' knowledge and understanding of the plays being rehearsed for examination performance are very good. Strengths are the depth of characterisation and the relationships students create between characters. There is good use of voice and space and an awareness of audience. Most course work is well-researched and well-structured.
87. The quality of teaching is very good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers have a very good command of their subject and considerable teaching expertise and establish good class relations. As a consequence students develop the confidence to try out new ideas in positive and challenging learning environments. Lesson planning is very good. It is based on sound units of work that provide students with continuity and progression of learning. Students enjoy drama lessons; they work hard and contribute significantly to their own learning. An area for development is to find time in lessons for students to assess their own work and that of others regularly through class discussion, thus ensuring the development of a critical appreciation and a facility to use technical terms.
88. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underlies the drama curriculum. Drama is taught through an exploration of themes such as juvenile delinquency and family tensions. Students develop plays to raise awareness of social issues. For example, students developed a play in conjunction with a local professional company to raise awareness of issues facing ethnic minority groups. This play was sponsored by the local authority and performed within the local community. There are well-supported drama clubs for younger and older students and annual school productions such as 'Annie' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. There are effective links with music and art. Drama continues to play a very effective part in the enrichment of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school community.
89. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The high standards mentioned in the last report have been maintained and the GCSE examination results continue to improve.

Literacy

90. Standards of literacy are sufficient to support learning in subjects across the curriculum for the majority of students. The progress of lower attaining students is impeded by not always being able to understand text. As these students move through the school they are increasingly handicapped in some subjects by weak writing skills. Although students for whom English is an additional language make generally make good progress a lack of sufficient breadth of vocabulary at times hinders their progress.
91. The school has good management procedures in place and most departments are using strategies to overcome literacy problems. Most departments ensure that students understand technical language, teachers discuss the work in hand and provide materials to support writing. The application of these strategies is inconsistent however

and the main reason for this is that new staff have not been a part of the extensive in-service training undertaken in the school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and promotes effective learning.
- Relationships and the working atmosphere are very good. These factors encourage students to learn.
- Leadership and management are good because they focus well on improvement of standards.

Areas for improvement

- Develop assessment procedures so that they are thorough and used to aid further improvements in standards.
- Develop the use of different materials for different groups in the same teaching set, particularly those who are at the top end of the set.

92. Standards in Year 9, as indicated by the 2002 national test results are average. The proportions of students gaining at least the expected Level 5 or Level 6 were marginally lower in 2002 than in previous years. However, this small drop was against a rise in results nationally hence performance fell from being above average to being broadly in line with the national average. When compared with similar schools, performance in tests in 2002 was well above average and students made better than expected progress. There was no difference between the performance of boys and girls. School analysis of comparisons of performance of Pakistani and white students indicates that though both groups made better than expected progress, white students made more progress and the overall results of Pakistani students were lower than those of white students. The results of GCSE examinations in 2002 were also in line with national averages and above the results found in similar schools. Girls did better than boys as was the case nationally and a higher percentage of girls than boys achieved the higher GCSE grades. The inspection evidence reflects these results and attainment is broadly average by Year 11. The department's work shows improvements in planning, teachers expect more of students and the achievement of most students is good.
93. Between Years 7 to 9 students show increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics. They extend well their knowledge of number, shape, space and measure and handling data. Students become adept at managing fractions, decimals and percentages and understand the relationship between them. In geometry, they successfully perform a variety of theoretical and practical exercises to help them understand patterns, symmetry and shapes. Students are effectively introduced to algebra and make good progress in learning how to solve equations and plot and interpret graphs. They make good use of their developing skills in all areas to solve problems including those they may meet in daily life, such as using percentages to calculate reductions in sales.
94. By the end of Year 11, students have covered all the topics of the GCSE syllabus and are sufficiently prepared for the examination. Higher and intermediate level students in Years 10 and 11 work well with abstract mathematics and confidently manage problems involving quadratic equations and graphs. One group of higher-level GCSE students enjoyed the challenge of learning the proof of a new rule in trigonometry. Foundation level students develop sound skills in all areas. They master multiplication

tables and improve their understanding of fractions. Year 10 students often make very good progress and this was evident in lessons and in the quality of their written work.

95. Most students show a mature attitude towards studying. They are well motivated and keen to do well. Students from minority ethnic groups are equally conscientious and willing participants in lessons. They make largely good progress. Students with special educational needs in all years and of all levels of ability in mathematics are enabled to keep abreast of their peers. Where possible with support of their teachers and assistants, students with visual impairment and other physical and emotional difficulties are taught alongside students of similar ability. Students who experience difficulties in coping with mathematics are taught in small groups with the additional support of teaching assistants so that they make good progress. However, work in lessons is not always well matched to the needs of different groups of students and the higher-attainers within individual sets are not stretched enough.
96. Students' good achievements in mathematics are the result of good teaching. In Years 10 to 11 teaching was mainly very good. Teachers plan well and use a variety of teaching styles according to the needs of the students. They are skilled in explaining new concepts. In one class of middle attaining Year 9 students the teacher, having high expectations of the students, systematically led them to a clear understanding of the relationship between equations and graphs. Because of the teacher's enthusiasm and lively presentation, students met the challenge of the lesson and all participated well, and achieved a good level of understanding. A teacher of Year 7 students learning how to work with positive and negative numbers showed them photographs of mountainsides displaying height above or below sea level. The students' interest was aroused and as a result they developed a deeper understanding of the concept. A class of lower attaining Year 11 students made excellent progress in an algebra lesson and mastered the skills involved in solving linear equations. All lessons begin with imaginative mental starters, which not only spark the students' interest but also reinforce their basic skills or allow them to focus on the skills needed for the lesson. One group enjoyed playing a specialised game of bingo, which helped them to revise calculations needed for the lesson. Another group used write-on wipe boards, which gave each student the opportunity to answer questions. Higher attaining students learn to work independently and to confer with each other to resolve challenging problems. Mathematical investigations are a good feature of the students' work and these range from carrying out surveys to testing theories about numbers and properties of shapes. This encourages both independent and collaborative study.
97. The teachers' courteous and kindly manner and their enthusiasm for mathematics helps students to learn and behave well and there is a strong sense of mutual respect between teachers and students. Teachers promote students' speaking and listening skills well by encouraging them to explain how they solve problems, and teachers explain the vocabulary they use carefully. The department has access to a computer suite and satisfactory use is made of this facility, but there is no forward planning to ensure the best use of ICT to support students' work in mathematics. Two classrooms have interactive white boards and one class benefited from seeing immediately how differences in an equation affect the shape of a graph.
98. Leadership and management are good and teamwork is firmly established. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well in Years 7 to 9 and there are GCSE courses at three levels in Years 10 and 11. The subject development plan identifies priorities to help raise standards including homework, monitoring and assessment procedures. However, schemes of work and short-term assessment procedures are out of date.

They need urgent revision to become useful tools to help teachers focus on students who could make better progress.

99. The classrooms are spacious, attractively furnished and decorated with inspiring and informative posters. Students' work is proudly displayed to celebrate their efforts and successes.

Numeracy

100. The students' skills in number allow them to enhance their learning in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. In science and design technology, students' numeracy skills are used effectively to collect and interpret data and for taking measurements. In geography students practise using co-ordinates in a map reading exercise. A class of Year 10 students used spreadsheets in ICT to calculate household income and expenditure. Bar graphs and pie charts are used in religious education lessons to portray the numbers of followers in each of the six major religions, and in French students create graphs to convert pounds to euros. Advantage is not taken of the many opportunities in physical education to develop students' numeracy skills such as measurement.
101. Most heads of departments are aware of the need to prepare a numeracy policy. The mathematics department has already provided training in the use of numeracy across the curriculum and it has produced a draft policy. An advising pamphlet is being prepared for use by other departments. Its purpose is two-fold: to establish a consistent approach and to identify areas where topics are being addressed in one subject to avoid unnecessary duplication of teaching. The mathematics department's initiative while in an early stage of development is proving to be effective in ensuring their students have every opportunity to develop their numerical skills and that their skills are applied appropriately.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching is good, and a high proportion is excellent.
- The overall progress made by students is good.
- Effective leadership such as the major improvement to the curriculum for Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- Improve marking so that students respond more carefully to written advice, given regularly.
- Maintain the focus on increasing the proportion of good or better teaching.

102. Standards in science are broadly in line with national averages by the end of Year 9. Over recent years these standards have risen steadily, somewhat better than the rise in national results. Also the year on year improvement in results is good, from when students start in Year 7 to the end of Year 9. However, analysis of the results of national tests in 2001 and 2002 shows that Pakistani students made less than expected progress between Year 7 and Year 9. Their progress and performance in these tests was lower than that of white students, though showing an improving trend. The overall GCSE results for Year 11 in 2002 were a little below the national average. The majority of students took the double science GCSE and attained well below average results. About one in eight students studied three separate GCSE science subjects and attained average results. These results were below the results for the previous year for Year 11. Standards by the end of Year 11 have fallen significantly in recent years but standards are now beginning to improve.

103. Standards in students' work during the inspection were in line with national averages overall by Year 9 and by Year 11. Good progress is made in students' achievements over time as they improve their knowledge and understanding of science. The earlier weaknesses which led to low standards for Years 10 and 11, are being overcome. The key improvement is that students now choose, with good guidance, from a very wide range of courses. All the new courses are leading to good progress. For example, most students take the double award GCSE. High-attaining students are driven hard by teachers to be within reach of A and A* levels. Low attaining students taking the entry level certificate are steadily gaining the skills and knowledge required, or working hard towards a single award GCSE. The first Year 10 students to take a course new to the school, the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in science at Intermediate level, made poor progress in their first year. These students are recovering from this weak start. The second group to start the course are making good progress. Teachers now ensure an efficient flow of viable GNVQ coursework. Students with learning difficulties make good progress overall, because teachers take care to set suitable work and to explain it clearly. Two groups of students with learning difficulties make very good progress: those with impaired vision, and students with the most complex needs. This is because a very good range of additional support is given to help visually impaired students, and because excellent teaching strategies make sure the others work very hard on suitably mature and complex tasks. Overall, the achievements of boys and girls are similarly good. Asian students are now making good progress during Years 7, 8 and 9, much as all other students. Their progress during Years 10 and 11 is better than the progress of other groups. Overall, students gain a good balance of knowledge

and understanding covering the required range of scientific investigation, life processes, materials science and physical processes.

104. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is an impressive proportion of excellent teaching. Teachers plan well and sometimes excellently. They use a good variety of methods including demonstration, practical work for groups, discussion, written tasks, quick quizzes, and more. Thus students are interested and concentrate well, and are encouraged to think carefully and make a good effort. Lessons move along briskly so that students have good opportunities, first to gain new knowledge and also to re-visit previous topics so as to secure their understanding. For example, some very low attaining students were directed through a precisely graded regime of work, to learn and then to practise new ideas about blood. At the end they had impressive fluency in using the new terms accurately, such as plasma, platelets and so on. The other main strength, regularly in use, is that the control of behaviour is effective because students are led to know what is expected of them calmly, fairly and clearly. The satisfactory teaching is at a steady pace, targeted at the correct level for the group, and with sufficient checks on the extent of learning. It lacks the variety of the better teaching. Sometimes planning is imprecise, with too many digressions, so that the consolidation of key ideas is satisfactory rather than good.
105. Teachers make a good contribution to the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills. A key strength is the emphasis on styles of writing and correct usage of scientific terms. Low attaining students are required to remember many new terms and then to use them correctly, both oral and written. High attaining students are required to use new words and concepts with great care over precision. Also number and graph work shows confident accurate work, including formula-work and a wide range of calculations. Students use ICT but the outcomes are unexceptional, except that the GNVQ groups have good levels of skill and constant practice for further improvement.
106. Leadership and management are very good. A key strength is to have broadened the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 so well. Students of all abilities are now given suitable opportunities to learn well, and a vocational option has also been added. All students take science in Year 10 and 11, and standards have improved. This change has been carried out during a period of major staff turbulence. The systems to monitor provision are good, such as sampling students' work and observing lessons. Problems identified are resolved well, such as the extensive support from senior staff which ensure all staff, especially the new staff, teach effectively. Assessment procedures are very good because they give regular, accurate information about attainment and progress. Students know the level they are working at. Even so some marking is too brief and even the best, which gives good advice, does not always lead to improvements by students. Plenty of support is available for students, such as revision and study clubs. Teachers have ample data, used well to group students by ability, and as a well-used basis for planning so that work set matches students' needs. The quality of provision is now better than the situation reported after the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained, and students' progress and the quality of teaching are better.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- There are very good relationships based on mutual respect.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Provide sufficient opportunities for three-dimensional work.
- Improve availability of computers to ensure effective use of ICT in teaching and learning.

107. Many students join Year 7 with low standards in practical skills and in knowledge and understanding of artists and cultural development. Standards reached by the end of Year 9 are average and this represents good achievement. By the end of Year 11, standards are good and indicating continued good progress between Years 10 to 11. In the past, fewer boys chose the subject at GCSE. Currently trends are changing and boys are just as committed to the subject as girls. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The newly appointed teachers have made a rapid and beneficial impact on standards.

108. By the end of Year 9, students develop sound levels of subject vocabulary in line with the departmental policy for developing literacy in art. They develop appropriate practical skills with a wide range of media, including graded pencils, paints, inks and printmaking techniques. Students work with increasing confidence and skill because teachers regularly teach representational drawing skills on a sequential step-by-step basis. This is particularly helpful for students with special educational needs and accounts for their confidence and good progress in the subject. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language show equal enthusiasm and make similarly good progress as their peers. All students feel supported at each stage of development. Students begin to make useful comparisons between their own work and that of other artists. They use the colour range, quality of line and distinctive style of artists such as Van Gogh, Franz Marc and Matisse as a starting point in their own work. Students listen carefully to different kinds of recorded music in order to gain understanding of how feelings, evoked through music, can be represented in art works. They invent their own private symbolism to show changes in volume and timing and how colour can influence mood and emotion. Students are offered fewer opportunities to develop skills in three-dimensional modelling and construction work for sculpture. This particularly disadvantages those few students with little or no sight, who otherwise make good progress because of the positive contribution of the learning support assistant.

109. In Year 10 students build successfully on the skills, knowledge and understanding gained previously. They settle quickly to more rigorous ways of working in preparation for GCSE. Students develop a more personal style and incorporate moral issues into their work, raising their social awareness and responsibility. They explore their own personal convictions sensitively, through an extended project entitled 'Prisoners of Conscience', which they find challenging and stimulating.

110. In Year 11, students sustain concentration through extended themes and develop ideas more creatively. Students make good use of homework to practise skills and make preparatory sketches for work in lessons. They use a good balance of first hand and

secondary source materials such as books, the Internet and visits to galleries to inform their work. Students refer to a wide range of artists to influence their own work such as William Morris, Georgia O'Keefe, the imagery of Islam, and Pop artists. Students have good cultural understanding and produce very good work in the style of Aboriginal artists. They make sensitive adaptations from authentic works, using similar marks and symbols, including patterns, colours and ways of applying pigments to represent the characteristic dots of the artists of the central desert areas. Students use ICT appropriately out of lessons, to research new topics, but there is insufficient availability of computers in the department.

111. The quality of teaching is very good throughout. Teachers are confident, have high levels of expertise and extensive subject knowledge, which students recognise and respect. They pace lessons well, which keeps students clearly focused. They insist on good behaviour and achieve it. They provide rich and interesting activities, which are well matched to the differing needs of most students. They have high expectations and strike a good balance between individual and group help. Teachers track students' progress informally in lessons and more formally at the end of each project or coursework unit. They give good levels of verbal feedback to explain marking levels and grades, which ensure that students know what to do to improve further. Teachers provide good quality printed worksheets and visual imagery as well as attractive displays, which enhance the learning environment. Teachers work well together as a team. They provide very good role models for students.
112. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department has clear and well-prioritised plans for future developments. Policies and schemes of work are kept up to date, detailed and well documented. The very good relationships between teachers and between teachers and students, which is fostered by the head of department, ensures mutual respect and trust and accounts for the very high standards of students' behaviour and commitment in lessons. There is a generous approach to the sharing of teaching skills and expertise. Monitoring of teaching is well established and has a beneficial impact on standards. There has been careful analysis of the recent downward trend in GCSE results, the reasons for which the school is well aware. Appropriate and effective action has been taken to ensure a reversal of these trends for current students.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The school's values embrace inclusion and its practice promotes it well.
- The School Council is an effective body and allows student participation in the school's decision making processes.
- Teaching and learning are good in extended tutorial lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Develop the contribution of subject areas to citizenship to augment the provision currently provided by extended tutorial lessons.
- Develop procedures for assessing and recording students' attainment in citizenship.

113. The school has made a good start in developing and delivering this new subject. Since September, extended tutorial lessons have been used to deliver the citizenship National Curriculum in Years 8, 9 and 10 with some aspects also in Years 7 and 11. Since these lessons also cover the personal, social, and health aspects of education, as well as some careers teaching, time for citizenship is limited. However, the wider

community aspects of citizenship are well catered for. The school's values embrace inclusion and its practice promotes it well. The school council is effective in allowing student participation in decision making and there are good opportunities for students to take part in other community-based activities. Students were observed to be mature in their suggestions and responses and willingly took on additional responsibilities. There are effective ways of involving the whole school in the work of the School Council through the consultation undertaken by School Council representatives and their feedback to their classes and year groups on the decisions taken. The suggestion box is used well more widely by students to put forward proposals which are then given due consideration at council meetings.

114. During the week of inspection there was insufficient evidence to allow judgements on standards of attainment. The quality of teaching and learning in the sample of citizenship lessons seen in tutor time in Years 8 and 9 was good. Teachers provide good opportunities for discussion to which students respond very well. Evidence of this was seen in a Year 9 lesson on human rights. Lessons were well planned and prepared and teachers have a good relationship with their forms. However, inspection of work in exercise books confirmed that teachers do not mark or assess completed written work and there is no assessment and recording of skills, such as skills of debate. Teachers have had some training but few have specialist knowledge and there is some variability in the quality of impact, as became apparent when talking to students in Year 10.
115. The school is committed to the delivery of citizenship. Senior management have a clear involvement in the initial planning. A citizenship policy has been written. Schemes of work for extended tutorial are clear and detailed with learning outcomes clearly identified. Lesson plans, teacher notes and resources have been prepared so that it is possible for all tutors to deliver the citizenship content. Teaching has been very well monitored by senior management and weaknesses identified and dealt with. However, arrangements for the assessment and recording of citizenship have yet to be put in place though they have been given consideration by senior staff.
116. Some aspects of the citizenship curriculum are delivered through extended tutorial time, but a considerable part of the programmes of study are not covered. For example, the significance of the media in society, and the world as a global community. Although the school carried out an audit which identified subject areas that could make contributions to the citizenship curriculum, these areas, with the exception of religious education, have not been clearly identified within subject schemes of work nor have specific learning objectives been targeted. Through good leadership the school has made a good start and developed a well-planned citizenship programme for tutor time. It now needs to identify and tap into the expertise that is already available in the subject departments.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the department are excellent.
- The school's aim to seek Technology College status is stimulating much very good development.
- Teachers' knowledge of the subject and management of students in lessons are very effective.
- Relationships in the department are very good.
- The department uses ICT and modern technology very successfully to support learning.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the attainment of students in Years 10 and 11, particularly that of boys.
- Increase the proportion of students taking courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Develop further, and implement effectively, assessment systems for assessing the students' work in terms of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9.

117. Standards are satisfactory overall. Standards on entry to the school are variable but are overall below the national average. By the time students reach the end of Year 9 standards are broadly in line with the national average. Girls perform significantly better than boys. Students with special educational needs and visual impairment make satisfactory progress, with additional help from teachers and support assistants in some lessons. Students from ethnic minority groups, most with English as an additional language, make similar progress to other students and sometimes better progress. Overall achievement is good.

118. Seven out of ten students opt to take the subject in Years 10 and 11, a proportion which has been increasing over the past three years. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, standards remained broadly in line with the national average with one-half of the students obtaining A* to C grades in the GCSE examinations. The proportion of students obtaining A* to G grades was also in line with the national average. The examination results in 2001 were significantly better. The results in individual aspects of the subject have varied considerably in the past three years. The variations have no obvious trend but students have consistently done better in food technology. Overall, girls have performed significantly better than boys. In 2002, the GCSE results in child development were good with a high proportion of students obtaining A* to C grades. Students are progressing well on the recently introduced entry level course in resistant materials, some students from minority ethnic groups are performing best in this course. Between Years 7 to 11 the overall achievement is good.

119. The quality of teaching in all years is good overall and very good in one half of lessons. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well. The management of students is very good and achieved in a natural and relaxed way. As a result relationships are very good. The teaching of basic technological skills and key words is very effective. Students habitually use dimensions and quantities in their work. All teachers gain the interest of students by routinely reviewing previous work and explaining the work to be done at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers involve students well by asking them questions as lessons progress and give good help and advice to individual students in practical lessons. Health and safety issues are customarily emphasised. Homework is set according to the school's rota. Good use is

made of ICT and modern technology. When teaching is less successful teachers do not always make the best use of time in lessons and miss opportunities to fully explain the technological aspects of the work. Teachers trained overseas are well supported. Most teachers provide the same range of work for all students, which disadvantages low attaining and gifted and talented students. Teachers need to encourage students to develop a better understanding of the spiritual, moral and social aspects of their work. The method for assessing students' attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels needs to be developed further and implemented.

120. The standard of learning in all years is good overall and very good in one-half of lessons. Students successfully learn to design and make a good range of products using wood, plastic, metal, textile and food materials in Years 7 to 9. They learn to use simple mechanisms, electronics, structures and control well. In an electronics lesson in Year 7, students were observed learning about electronic components and how to use them to produce a moisture sensor very effectively. Students learn to undertake assignments in which they work from a design brief, research topics, produce a number of designs, select the best design, make a product and evaluate their work. In Year 8, students were seen making an aluminium and copper candle holder they had researched and designed in previous lessons satisfactorily. Some of the designs had to be modified in order that they could be made. In a Year 9 lesson, students were seen producing a picture by dying fabric very effectively. Many of the designs were based on multicultural themes that had been researched using the internet.
121. Students who opt to take the subject in Years 10 and 11 continue to learn in GCSE courses based on their chosen material - food, resistant or textile materials - or graphic or electronics products well. They learn to undertake extended coursework well firmly based on the design and make cycle. In a very good lesson in Year 10 students were seen designing a printed circuit board using computers as a part of their course on electronic products. In Year 11, students on the food technology course were seen working effectively to design and make a dish for teenagers as a part of the coursework. In another lesson in the same year, a visually impaired student was seen making a wooden CD holder successfully with the help of a support teacher. A small number of students in Year 11 most with special educational needs, were seen making a "G" clamp as part of their work in the Entry level course in resistant materials satisfactorily.
122. The department is extremely well led and is emerging from a difficult period in which there have been many changes in the staff. The provision declined following the last inspection but has improved significantly over the past three years. The school's aim to seek Technology College status is very good and stimulating much development. Standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching improved. ICT and modern technology are more extensively used.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well on their GCSE course.
- ICT is used effectively to further the learning of Year 11 students.

Areas for improvement

- Develop fieldwork and enquiry skills in Years 7 to 9 so that students experience a broader geographical education.
- Improve procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress.
- Plan lesson tasks and activities to allow all students in mixed ability classes to make sufficient progress in their learning.

123. Attainment on entry to the school is just below the national average, but students have limited subject knowledge and understanding and few geographical skills. At the end of Year 9, in 2002, the results of teacher assessments show that standards were just above national averages. These results mirror the standards of work seen and confirm that attainment in Year 9 is just below the national average. Students have satisfactory oral and listening skills. The majority, including those with English as an additional language, can write well enough to describe geographical patterns or processes in simply constructed sentences using appropriate geographical vocabulary, but many have problems with spelling and punctuation. Examples of extended written work, or in-depth case studies of places or topics, were few in all three years of the lower school. Students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the patterns and processes they have studied. They have good mapping skills, for example in Year 7 they locate places on maps accurately and draw sketch maps and diagrams using the correct symbols. However, fieldwork and enquiry skills are weak because they are not being taught sufficiently and data analysis is confined to pie charts or simple bar or line graphs. Opportunities to use the local area as a resource are missed. Students make satisfactory progress in geography in the first three years at the school. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs make similar progress as their peers because of well-focused support by class teachers. However, learning is not structured sufficiently to meet the needs of students of all abilities in mixed ability classes and higher attaining students are not always challenged sufficiently. Overall, achievement is satisfactory based on prior attainment.

124. In 2002, GCSE results at A* to C were in line with national averages as they were in the previous two years. Although this shows an improvement since the last inspection when results were below average, students did worse than predicted and worse than in most of their other subjects. Girls did better than boys and the gap was wider than nationally. Pakistani students also did better when compared with the whole group. In work seen in the current Year 11, standards remain in line with national averages. ICT is used effectively to further the learning of Year 11 students and they have good ICT skills, using the internet for research and using word processing and data presentation methods to record their findings. Year 10 students demonstrate a good understanding of physical geography and can explain or describe physical processes, such as the formation of a waterfall, using good quality sketch diagrams to illustrate. However, fieldwork skills are still underdeveloped at this stage and reflect the lack of attention to this skill earlier in the school. All students, including those with EAL and SEN, make

good progress on their GCSE course due to the good teaching they experience during that time. Achievement is good based on prior attainment.

125. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Confident lesson management and good relationships promote a positive response from students and a purposeful learning environment. Planning is good. Lessons get off to a prompt start, enabling students to focus quickly on their learning and teachers constantly reinforce previous learning. Some very good teaching was seen, where a challenging pace with timed deadlines, together with high expectations of learning, led to very good learning, for instance, about rainforests by a Year 8 group. This was in contrast to a few lessons where the pace of learning was slow, expectations were too low and challenge was insufficient. Teachers mark books carefully, giving guidance on how to improve. However, insufficient attention is given to the improvement of literacy, with written tasks rarely structured to improve students' writing skills and too much copying was seen in some lessons.
126. A new head of department has been in post for just over a term and schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been rewritten. Assessment procedures and fieldwork provision in the lower school need urgent attention though, and the department handbook needs rewriting. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. A number of issues raised then have been suitably addressed, for instance the learning of students with special educational needs, but several concerns still remain, not least the opportunities to improve writing skills. Overall the management of geography is satisfactory.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and standards are above average by Year 9 and Year 11.
- There is excellent use of the interactive whiteboard to support learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Build on existing strengths in teaching to develop further the strategies to support the learning of students with English as an additional language.
- Provide more opportunities to promote students' spiritual awareness.
- Provide more time for the head of department to monitor the teaching and learning.

127. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is well below national expectations for students of that age in history. Students make very good progress throughout Years 7 to 9 and by Year 9 attain standards slightly above the national average. They continue to make very good progress throughout Years 10 to 11, and by Year 11 attain standards above the national average. The teacher assessment in history for Year 9 students in 2002 indicated that standards were marginally above national expectations. Although the GCSE results in 2002, at grades A* to C, were below the national average, they must be seen in the context of the lower attaining group of Year 11 students entered for the examination in that year and it must be noted that value added evidence shows that these students made very good progress measured against their prior attainment. GCSE results in the two years previous to 2002 were above the national average.

128. By Year 9, students give thoughtful ideas about what life was like on the Western Front. Moreover, they have well developed enquiry skills. They define and use in context words such 'harvest of battle' and 'No Man's Land', which is relevant to their understanding of what life was like in the trenches. By Year 11 students give examples of different kinds of evidence and are able to analyse and interpret sources at a level above the national average. The majority of students are erudite and they use the language of history accurately. They enjoy engaging in historical debate with their classmates and this contributes to their very good learning. Through the analysis of graph source materials they make very good gains in numeracy skills.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It ranges from barely satisfactory to excellent. Teaching is excellent when the lesson runs at a cracking pace and the outstanding subject knowledge, and enthusiasm of the teacher coupled with very skilful use of the interactive whiteboard, results in all students making excellent gains in their learning as in the Year 11 lesson on the reasons for the boom in the economy in the USA in the 1920s. Where teaching has shortcomings in Year 8 the pace drops and higher attaining students lose concentration which impedes their learning, and the lack of strategies to support students with English as an additional language results in their learning being unsatisfactory as seen in a lesson on the causes of the English Civil War, where the teacher did not have an appropriate strategy to explain the meaning of the term 'remonstrance'. Opportunities are sometimes missed to promote students' spiritual development through the teaching. Students with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented make very good progress because work is very well matched to their needs. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent and because of this students are confident to ask questions in lessons and so learn at a greater depth, as seen in a Year 7 lesson on the Black Death. Teaching is exciting and interesting and so students behave very well and are keen to learn, and this is a very significant strength.
130. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Improvements since the last inspection are very good. The excellent use of ICT and the very good use of assessment are key strengths in the subject. However, the head of department does not have the time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in his subject. There are no opportunities for those members of the department who are very good teachers to model and share their good practice so as to develop the skills of all staff who teach the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good in all years.
- Students make good progress over time and their standards of work are above average.
- Accommodation and resources are very good.
- ICT is very well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Meet statutory requirements in the small number of subjects where ICT is not regularly used.
- Improve provision in Year 9.
- Develop rigorous assessment in Years 7 to 9.

131. ICT is a high priority for the school. Students in Year 7 and 8 have a weekly ICT lesson, but there are too few lessons in Year 9. Half of Year 10 opt for the full GCSE course, or GNVQ. All other students take the short GCSE course. Computer provision has significantly improved since the last inspection and staffing is now strong and settled.
132. Standards by the end of Year 9 are above national expectations overall for girls and boys, due to good teaching with good computer equipment. Teachers assessed Year 9 students' National Curriculum levels in 2002 as above average. Levels, though generally accurate, were mainly based on work in Year 9 and not ongoing from Year 7. In timetabled ICT lessons seen, students made good progress creating a spreadsheet model of drinks prices at sports day, and manipulated formulae well. Most, including those with special needs and English as an additional language, handled and presented information very well, using desk top publishing, when designing school brochures with imported logos. Higher attaining students showed a particular good sense of audience when designing web pages. Students' evaluation skills are generally good, although boys tend to write less and with more errors.
133. Students' achievement over time from lower than average entry standards in Year 7 is good, and sometimes very good, where they make good use of home computers and the school's hugely popular break and lunchtime computer clubs. Students with English as an additional language make satisfactory rather than good progress in lessons when they do not have additional support. Students extend skills well in some other subject lessons, where they research information systematically from various internet sources. In history, they download images from the First World War trenches very effectively. Students plan, test and modify instructions in technology but mostly only with simulations rather than real objects. In science, students are beginning to make good use of data loggers and light gates. Students use equipment safely and responsibly, and all Year 7 parents sign a contract relating to internet use, very well monitored by staff.
134. GCSE results for the full course were above average in 2002 for grades A* to C. They were well above average for the 24 girls and above average for the 56 boys, maintaining a similarly high overall trend from the first two years of operation. Nearly a half of the 80 students entered for the short GCSE course gained a grade A* to C, at about the national average, for girls and boys. Students' achievement over time on all ICT courses is very good overall.

135. In timetabled GCSE ICT lessons and work seen in Years 10 and 11, standards are as expected nationally, and above for higher attaining students on the full GCSE course, who build in effective programming statements when making complex use of use of applications software. Most students, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. Students generally analyse task requirements well, using their skills to solve a variety of problems, applying concepts learned effectively to the design of databases and spreadsheets. They evaluate their work in sufficient depth and often use Powerpoint slides or design web pages to present their work, sometimes in groups, particularly in GNVQ, which is being run for the first time. GNVQ students' work, whilst below average nationally, is better than expected from their very low starting points in Year 10. One example of a very good Year 11 project involved a fluent analysis by a boy from a minority ethnic group of his proposal for a new computer shop, based on visits to a relative's business.
136. Students use ICT well to research information from the internet in most other subjects and overall use of computers across the curriculum is well developed except in art and design, music, physical education and modern foreign languages. Students apply ICT skills very well in history, religious education and design and technology, and in tutor time draft their national records of achievement effectively. Students now have more opportunities in GCSE science, and design and technology for data logging and controlling events, but ICT is not yet used consistently by all groups to meet National Curriculum requirements in art and design, modern foreign languages and music. There is room for improving the use of ICT in mathematics by forward planning to make it more systematic. In lessons seen, students showed positive attitudes to learning by supporting each other well when designing systems, and gained good social skills. They work well on their own.
137. Teaching is good overall, and very good in two of the eleven lessons seen. Teachers, mostly specialists, showed good subject knowledge, and very good relations with students, who behaved well in the calm working atmosphere. Teachers planned interesting lesson topics well in all years, and supported individuals well. Students with English as an additional language were kept on task well but sometimes, in Years 7 and 8, work was not sufficiently well matched to their language needs; they made only satisfactory progress without additional support.
138. Students' work is constructively and regularly marked in all years. In Years 7 to 9 assessment is not linked to National Curriculum levels to ensure ongoing and final assessments are sufficiently rigorous. In Years 10 and 11 students are more certain about their progress in theory, where they are frequently tested, and in their coursework assignments. GNVQ students record their achievements well on checklists. Homework is frequently set in all years, often involving research out of school. Some examples of very good practice seen were, in Year 11, teachers using voice attachments to emails to feed back assessments to students, and, in several subjects, most notably history, very good use of interactive whiteboards
139. Leadership and management of ICT are very good, and the team of specialist ICT teachers in all years is well led by the recently-appointed co-ordinator, who has improved procedures for monitoring and assessing students' progress. Further monitoring of ICT use is needed in other subjects, following a recent audit, but a new scheme of work based on the national Key Stage 3 strategy is being successfully trialled. Numbers of computers, now slightly above the national average, and network rooms have improved significantly since the last inspection. With very good technical

support and network management now in place, improvement since the last inspection has been very good overall, with good capacity for further development.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good overall with evidence of outstanding teaching.
- A broad range of languages, including Urdu, offers very good diversification of provision in both key stages.
- The management of the department is good and well supported by senior staff.
- Sustained above average results at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Use the good practice in the department to focus on improvement in methodology, especially in Urdu.
- Increase use of ICT and TV/video to enhance learning.
- Focus upon students' use of the foreign language for their own purpose in classroom communication.

140. Standards of students in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national averages and there is an improving grasp of grammatical structures. This reflects the results of recent teacher assessments and is also similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Students' levels of comprehension of written and spoken text are generally higher than their oral skills, but exceptionally a Year 7 class showed outstanding competence in understanding instructions in the foreign language and in retaining and reproducing with accuracy a wide range of vocabulary using very good pronunciation. Overall, students are less confident in speaking and rarely initiate the foreign language to communicate or seek help. Written work is usually accurate but is limited in scope. Students in this age range, including those with special needs and English as an additional language, make good progress and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

141. The attainment of students in Years 10 to 11 is good overall and this is also an improvement. This is particularly evident in abler sets where students have a solid grasp of structures and apply these correctly in both spoken and written work. There are examples of high quality writing and an ability to use a range of strategies to identify meaning from unknown text. In outstanding French lessons in Year 10 and Year 11, students showed a confident understanding of structures, used extended language and performed with attention to very good pronunciation and intonation. Whereas attainment in Italian and German is above average, progress is only satisfactory in spoken language, whereas progress in French is sometimes very good. These observations are borne out by the above average GCSE results at grades A* to C in all languages.

142. The quality of teaching is good. In almost all lessons teaching was at least satisfactory and in two thirds of lessons it is good or better. In two lessons teaching was excellent. This is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is good throughout the school. Where teaching is particularly strong the confident management of the class, the impact of focused presentation and, above all, the challenge and pace of lessons lead to high levels of student motivation and participation with resultant outstanding progress. Where lessons have less impact, teachers do not provide opportunities for students to use the foreign language and make an inappropriate use of English. Relations between teachers and students are usually very positive and

management of the class is good, but in the weaker lessons teachers do not deal sufficiently with the passivity of students, the occasional off-task behaviour and low-level oral response. Marking of students' work is good with useful commentary on how they might improve.

143. Students' attitudes to their work and commitment to learning are usually good and sometimes very good indeed. In most lessons they settle quickly to their work, collaborate well in paired activities and listen carefully to instructions. Behaviour is often excellent and they are seldom inattentive. In a minority of lessons, however, a degree of passivity and a lack of self-confidence inhibit students' productive use of the foreign language.
144. Management of the department is good. The acting head of department is very well supported by the senior staff and provides an example of outstanding classroom practice to her colleagues. Documentation and schemes of work are of good quality but do not give sufficient attention to the application of information technology or citizenship. The curriculum offers a wide range of languages and there is a welcome range of extra-curricular and cultural opportunities. Resources are adequate but there is lack of sufficient TV/video facilities or access to information technology. Accommodation is good, rooms have high quality display and provide a pleasant learning environment.

Urdu

145. The provision for Urdu is satisfactory overall. Standards of work are above average by Year 9 and in line with national averages by Year 11, which broadly reflects the results of the GCSE examinations in 2002. However, numbers are very small and attainment is very dependent on the level of students' prior knowledge of Urdu. Students make satisfactory progress overall throughout Years 9, 10 and 11, though there is some element of underachievement and most students could do better. Skills in reading are largely good in most year groups and students read aloud from standard course texts with reasonable accuracy and speed, occasionally hesitating over difficult or new vocabulary. Writing skills are developing satisfactorily as there is a heavy focus on this skill in lessons. Most students have made good progress in developing their knowledge of the script, however, their capacity for extended and independent writing is variable. Though students' speaking and listening skills are adequate for examination purposes, many lack the confidence to speak at length and have a fairly limited range of vocabulary. This is not helped by a lack of focus on developing and extending spoken Urdu in lessons. Limited oral communication skills to some extent hold back students' development of written work. For instance, in a Year 11 lesson, students working on a whole class exercise to write a postcard needed considerable help from their teacher to express good ideas orally in Urdu before they could produce written statements. In some cases, students' spoken Urdu is good but their English is at an early stage of development, but there is little focus on developing relevant English vocabulary.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching shows a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include good subject knowledge. This is used effectively to instruct students on how to express ideas in writing and to answer questions from comprehension exercises in the course text. The work is potentially challenging for most students and indicates high expectations from the teacher. However, students are not given sufficient opportunities to work on their own or to work at a level that suits their current needs. For example, all the lessons seen were teacher directed and teacher led, usually working at the pace of the slowest in the class. Some able students particularly are working at a level which is too easy for them or at a pace which is too slow. There is a lack of variety in the work and the narrow

range of teaching styles often fails to enthuse or motivate students, especially girls. The range of resources is very limited also. There are, for example, no displays of key words that students will be using in the lesson. Teaching needs much development if the high drop-out rate is to be reversed.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**. However, there are some outstanding features which make a significant contribution to students' musical performance, personal development and their wider appreciation of music.

Strengths

- There is some very good development of relationships which motivates students and promote a positive ethos for the subject.
- Achievements in band performance are excellent.
- The new accommodation for music is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop curriculum provision for students in Years 7 to 9.
- Put in place effective systems for assessment.
- Improve take-up of GCSE music courses.
- Develop effective use of music technology.

147. Teacher assessments for Year 9 students show standards that are in line with expectations, but the quality of most of the work seen during the inspection was below this. The most recent GCSE results are above the national average, though this is based upon a small number of candidates. All groups have access to the music curriculum and boys and girls respond and achieve equally well overall.

148. Work in music for students in Years 7 to 9 is based upon a range of units which provide some material relevant to the National Curriculum requirements. Not all lesson content is appropriate. For example, two lessons in Year 7 involve singing along to a video of a musical. Areas such as the use of ICT and class/workshop performances are under developed. Some good composition work is being produced by one Year 8 class where students work keenly and are able to improvise short melodic phrases at the keyboard. Their work shows a good sense of shape and balance. However, this level of attainment is not sufficiently widespread and there is a tendency for teachers and students to concentrate upon knowledge about music rather than an active engagement with it.

149. No Year 11 students are taking GCSE music at present and there are only four students in Year 10 following the GCSE course. Only one lesson is on the timetable, the rest of the teaching is provided in an after-school class. Those students taking the course are committed practical musicians, but their course work material needs more careful selection and structured progression in order to develop listening and composition skills effectively.

150. Some good and very good teaching was observed but the overall standard of teaching is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, students work purposefully and enjoy a very good relationship with their teacher, but in other instances, lesson presentation is often unfocused and some poor behaviour is allowed to undermine achievement. Assessment of students' work in Years 7 to 9 requires a more coherent approach which

relates to the National Curriculum programmes of study and the assessment level criteria as defined nationally.

151. The department has now some new accommodation which is of very good quality. However, the provision of only one specialist classroom is insufficient for the demands of the present timetable.
152. Music is no longer managed as part of a performing arts faculty as it was at the time of the last inspection, but other problems identified in the last report in relation to leadership and management remain. These are recognised, but strategic management has not yet reconciled the conflicting issues of utilising staff strengths and preserving flourishing traditions with the need to develop a broader base of musical provision and achievement in the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Improvements since the last inspection are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, resulting in above average standards.
- The commitment to enrichment activities by specialist and other teachers is excellent.
- Curriculum provision is very good; the school has 'Sportsmark Gold' status.
- The literacy strategy is well implemented throughout the department.

Areas for improvement

- Further develop assessment procedures as a tool for driving up standards.
- Undertake detailed risk assessments.
- Develop schemes of work for students in Years 10 and 11.

153. Standards are above average by the end of Years 9 and Year 11. This is reflected in examination results in 2002, which were well above national averages, especially A* and A grades. They were among the highest in the school and have improved year on year. Students obtained better results in physical education than in most of their other subjects. In view of average standards on entry, students' achievement is good across all activities seen: badminton, football, netball, hockey, health-related education (HRE) and gymnastics. The learning and achievement of students with special educational needs and students with English as an additional language follow a similar pattern. The attainment of boys and girls is comparable. Standards in games such as football and cricket are good. For example, Year 10 boys were semi-finalists in the County Cricket Cup, and Year 8 girls won the district five-a-side football competition. Significant improvements have been made since the time of the last inspection. In particular, standards have risen, full and short examination courses have been introduced and numbers of students taking Duke of Edinburgh Awards have risen steeply from about 20 to 120. The school has 'Sportsmark Gold' status in recognition 'of an excellent programme of physical education and school sport.'
154. By Year 9, most students know how to warm up effectively, independently and with understanding. In games such as football, most students acquire good basic skills and techniques. Their tactical knowledge is also good and higher attaining girls correctly position themselves goal side when defending a free kick, throw-in or corner. In HRE most boys understand the principles of training, and a minority know how these relate to various activities such as skipping to boxing. Students' observation, planning and

evaluation skills are good and most students can effectively analyse and comment on skills and techniques to improve performance using relevant technical terms.

155. By Year 11, most students are achieving above average standards partly due to good time allocation. In addition, over half play for either inter-school or form competitive teams in a wide range of sports which re-enforces, extends and deepens students' skills. High attaining boys are fit, strong and agile as seen in a circuit lesson and understand concepts such as 'overload' as a method of training. Students on the full examination course are meeting course requirements mainly at average grades. Although more competent in the practical, rather than theoretical component of their work, in hockey their performance was not as expected, showing a lack of self-control.
156. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, often very good, and sometimes satisfactory. This results in good progress in lessons over time. Students' enthusiasm, high levels of participation and willingness to play fair enhance learning. Teachers' good knowledge and technical accuracy ensures that students learn basic skills effectively. Lesson planning is very good and new or developmental work is a strong feature of all lessons. Tasks set are varied to meet the needs of different ability groups of students. For example, in a Year 7 gymnastics lesson observed different moves, such as a forward roll, were given a point value. Each group was then given a total number for a complete sequence and the girls decided levels of difficulty of the component moves. In very good lessons, teachers have high expectations setting work that is both physically and intellectually demanding. Lesson organisation and student management are strong, ensuring that students learn in a safe, orderly environment. Teachers are well informed about the strengths, weaknesses and learning needs of each student. They adopt simple but effective strategies for overcoming difficulties of communication, such as facing hearing impaired students when talking, and writing up key words in large letters for the partially sighted. The literacy strategy is consistently well implemented throughout the department. Although informal assessment is good, this is not linked to formal assessment procedures and students do not know what they have to do to reach a higher National Curriculum level.
157. The new departmental head has made a good start in identifying most of the appropriate areas for development. Senior management monitor and support the work of the department effectively. Specialist and other teachers show excellent commitment to an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities. Curricular provision is very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where all students take at least a short GCSE examination. However, there are no schemes of work for examination courses and detailed risk assessments need to be developed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The head of department provides outstanding leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and in some cases inspirational.
- GCSE examination results are above national average and well above similar schools.
- Teachers have a commitment to high achievement for all students.
- Religious education contributes significantly to spirituality, personal development and citizenship.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure gifted and talented students are sufficiently challenged in all teaching groups.
- Narrow the gap between gender differences in attainment.

158. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection, and continue to rise. By the end of Year 9, both boys and girls reach well above average standards, which represents very good achievement in relation to their below average attainment on entry to the school.
159. Year 11 students reach well above average standards in full GCSE, taken by one third of the year in 2002, with 70 per cent of students gaining A* - C grade passes. In the short course students reach above average standards. Girls do better than boys but the variance is replicated nationally. Nevertheless, this is an area identified for attention within the department. There is no discernible difference between the performance of different ethnic groups.
160. Levels of attainment in work seen are well above average at the end of Year 9. In Years 7 to 9, students are building a basic knowledge of Christianity, Islam and other major religions and developing a good understanding of religious concepts such as faith and the effects of belief on behaviour. Students have a good specialist vocabulary, understand and can recall key words. They show a growing ability to reflect on questions of meaning and purpose and make links between their learning and their own experience. By the end of Year 9, students have a firm foundation of Christianity and Islam to develop in GCSE examination work.
161. In Years 10 and 11, work seen in class, on wall displays, in coursework and assessment tasks, all illustrate that students are attaining very good standards. In a Year 10 class exploring euthanasia students showed respect for differing views and could articulate their own responses to this moral issue. Year 11 student essays, on war and peace, contain good, relevant and supportive references from the Bible and the Qur`an.
162. Overall, students make very good progress, as do students from different ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. This is due to the effective support given by teachers and learning support staff where present, coupled with good differentiation in learning tasks. Although gifted and talented students make good progress, they are insufficiently challenged in some lessons. The 'Big Brain Bonus' idea, introduced by the head of department, is not yet used consistently.

163. Overall, teaching and learning are very good and students learn very effectively as a result. Several inspiring lessons, which gained and held students' interest, were observed during the inspection. Particular strengths are the excellent relationships between teachers and students and teachers' enthusiasm for their subject, which inspires high achievement. The very good teaching is rooted in good planning, excellent subject knowledge and high expectations. Teachers make lessons fun and exciting through use of a wide range of stimulating resources and learning activities, consequently students enjoy lessons. Methods ensure the inclusion of all students, for example, students can use writing frames and the word banks. Teachers make good use of ICT in lessons, for example Power Point presentations seen in Year 8, 10 and 11 lessons aided learning. Close attention is given to improving literacy skills, which helps students develop their written work. The work for lower attaining students and those with special educational needs is carefully matched to their abilities so that they make good progress in lessons. Very good classroom management results in good behaviour and positive attitudes. Students know that each one of them is valued and consequently they, in turn, value their achievements. Homework is always set with relevant tasks, which extend class work. Marking is regular, thorough and students' knowledge of their learning and target levels/ grades is good.
164. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent. Many very effective new initiatives have been implemented to raise motivation and attainment, such as the praise policy, which includes 'phone calls/letters to parents, competitions in Years 8 and 9, and the 'table of triumph'. Class work, homework and assessments are monitored by the head of department and moderation is regular. There are excellent enrichment opportunities which include visits to places of worship, and a revision club for Years 10 and 11. Assessment procedures are well established, assessments are moderated and monitoring of students' subject performance is excellent, with mapping from Year 7 onwards, concluding with very thorough analysis of GCSE results.
165. Outstanding leadership and management are the major reasons for the significant improvement to standards in all years over the past four years, achieved despite staffing difficulties. All students take either full or short course in religious education with over half current Year 10 students choosing the full course. The ethos of the department supports and encourages all students and reflects the school's aims and values. The department makes a powerful and inspiring contribution to students' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social, cultural and citizenship. An appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures is a prominent feature of examination work. Lessons include the understanding and skills necessary to become responsible members of society.
166. There is shared commitment to further improvement and the capacity to succeed is very high. This is a first class department, which is valued in and beyond the school and is a beacon of excellence.