

INSPECTION REPORT

WOOD GREEN SCHOOL

Witney

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123238

Headteacher: Miss C Savage

Reporting inspector: Carol Worthington
20609

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 254353

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woodstock Road Witney
Postcode:	OX28 1DX
Telephone number:	(01993) 702355
Fax number:	(01993) 774961
Email address:	headspa_woodgreen@yahoo.co.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Chairman of governors:	R Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	24 th – 28 th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20609	C Worthington	Registered inspector	Citizenship	How high standards are How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
9880	A Comer	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
24142	S Argyle	Team inspector	Drama	
27226	R Cribb	Team inspector	History	
31779	V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
16786	S Hodge	Team inspector	Science	
30597	R Howells	Team inspector	Biology Physics	
19169	T Lawes	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
18967	B Loydell	Team inspector	Geography	
13122	S Matthews	Team inspector	History	
19528	R Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18846	P Priest	Team inspector	Music English as an additional language	
10941	R Robinson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
20533	D Rogers	Team inspector	Art	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
15372	P Walker	Team inspector	English	
31644	V Walker	Team inspector	French German	
19983	H Webb	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
18755	R Whittaker	Team inspector	Physic education	
18673	R Wilkins	Team inspector	Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol

BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5 - 8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	9 - 11
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 15
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	15 - 16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17 - 19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19 - 20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21 - 24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT	24 - 25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26 - 31
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	32 - 52
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	53 - 64

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This popular larger than average community school has 1147 pupils on roll between the ages of 11 and 18, with an even number of boys and girls and is one of two mixed comprehensive schools in Witney. It draws its pupils from the north, east and west sides of the town and from neighbouring villages. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 5.9 and below the national average. The school occasionally has a very small number of pupils who do not speak English as their first language. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is average; 3.5 per cent have statements, which is above average. The school has a designated unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties - 20 have statements. There is full integration between school and unit. Attainment on entry of the current Year 7 and Year 8 was above average; of pupils in Year 9 and above, it was below average.

The school also voluntarily hosts three classes from Springfield Special School.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many very good features. It aspires to develop the whole child by providing a well balanced education from which pupils emerge as mature and responsible young adults. Personal development is very good and relationships are warm. Standards of achievement in GCSE are above average; pupils make consistently good progress from Years 7 to 11 as a result of the good teaching they receive. The headteacher leads the school very well and is well supported by senior managers. All staff form a cohesive team in the drive for further improvement. Value for money is good.

What the school does well

- The most recent GCSE results were above average overall and well above average in mathematics and geography.
- Standards achieved in Key Stage 3 are above average in mathematics and science and well above in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Sixth form provision is very good and standards are high.
- Provision for extracurricular activity is very good, particularly in drama, music and physical education.
- Provision for pastoral care and moral and social development is very good, so pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and integrated well into the whole school community.
- The library/resources centre enables pupils' independent learning to be developed very well.

What could be improved

- Provision for ICT in Key Stage 4 in continuation of the very good provision in Key Stage 3.
- Improved provision for religious education at Key Stage 4.
- Marking and short-term assessment.
- Planned provision for spiritual development in the curriculum and through collective worship.

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 when it has made good improvement. All the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed and improvement achieved. Impressive improvement has been made to the school's accommodation to provide a much better environment for learning; departments are better supplied with resources. Management of special educational needs has greatly improved; the policy is now effective and provision is very good. The National Curriculum requirements are not met in art because of the missing ICT component in Key Stages 3 and 4, but are now met in music throughout the school and in ICT in Key Stage 3. The school is now employing well-qualified

technical staff to support provision. Boys' achievement has improved and in some areas is now relatively better than girls, noticeable in mathematics and science in particular. The school still does not comply with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and has no policy for the planned development of spirituality. The sixth form has strengthened and continues to be very good.

The school continues to produce above average standards. In the current inspection, there were no unsatisfactory lessons as there were last time. The curriculum has improved and extracurricular provision is now very good. Assessment has greatly improved; leadership and management have been maintained at a high standard and are very good. The very high professional standards and the ability of staff to work hard as a team show a very good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school's performance in GCSE examinations for 2002 was above the national average for the number of pupils' gaining five A* - C grades and average compared with similar schools. For 14 year-olds, performance in National Curriculum tests was above average for mathematics and science and average for English.

Current standards in English and science are average in Key Stage 3 and above average in Key Stage 4. In mathematics they are above at both key stages. Standards have been rising faster than average in Key Stage 3. They appear to have fallen from well above average to above average in Key Stage 4, but national standards have risen sharply since the last inspection and the gap is now narrower. Standards in other subjects at Key Stage 4 are well above average in geography, above average in art and design and technology, modern languages, music and physical education, average in history and below average in ICT and religious education. In Key Stage 3, pupils' standards are above average in ICT, geography and history and average in art, design and technology, modern languages, music, physical education and religious education. From their below average attainment on entry, these pupils have achieved well. Those with special educational needs make good progress in both the main school and the unit.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school. Most are keen to learn and enthusiastically take part in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in class and at breaktimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils have very good awareness of the needs of all members of the community. They have a strong sense of justice and how their actions affect other people.
Attendance	Good. This is above the national average. Pupils arrive on time and most lessons start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. Teachers have good expertise in the subjects they teach; they promote literacy and numeracy well, but could do more to ensure that pupils develop ICT skills in all subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers manage their classes very well; they use a very good range of teaching methods to enthuse and promote pupils' learning. A strong feature is the way teachers encourage their pupils to develop independent learning skills, using the library/resource centre, which prepares them not only for the sixth form but for study and careers beyond. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties. The occasional pupils whose mother tongue is not English receive satisfactory support. Teachers' planning to extend pupils with particular gifts and talents in lessons is not consistent however.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall quality of the planned curriculum is good, but in Key Stage 4, its balance is unsatisfactory because the National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not met. The quality and range of extracurricular activity throughout the school are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know their pupils well. They adapt their lessons well in order to meet needs effectively. Provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulty in the unit is very good. Pupils respond well to the high quality teaching they experience. The excellent relationships they develop with staff and each other have a significant impact on the progress they make.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school seeks specialist support for the occasional pupils who do not speak English as their first language as soon as possible after their arrival. Provision is satisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social education is very good; for cultural education it is good, but pupils are given too few opportunities to appreciate and understand spirituality either in collective worship or across the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care is very good. Assessment of pupils' academic work is good overall, with some very good examples of good practice and some areas for development.

The school's partnership with parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a very good leader who manages her staff very well and makes the best use of their talents. She has very clear vision for the direction of the school. She is very well supported by the senior management team, subject and pastoral managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They play a very good part in the selection and appointment of staff and in their consideration of the school's direction and development. They have consistent and effective procedures for monitoring the curriculum, but statutory requirements for collective worship and ICT in Key Stage 4 are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. All staff and governors contribute to the school development plan and use it as a working document to direct the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school plans very well to obtain the best value from all resources. It compares its achievement critically with those of other schools, seeks competitive tenders, constantly challenging itself to do better, consulting pupils and channelling all developments to this aim.

Staffing, accommodation and resources are all good. All staff are well qualified and form a cohesive team. The recent building programme has made a significant difference to the learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The standards their children achieve. • Extracurricular music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress, including time allowed at parents' evenings. • Aspects of behaviour. • Inconsistent homework. • The state of the toilets.

Inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. The school supplies good information regarding children's progress; the time allocated at parents' evenings is planned so that teachers who have more to discuss with parents are given priority. Behaviour is good overall in school; where there are some small instances of unsatisfactory conduct, they are quickly dealt with by the successful 'walkabout' system recently introduced. Inspectors agree that there are some inconsistencies in the provision for homework which the school needs to address. Some toilets are in urgent need of refurbishment, but the plans and materials for doing so are already in school and much should be completed in the forthcoming holidays.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

WOOD GREEN SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The Wood Green sixth form has 189 students, with slightly more boys than girls. It is run in collaboration with The Henry Box School and Abingdon and Witney College. Its composition is similar to that of the main school in respect of students' background, but there are no special educational needs. All students follow AS level or AVCE courses in Year 12 and A2/AS or AVCE in Year 13. A number of students from the Consortium come to study a subject at the school and some of the school's students study a subject at the other institutions within the Consortium. Almost all pupils from Year 11 who go on to study A-levels are based in the school's sixth form. Vocational courses are followed at the college.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provides a very good quality of education with several excellent features. It is very well led, cost effective and gives very good value for money. The standard of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent and the provision for academic and personal development is very good. Academic standards are well above average and represent very good achievement. Through the Consortium arrangements, it successfully meets the needs of all students in providing courses which enable them to achieve their potential and become mature and responsible adults.

Strengths

- High standards in academic subjects.
- Very good careers education and guidance for future study.
- Partnership in the consortium.
- Students' attitudes and positive relationships.
- Very good development of students' personal and learning skills.
- Very good teaching.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Good procedures for identifying and supporting students who have difficulty with their work.

What could be improved

- Standards in physics.
- The use of ICT in mathematics, biology, physics, drama and history.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

The curriculum offers a very good range of subjects – mostly academic in this school with AVCE leisure and recreation. A wide range of vocational subjects is available through consortium ensuring that students have very good equality of access and opportunity to sixth form provision. Extracurricular and enrichment courses further serve to widen students' experience.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Very good. Students respond very well to very good teaching. They consequently achieve very good results in A level examinations.
Physics	Satisfactory. Teaching is good, ensuring good progress, but monitoring of students' written work and assessment procedures lack rigour and need to be formalised to improve the below average standards.
Biology	Good. Students make good progress in response to the good teaching they receive and achieve above average examination results.
Art and design	Very good. Teachers' very high expectations and planning enable students to achieve well and learn independently.
Drama	Outstanding. Students achieve well above average standards as a result of inspirational teaching. Excellent new facilities add a great deal to provision. Technical support would enhance this further.
Geography	Very good. The consistently high examination standards are achieved as a result of teachers' excellent expertise, the good development of independent learning and use of ICT.
History	Very good. Teaching is very good and students produce work of a high standard, although deadlines for work can be too flexible.
English	Very good. The teaching of English is very good and students achieve very well. Standards are high and rising. Assessment data are not used sufficiently to measure progress.
Information and communication technology	Very good. Excellent teaching with particularly good use of assessment data to monitor progress and set target ensures good all-round progress and achievement.

Provision was sampled in a few other subjects. It is outstanding in extracurricular music. In the lessons observed, teaching and learning were very good in chemistry and physical education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Subject and pastoral staff do not allow students to lose pace. Development of learning skills is excellent; students are becoming mature young people with a very good work ethic.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. This is a high quality and efficiently run sixth form, whose head is well supported by two deputies. Liaison between the schools and college in the consortium is a major strength of the provision.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of subjects available to them. They are well taught and challenged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical assessment of their work. Future options.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are helped to study independently. • Teachers are accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral help and guidance. • The school's response to their views. • Their treatment as young adults.
---	--

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by sixth formers. All the students spoken to during the inspection contradicted the negative views in the questionnaire strongly and inspectors found no support for these opinions, except that concerning critical assessment of physics, which is justified. It became apparent that the questionnaire was not readily understood.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is rising. The current Year 7 and Year 8 both entered with above average attainment as shown by their Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results. Standardised cognitive tests taken on entry also confirm this. From Year 9 upwards, however, the same tests showed attainment to be below average, particularly in verbal reasoning.
2. In 2002, pupils' overall performance in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 was above the national average and that of similar schools in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils did better in mathematics and science than English. In English, they were average. However, these pupils had below average verbal reasoning scores on entry to the school, which equate most closely to literacy, but were about average in tests relating to numeracy. Their achievement was, therefore, good all round.
3. The school has an attached Area Resource Unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulty and most of its 20 or so pupils are entered for tests alongside pupils from the main school. The lower standard of literacy in some of these pupils accounts for the greater than average proportion gaining below the expected level 5 in English. It is very creditable that in mathematics and science, this proportion decreases to below average; the school enables these pupils to achieve well in these subjects by often providing an amanuensis. There is also a higher proportion of above average levels in both mathematics and science, which shows that the school also does well by its higher ability pupils in these subjects.
4. Boys did better than girls in mathematics and science, though both achieved above average results in mathematics and science; boys did slightly better than girls in English. The school has striven to improve boys' achievement in English since the last inspection and has been successful, without compromising girls' achievement. The general trend in standards in Year 9 has been rising faster than the national trend over the last four years. Standards shown by end of key stage teacher assessments in 2002 were average for design and technology, physical education and art, above average for history and modern languages, well above for ICT and geography and below average for music.
5. Current standards in the school in Year 9 were judged to be similar to those shown by the tests and teacher assessments for English, mathematics, art, design and technology, history, geography, ICT and physical education. In music, standards showed good improvement, now being close to average and in religious education, standards are in line with those expected from the agreed syllabus. The very high standards in ICT and geography have been maintained, but standards in science and modern languages are judged to be lower this year. There is not enough time given for pupils to build really secure foundations in modern languages when studying both French and German. In science, they are making good progress from their relatively low attainments on entry to the school.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make consistently good progress. All pupils have individual education plans (IEPs), which identify their needs and provide appropriate targets for development. Teachers make good reference to pupils' IEPs in order to meet their needs effectively during lessons. They know the pupils well and work hard to ensure that they are included in all aspects of their lessons. Pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants who provide additional support where appropriate. As a result their progress is consistently good and sometimes very good.
7. The school's performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations in 2002 was above the national average for the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE passes or GNVQ equivalent at grades A*-C. That gaining five grades A*-G was close to the national average. The average GCSE/GNVQ points score for five subjects achieved by individuals in Year 11 is a more accurate measure of

- achievement and pupils' results were similar to the national average with boys' being above and girls' close to average.
8. In the previous three years, boys have been above and girls well above average. There is no simple explanation of why girls did relatively worse in 2002. The school has an impetus on raising boys' achievement since the previous inspection, particularly in English. More boys took English literature GCSE than girls and did a little better than average, whilst girls' performance was average. In mathematics there was a similar difference between boys' and girls' attainment, boys doing much better than girls. Fewer girls than boys were entered for the combined science dual award, even though science is a core subject. This is linked in part to the non-attendance for examinations of a small minority.
 9. No significant differences were noticed in the attitudes of boys and girls in English and mathematics during the inspection, but in science, this was not the case. In a few science lessons, boys tended to dominate and teachers paid less attention to girls. On some occasions, girls were observed to be reluctant to seek help and lost interest; they made less progress than boys. It does seem as if the drive to improve boys' achievement has succeeded, but somewhat at the expense of girls in some science lessons. Nevertheless, girls do well at A level in science subjects.
 10. Standards in some subjects achieved in the 2002 GCSE examinations were particularly high and well above average in mathematics, geography and science for boys and geography and drama for girls. Boys and girls achieved less well in German and religious education. Current standards seen in Year 11 are above average in English, mathematics and science, corresponding to the school's sustained action to meet its targets for achievement in the core subjects and the use of assessment to set individual and group targets in these subjects. In design and technology, current standards are also above average across the specialisms, with improvements in presentation and research in food technology and graphics products, bringing these areas up to the level of the standards achieved in resistant materials and systems and control.
 11. Standards are average in art, music, history, modern languages and physical education and are being maintained at well above average in geography. A large proportion of pupils choose to study geography in Years 10 and 11 and the continuing high standards are due to the range of teaching methods. Examination techniques play a large part in the preparation of higher ability pupils, together with the ability to use numeracy and ICT to the full.
 12. Standards in ICT and religious education were seen to be below average for Year 11. This is because the full programme of study for ICT is only taught to a small number of pupils who take GCSE in the subject, who achieve at least average levels of attainment. In religious education, too little time is devoted to the subject to make it viable for a full GCSE and there is also evidence from lessons of disaffection from some pupils, especially in Year 11.

Sixth form

13. Disruptions to the systems for the marking and publication of AS and A level examinations has resulted in there being no national standards for 2002. The last reporting year for which comparisons can be made is 2001 when the school's results shown by average points scores for A and AS levels were well above the national average. Particularly good A level results were seen that year in business studies, chemistry, economics, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics and religious education. Below average results were seen in art and design, communications studies and physics, with English literature and German being average. In 2002, results were better. Ninety-eight per cent of students achieved A to E grades; 41 per cent achieved A to B. All except one candidate achieved two or more passes. Current evidence shows that of the subjects inspected or sampled, similarly high standards are being maintained in mathematics, drama, history and geography. Results in most subjects were higher than predicted from students' prior attainment, showing good added value in mathematics, chemistry, design and technology, economics, drama, history, religious studies and communication studies. The AVCE in leisure and recreation adds particularly good value to students' education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastically involved with its activities and that of the wider community. They take pride in their achievements. Parents believe that their children are encouraged to work hard and to do their best and that the school helps them to become mature and responsible. The evidence supports these positive views.
15. Pupils with special educational needs display positive attitudes to learning, responding to the inclusive nature of the school. They are keen to do well and to meet the targets identified on their individual education plans. The very few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties find it hard to conform to the expectations of the majority, especially when they lose interest in the lesson and the teacher has limited means to recapture and sustain their enthusiasm.
16. Overall, behaviour is good. In class, behaviour is generally good and often very good or excellent, particularly where teaching is effective and focused on the needs of individual pupils. This is particularly so in the lower school. In the upper school, very occasionally the behaviour of a tiny minority of pupils is unsatisfactory, as seen in some religious education and science lessons. Despite somewhat congested corridors, pupils move around the school in a sensible manner and there is a calm and orderly exit at the end of the school day. One concern, shared by pupils, parents and staff, is the amount of litter evident around the school. Solutions to this problem are currently being considered by the school council and staff. Pupils interact well together at break times and respect each other's feelings. During the inspection there was no evidence of oppressive behaviour. Although during the last school year there was an above average number of fixed period exclusions, so far this year there has been a significant reduction, so that at the end of the year the school is likely to be well inside its target.
17. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. Teachers and support staff work hard at establishing these relationships and improving pupils' self-esteem. The system of rewards and sanctions is well understood, valued and respected by pupils. The emphasis that the school places on personal, social and health education, the very impressive pastoral system and the programme of work-related learning all contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to show initiative in a wide variety of activities, including their own learning. Prime examples of this are the school council, the wide range of charitable fund-raising, the lower school festival, pupils' commitment to a wide variety of activities outside lessons (particularly the school bands, choir, drama and sport), pupils' involvement in the school website and the contribution that all pupils make to their annual reports and in setting targets for improvement.
18. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a positive contribution to learning, standards having been successfully maintained since the last inspection.
19. Pupils' attendance is good being above the national average for schools of this type. There has been further improvement over the past year and the rate of unauthorised absence has been significantly reduced to a figure below the national average. Punctuality is good and lessons begin on time.

Sixth form

20. Students' attitudes to school are very good. They are enthusiastically involved in their studies, the life of the school and in the wider community. They take pride in their surroundings and their achievements. Relationships between students, and between students and adults, are very good. Students willingly and enthusiastically show initiative and take responsibility through a wide range of activities. This is exemplified by their involvement in the school council and the sixth form committee. They provide very valuable support for younger pupils through the mentoring and paired reading schemes and through the lesson attachment programme. There is also a community attachment programme that is well supported. Students have a mature approach to all

aspects of school life and they are developing a wide range of excellent personal and learning skills that are already evident. Attendance was good during the last school year with little unauthorised absence. Overall, students have positive views about what the school sixth form provides and these views are supported by the inspection evidence. A significant minority of students expressed negative views in the questionnaire about the advice and support that they receive, about whether or not they are treated as adults and about how the school responds to their views. However, these views are not supported by the inspection evidence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching and learning are good. During the inspection, four out of five lessons were good or better. The school attaches great importance to the quality of teaching; no appointment is made without a teaching observation in the department and its improvement has also been a focus in the school development plan. Each department has identified the qualities of effective lessons in its subject over the last two years and put the information into a booklet for all to consider. Particular strengths in teaching, therefore, lie in the methodology used by departments to enable pupils to learn well in all subjects. Very good use is made of drama in history, for example. In a Year 7 lesson, an excellent start was made in a dramatic simulation of the spreading of the plague round the class whilst they enacted mock trade. This led pupils of all abilities to engage quickly in the lesson. In geography, great store is laid by the development of critical thinking. Teachers encourage pupils to think how to consider concepts of people and places more deeply by the frequent use of 'so what?' questioning, which takes learning to a higher level. In art in Year 7, the emphasis on technical expertise followed by allowing pupils choice of approach when using water colours brought forth some good original work.
22. Teachers have good subject expertise which is kept up to date by effective training. The confidence this brings enables teachers to have high expectations of the standard of work their pupils may produce. In ICT in Year 11, for example, pupils completed a coursework assignment in which they designed a company logo and stationery to a high standard. Teachers' good subject knowledge in science enabled pupils in Year 7 to consolidate learning over a wide range of health-related aspects of biology.
23. Most teachers' expectations are high, whatever the ability of pupils. Where classes contain a number of pupils with special educational needs, methods such as the use of picture clues relating to the text of Macbeth enabled these pupils to predict what could happen next. Excellent differentiated tasks produced by a student teacher working with the classroom assistant brought about rapid learning about the battle of Hastings. However, expectations in a Year 9 graphics lesson in design and technology were not high enough for lower ability pupils to make as good progress as those of higher ability.
24. Teachers are beginning to apply recent training in the National Initiatives for Key Stage 3 in all subjects, with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy throughout. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of subject specific vocabulary is enhanced by the display of key words in most departments. All pupils in a Year 11 geography lesson, for example, showed good awareness and use of geographical terms in their textbooks and notebooks; as a result they independently made a summary for an urban case study. Writing frames and exercises for filling in key words, such as 'villein' and 'serf' used by lower ability pupils in history enabled them to produce good work on crime in a village case study. Numeracy is also being developed satisfactorily, particularly in science and design and technology where pupils interpret graphs and charts and measure accurately. Information and communication technology is taught well in Years 7 to 9 and pupils gain well above average skills. However these are not developed fully in all subjects and in art the ICT component is lacking, with only the use of digital cameras.
25. Teachers' planning is good and usually covers work for all abilities, so they all succeed. Extension work is often provided for those capable of higher attainment; in art extension lessons are given. In mathematics, the development of thinking contributes strongly to the high standards achieved, seen well used in a very good Year 7 lesson investigating 'Happy Numbers'. Many teachers also use IEPs to provide work for those of lower ability. In English and mathematics,

teaching assistants give effective support and guidance; there was good achievement in the lowest Year 10 set, for example, learning about migration from rural to urban areas in geography. However, work was not matched sufficiently to ability in a history lesson in Year 9 where pupils struggled with difficult material about World War I. Planning is enhanced by the use of good resources, including interactive whiteboards in some subjects, such as mathematics, but learning about the Vietnam War in Year 11 history was hampered by a lack of textbooks.

26. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in nearly all subjects; it is occasionally very good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of such pupils in their classes. They refer to IEPs in their planning and ensure that tasks and activities during lessons are appropriately matched to pupils' needs and abilities. As a consequence, pupils are fully included in lessons and make consistently good progress. Where pupils have additional support during lessons, teachers and support staff work very effectively together.
27. Teachers manage pupils very well and control their classes effectively as a rule; some pupils have learning and behavioural difficulty, but the lessons where this has a deleterious impact are few and far between. Only in some religious education lessons did older pupils' negative attitudes affect learning: in one Year 11 class, pupils showed ill-mannered demeanour and two thirds of the class came unprepared by not having their exercise books. A few girls in Year 8 also showed a negative attitude to this subject and in Year 10 it was also seen in physical education.
28. Teachers mark work promptly and give grades so that pupils have an idea of how well they are doing. Very good marking was seen in Year 9 history books, but pupils do not always know how to improve, since they are not set targets in all subjects. Sometimes during lessons themselves, for example on igneous rock in science in Year 11, short term assessment is not used thoroughly enough to check on pupils' understanding. In a Year 9 history class, marking was also variable so that pupils had patchy knowledge of their standard of attainment.
29. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to enhance the curriculum, such as practice for music. Good use is made of homework in some subjects, such as science, to prepare for the next lesson. Revision is also used well, as seen in mathematics where pupils were consolidating work. Parents mentioned homework as an area they would like to see developed. There is sufficient, but it is inconsistent between subjects.

Sixth form

30. Teaching and learning are very good in the sixth form. During the inspection, all teaching was at least good, with nearly three quarters of lessons very good or excellent. Teachers were seen to have very good subject expertise in all subjects inspected and use this to prepare lessons well, most of which are characterised by good pace, well structured question and answer sessions and challenging examples. Teachers have enthusiasm for their subjects and a very good rapport with students, who take a mature attitude to their studies. Teachers place great emphasis on student accountability and most students are responsible, mature and articulate when discussing their work management, as in art, for example. Teachers have high expectations of their students' capabilities and this is seen in the very good formative marking and the constant way they strive to extend students' knowledge by questioning to get them to think deeper into the subject, as seen in geography. However, sometimes assessment procedures lack rigour, as in physics, and need to be formalised.
31. The key skill of communication is developed well in all subjects through written work, discussion and group work. Students are encouraged to complete research tasks and discuss their findings in most subjects; many regard this as a good preparation for university studies. Numeracy is used very well by teachers, especially in the physical sciences. Some subject teachers make very good use of ICT, but this could be developed further in others, such as mathematics.
32. Teachers expect students to read widely, not only in English literature but also in the science subjects. Teachers know the examination systems well and prepare students very thoroughly, teaching basic examination skills, structuring and timing questions as well as ensuring that

subject matter is taught as the correct level. Subject teachers provide very good support and guidance for students, backed up very well by the pastoral system.

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

33. The school generally provides a good curriculum which meets students' needs throughout their time in the school. A satisfactory balance has been achieved between academic and vocational courses in Key Stage 4. At the request of staff, increased options time was built into the timetable this year to allow greater time to teach each course. This was achieved by reducing the maximum number of GCSE courses that pupils could study from eleven to ten, thus freeing the additional time.
34. In Key Stage 3, curriculum breadth and balance are satisfactory, but this is not the case at Key Stage 4 where National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not met. The time specified for teaching this subject is insufficient for pupils in Year 9. Beyond this age, there is no detailed programme of study for many pupils who are not studying for a GCSE qualification in the subject. The monitoring of pupils' work and their progress in this subject is unsatisfactory. Consequently, there is inconsistency in the standards of pupils' work across the year group and inconsistency in the progress made by these pupils. For the older pupils, there is insufficient time to develop their skills or to extend their knowledge and understanding. They are not able to extend their experience of control technology.
35. There are many strengths as well as some areas for development in the main school curriculum. In physical education, the provision and take up of examination courses is very good, although planning for learning outcomes needs some development. The extracurricular provision in music is outstanding, although assessment in lessons is not linked strongly enough to the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3. In modern foreign languages, the extra tuition provided to target the grade C/D borderline pupils so that they improve their standards has very good outcomes. For those pupils studying two languages at Key Stage 3 however, time allocation is insufficient and attainment is constrained by this. Curriculum planning in religious education resulted in the outstanding work associated with the Holocaust project in Year 9. Time allocation for the delivery of the full GCSE course in religious education is, however, insufficient.
36. Several subjects provide well planned opportunities for extension work to gifted and talented pupils. In modern foreign languages, for example bilingual pupils have the opportunity to sit GCSE examinations in Year 7. In music, there are very good opportunities made available through high quality extracurricular performing groups. In art, a weekly after school lesson is held specifically for higher ability pupils and tasks are differentiated appropriately in class. In English, those studying for examinations are given high quality additional reading material to add depth to their responses to set texts.
37. The experiences available to pupils with special educational needs are equal to those of their peers. Teachers work very hard to ensure that the work provided for such pupils is closely matched to their needs and abilities. They employ good methods of gaining and maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils in their class.
38. From time to time, the school has a small number of pupils with English as an additional language, for whom satisfactory provision is made. An experienced learning assistant is responsible, reporting to a deputy headteacher. All receive appropriate assessment on entry, with specialist support supplied through the local authority's service. Progress is monitored and the need for support regularly reviewed. The 'buddy' system gives moral and social support.
39. Satisfactory opportunities are made for the use of literacy across all subjects of the curriculum. There is a whole school policy in place and staff in all subject areas have received appropriate training in this. Most place an appropriate emphasis on the correct use of specialised vocabulary, although there are examples of insufficient marking of the spelling of both these words and more general vocabulary. In some subjects, for example history and geography, pupils have good opportunities to undertake extended or personal writing, but the use of this is not widespread.

Good use is made of the library to support literacy, for example in the development of research skills and in offering motivation and support to pupils who experience difficulty with reading.

40. Pupils' number skills are good and regularly reinforced in mathematics lessons. Numeracy training has been undertaken but in many subjects there is little planned provision for the use and development of number skills within different subject areas. However, the geography department has a well-produced information sheet to enable teachers and pupils to use graphs and charts very well so that pupils understand and use sophisticated techniques to analyse information and present it in imaginative ways. Pupils in Year 7 use this to compare different demographic principles graphically in a meaningful way. Design subjects report that the skills used are adequate for the subject in the use of scale and measurement with graphs and charts well used in surveys for investigational work. In science, skills are adequate and there is a 'numeracy in science' module, which lasts seven to eight weeks within the department's scheme of work.
41. The quality and range of extra curricular activities throughout the school is very good. For drama and for music, such provision is excellent. In music, pupils may play in the band and orchestra, both held in high regard both locally and on their ten European tours. They perform regular concerts, as does the choir. In drama, the school produces plays and participates in local theatre work. In sport, there are competitive teams in 12 sports. Teams and individuals have competed in national finals for cricket, rugby, synchronised swimming, cross country and athletics and were national U16 girls' basketball champions. There is a thriving Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the Young Enterprise students were county ICT winners.
42. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. The school treats it as an embellishment to pupils' all-round education programme. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 are taught by a group of teachers who specialise in the subject. In Years 7 and 8, lessons are taught by the form tutors. The course for each age group is very well planned to incorporate all required aspects of health, sex and drugs education. Support materials in Year 7 and 8 are set at the right level for pupils this age. The workbooks for Years 9 and 10 are very well matched to the needs of the pupils, who have good opportunities to develop their awareness of issues relevant to their lives now and in the future. There are many opportunities to learn from outside agencies and speakers. Pupils also receive significant advice on careers as part of this programme in Years 10 and 11. The recent "Caught in the Act" drugs-related drama production is one of many very good activities that engage the pupils well. There is also a very good preparatory programme to support the work experience that pupils in Year 11 undertake.
43. Overall, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, having been good at the time of the last inspection. There are some opportunities during lessons for pupils to discuss and reflect upon topics and issues of the day, particularly in religious education, personal and social education and physical education. Generally, these opportunities are not developed and planned for within the curriculum schemes of work. There is very little spiritual content in school assemblies and the statutory requirement for acts of collective worship is not being met.
44. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, an overall improvement since the last inspection. There are clear school rules, which are known and understood by pupils. Pupils develop a sense of right and wrong. In lessons, pupils learn to co-operate, to consider the needs of others and to work effectively in groups. Teachers and support staff provide good role models. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme helps pupils cope with situations that they might find difficult to cope with on their own. Good examples of this provision are the school council, the Lower School Festival, the regular 'Holocaust Day', Blue Planet Day, the 'Energy and Vision' drugs awareness programme, pupils participation in the Model United Nations General Assembly, the 'fair trade' breakfast and the 'lesson and community attachment' programmes.
45. Overall, the provision for pupils to study their own and other cultures is good. Through art, music, drama, religious education, geography, history and the personal, social and health education curricula, pupils effectively learn about their own and other cultures and faiths. However,

opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of the multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of their own community are somewhat limited, although the school has a thriving link with a Ugandan school. The school is making efforts to involve the various local religious communities in its activities, so far with limited success.

Sixth form

46. In the sixth form, and through consortium arrangements, the range of academic and vocational courses available provides a very good level of choice. This ensures that students of higher attainment, as well as those with other interests and abilities, can find an appropriate route through which they can approach higher education or employment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good, standards having been maintained since the last inspection. The school works with a variety of other outside agencies, including Connexions, BASE 33 and the community police officer, further underpinning the effective care of pupils.
48. The support and guidance which pupils receive, both formal and informal, is very good. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems. The school's response to any issues is prompt and effective. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and respond to their needs. Clear guidance is given to pupils, teachers, tutors and parents about the school's levels of expectation for pupils' care and welfare.
49. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. The identification and review of such pupils is systematic, rigorous and thorough, ensuring their needs are met very effectively. All have IEPs with clear targets identifying what they need to improve. These are well known by all staff who work hard to make sure that they adapt their teaching during lessons in order to include these pupils. IEPs are reviewed regularly and new targets set where appropriate. Pupils themselves are increasingly included in the review process and this is having a positive impact on their development. The management of information relating to pupils is very good. It is thorough, well organised, up to date and accessible. The school fully complies with the requirements of the Disability Act.
50. The procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development are very good. There is a very effective pastoral system that includes careful monitoring and recording of data and effective lines of communication between senior management, tutors, teachers, the school counsellor and school matron. Particularly effective elements of this system include internal and external mentoring (sometimes involving members of the sixth form), the 'cause for concern' and 'good work' procedures (blue and yellow forms), the work of the 'student support co-ordinator', and the regular reviews carried out by the 'pupil services team'.
51. The school policies and procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very effective. There are clear behaviour management guidelines for pupils, parents and staff. The recently introduced system of 'walk-about' during lessons is having a positive effect.
52. Policies and procedures for promoting health and safety are also very good, including teachers promoting healthy and safe practices in the classroom and during other school activities. Governors and the very effective facilities management staff are fully involved in this process.
53. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are very good. Effective liaison with the education social service has successfully improved attendance and reduced unauthorised absence.
54. Provision for careers education is very good. Year 9 pupils receive good guidance in the choice of their options. A very good section in the PSHE Year 9 workbook supports this. The team of

teachers work well together to prepare Year 11 pupils for work experience, arranging placements and interviews where necessary. All Year 11 pupils have an opportunity for a personal career interview with a specialist. This provision is good. The careers service has a regular link with the school providing good support on parents' evenings and at times when pupils make options choices, move into the sixth form or into the world of work. Good support is given to pupils in Year 11 seeking to gain placements on modern apprenticeships.

55. Good use is made of ICT. The careers service supports the school in introducing pupils to two particular software packages on the Internet, which are very helpful in giving pupils opportunities to explore career progressions from their studies. The careers officer also shows pupils how they can make best use of the careers libraries in the main school and in the sixth form.
56. Another very good venture was the Business Day in which several local employers and the citizens' advice bureau took part. This gave pupils a very good understanding of their local community, whilst at the same time informing them of opportunities for progression.
57. Arrangements for assessing pupils' academic work are good. The school has now developed a good system for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development. The reporting to pupils and parents meets statutory requirements. Meetings with parents and pupils to discuss standards and progress keep parents well informed.
58. In Years 7 to 9, the assessment procedures are closely linked to the descriptions of levels as stated in the National Curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 the linkage is to individual criteria and based upon GCSE examination grades. Regular assessment is now incorporated into a well-constructed calendar of recording and reporting. A programmed review process between pupils and their form tutor supports this procedure.
59. The use of assessment to help improve course and subject planning varies across subjects. In some subjects pupils use both self-assessment and ongoing assessment by the teacher to inform target setting. The provision for matching work appropriately to most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good in some subjects, but not yet developed in all areas. Consistent provision of extension activities for gifted and talented pupils is not in place.

Sixth form

60. The care and welfare of students is of a high quality. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance about their studies, career opportunities and personal development are very good. Tutors have an informed knowledge of students' capabilities and aspirations and they use this knowledge effectively to set realistic goals for improvement. The pastoral care arrangements are very effective and much valued by students and their families. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Overall, the sixth form is an environment where students can feel safe, develop confidence and in which they are encouraged to become independent.
61. Assessment procedures are very good and used well to guide planning. Students enter the sixth form from Wood Green and other schools with a minimum of five GCSE grades A*-C and are usually expected to have at least B grades in the subjects they choose to study. Average GCSE points scores, grades in individual subjects and standardised cognitive tests are used satisfactorily to predict grades that students are capable of achieving. Much deliberation is put into this and the school invariably aims high and achieves grades better than predicted for the majority of students. In some subjects, such as English, however, the use of data could be improved to measure the progress of students through the course.
62. Ongoing assessment procedures are usually rigorous; regular testing during the modular courses is carried out in all subjects. Day-to-day procedures vary according to the specific requirements of different subjects. In mathematics, for example, there is much discussion when students annotate their own notes; in biology, effective plenary sessions are used well to guide future planning. In all subjects, there are good and often very good procedures with effective targets for improvement set. Students, particularly in Year 13, take much responsibility for their work and

regularly assessing their own progress. This is not consistent in physics, however, where work is marked thoroughly but not enough advice is given for improvement and standards are below average.

63. Students in the sixth form are given good support and advice about careers. They are particularly pleased with the provision of the careers carousel in Year 12, which gives them the opportunity to talk to local business personnel about their areas of work. There is also very good provision for mock interviews, a programme of visiting speakers, liaison with universities in Oxford to support students' progression to higher education and entry into the world of work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. The school's partnership with parents is good. The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or who attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting have positive views of what the school provides and achieves. However, a significant minority of these parents disagree that the school provides the right amount of homework, disagree that the school works closely with them and also disagree that they are well informed about how their children are getting on. Inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents, but does not support the negative views held by some of them.
65. There is much very effective communication between the school and parents, with information provided through regular newsletters, parents' meetings and annual reports. There is also an award-winning school website, together with the recently introduced 'parentmail' system that further enhances communications. The use of homework diaries is variable across the school, but these can provide an effective method of two-way communication between school and home. The content and presentation of the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are examples of the high quality information that the school provides.
66. The revised format of pupils' annual reports provides a careful analysis of what pupils know, understand and can do, as well as focusing on areas for future development. They give parents an accurate picture of their children's academic progress and personal development involving evaluation by both tutors and pupils. Parents are fully involved in formulating and reviewing the IEPs of pupils with special educational needs.
67. The school makes significant efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and the impact that their involvement has is very good. A significant number of teaching and non-teaching staff have children at the school and their commitment to the life of the school is total. The parent/teacher association is very supportive and raises a significant amount of additional funding for the school. Parent governors and other governors who are parents are enthusiastic and committed to the school.
68. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved at all stages of the identification and review process. They welcome the information they receive and the involvement they have with the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the educational direction of the school and leads the drive for constant improvement. Since her own appointment four years ago, she has assembled a very strong team, particularly at senior and middle management levels. An especially strong characteristic is her ability to delegate staff into positions of responsibility which develop their talents so that they are used effectively for the good of the school. All staff have a strong sense of purpose and high aspirations for the future development of the school.
70. The senior management team all manage their particular areas very effectively and communication channels through informal and regular meetings are particularly good, so that all staff are kept well informed. Subject department heads and pastoral staff are very effective overall; some are fairly

new in post but, because of the management systems in place are already making their mark. The headteacher is very careful when making management changes and makes sure that valuable expertise is retained for the school wherever possible. One department head who left for maternity leave, for example, is now back part-time playing a lead role in disseminating good practice. It is policy to appoint high quality non-teaching staff to manage financial, administrative and site staff.

71. School governors are very supportive of all the work of the school and give freely of their time to attend all school events, taking part in such diverse activities as judging the lower school festival and providing mock interviews for sixth form students about to apply for university or jobs. Governors know the strengths of the school well and identify areas for its further development. The extent and depth of their deliberations over the possibilities of the school's specialist status are impressive, especially in their conclusions which fulfilled their aim 'to educate the whole child'. They play an effective part in monitoring the curriculum and the standards achieved by the school. They review the PANDA and make recommendations to redress weak areas. They discuss all changes to policy fully, including local education authority policies, such as the changes in music services. Changes in the special educational needs policy have been fully reviewed and supported. Statutory requirements for ICT in Key Stage 4 are not met and there is still no daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
72. The school development plan forms the bedrock of the school's way forward. It is a comprehensive document which provides whole school direction and coherence by having three key elements as its framework – 'Quality teaching and learning', 'The school as a community' and 'Towards a self-evaluating school'. The action plans of all departments and of the pastoral team (including the sixth form) are directed towards issues pertinent to their own areas, but yet within the framework of the whole school vision. The current plans all have clear targets for improvement, with outcomes and monitoring plainly identified. The school budget is set according to the priorities and the governors monitor effectively, making full use of financial expertise on the governing body.
73. Teaching is monitored and evaluated very effectively through the school's 'Strategy for Performance Management' and classroom practice is improving through this – no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. This year's focus for the quality of teaching and learning element of the school development plan is 'what makes an effective lesson' and several departments have concentrated specifically on teaching methodology to enhance pupils' learning. Departments have produced booklets to illustrate effective teaching methods in their subjects and the impact of this was seen in the teaching and learning grades given during the inspection. A high proportion of very good teaching was seen as a result of methods being used which enthused pupils and promoted very good learning.
74. The school is very efficiently run. All grants, for example for special educational needs and for ICT training, are used effectively for their specific purpose. All the school's complex funding with two special needs units on site and sixth form consortium arrangements is very well managed, with the aim of getting the best value for all resources. Staffing is deployed effectively; resources are purchased to improve standards. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively. It compares its examination performance with that of other schools, both nationally and with similar schools, constantly challenges itself to do better by setting high targets for improvement, consults pupils and sixth form students through their councils and secures competitive tenders. It achieves above average standards for its average costs and gives good value for money.
75. Special educational needs have assumed a much higher profile within the school since the last inspection. The department has undergone considerable change and development with very positive results. One of the deputy headteachers takes responsibility for its overall management, but devolves the day-to-day management to the co-ordinator and a very effective team of support staff and teachers, who have clearly defined roles and responsibilities at all levels. These are carried out very well and provision is now very good. Information is well organised, up to date and clear. Those who work in partnership with the school are very appreciative of the support they receive and of the progress that has been made since the last inspection.

76. The school's recent third reassessment of the Investors in People Award reflects its very good arrangements for the induction, appraisal and professional development of its teaching and support staff. There are clear policies and effective procedures for the induction of teachers new to the profession and the school. The school's policy for appraisal and performance management meets statutory requirements.
77. Provision for the professional development of staff is very good. Effective policies identify whole school, departmental and individual training needs. Training is very well planned and matched to need and outcomes effectively disseminated and evaluated. Best value is achieved from training by effective dissemination of outside courses and the school's own training courses. The professional development needs of support staff are also very well met. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training. Induction of all new staff, including teaching assistants and support staff, is excellent. All have an induction manager. Newly qualified teachers have a mentor, a reduced timetable, and regular courses to attend. The school gives excellent training expertise to a substantial number of new teachers yearly under an internship arrangement with Oxford and Oxford Brookes Universities.
78. Staffing is good. With the exception of ICT, where the number of staff is inadequate to teach the National Curriculum, the school has sufficient well qualified and experienced staff to teach the curriculum effectively and meet the needs of pupils and sixth form students. The school's site management, support and administrative staff serve it very well, providing very good support to pupils, students, parents, governors and teachers. There is a very strong team ethos within the whole of the teaching and non-teaching staff, underpinned by a shared commitment to the school's values and aims, which has a positive impact on standards in all areas.
79. Resources overall are good. They are particularly well used and managed in music and physical education. They are good in science, history, geography, physical education, information and communication technology and for special educational needs. They are satisfactory in all other subjects except religious education, where an insufficient number of textbooks is having an adverse effect on learning, especially on the development of independent learning and the skills of enquiry. Provision of computers in subject areas varies, being very good in design and technology, satisfactory and developing in most, but needing more equipment for regular class use in modern languages, music and geography and in special educational needs.
80. The central resource services are very good indeed and are a strength of the school. The managers of the Resource Centre and of the Study Centre, incorporating the library, are very experienced and active in providing a continuously improving service to pupils, students, teachers and therefore to learning. Computers are already used to very good effect and both managers have very good development plans, aiming to keep up to date with all affordable new technology. While there are deficiencies in library stock for certain subjects, particularly religious education, provision for art is very good. It is good for English, science, geography and special needs. Very good support for literacy is provided by the promotion of fiction, by special events and the use of display. Younger pupils are encouraged to enter competitions involving writing reviews of new books. It is well used by pupils and staff before and after lessons and by sixth form students in free periods. Such use includes the many computers, providing access to the school's Intranet and some to the Internet. The resource centre has efficient systems for meeting the needs of teachers, pupils and students, including the purchase of stationery. Increasingly its clerical services enable teachers to use their time more profitably.
81. Since the last inspection, a considerable amount of improvement has been made to the school accommodation and it is now good. The school buildings were considered unfit to support the full curriculum at the previous inspection and there has been impressive improvement since then, with much more planned to make the whole school into as good a working environment as that afforded by those buildings already refurbished. The main school entrance, administration block and library and resources centre are good examples of this improvement. The drama studio and new classroom block have already had a positive effect on the curriculum. There has been massive investment in ICT and improvements to the sixth form block. Whilst the pupil toilets are in poor condition, renovation work is to be carried out this year. Further building developments are

planned in the future, including a new sixth form centre and dining hall. The overall building programme has been managed with care and imagination and has had a positive impact on morale, standards and expectations. Displays around the school are very good and are used to reinforce pupils' learning and understanding. The problem of litter around the school site is being addressed. The site has been improved tremendously by the landscaping, designed and carried out by pupils, which won them an award for 'Witney in Bloom'.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are very good. This is a high quality, efficiently run sixth form. The head of sixth form is an assistant headteacher, who is well supported by two deputies. The sixth form is an integral part of the whole school and its development is considered alongside that of the main school. Educational direction is very good. The central aim is to ensure students leave well qualified and very well prepared for further education or other careers. The very good liaison with the other school and college in the consortium is a major strength because it enables such a good choice of courses to be offered at a high standard.
83. The governors are very supportive of the sixth form. They arrange for outside speakers and help with mock interviews to prepare students for university entry. A good feature of management is the way it seeks students' views through the student council, which fosters mutual respect and encourages students to become mature and responsible role models for the rest of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. In order to improve further the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (i) Implement the whole programme of study for information and communication technology in Key Stage 4 and ensure that the use of ICT meets National Curriculum requirements in all subjects in all key stages.
(Paragraphs 24, 34, 71, 98, 119, 124, 128, 136, 154, 157, 158, 159, 160)
 - (ii) Improve provision for religious education by ensuring that the subject has sufficient time allotted to it and that resources are improved.
(Paragraphs 181, 183, 184, 188)
 - (iii) Develop a consistent whole-school policy for marking of work and assessing pupils' progress.
(Paragraphs 107, 117, 136, 158, 166, 175, 180, 187)
 - (iv) Ensure that provision for spiritual development is planned through the whole curriculum and that statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are met.
(Paragraphs 43, 136, 144)

Sixth form

- (i) Improve standards in physics and ensure that the very good assessment procedures in some subjects are more consistently applied here.
(Paragraphs 13, 30, 61, 62, 198, 200, 201)
- (ii) Ensure that ICT is used as required in all subjects

(Paragraphs 154, 192, 196, 200, 211, 224)

When forming their action plan the governors should take into account the following minor issues:

- ensure that the refurbishment of the toilets is carried out swiftly (paragraph 81); and
- provide more opportunities to educate pupils for living in multi-cultural Britain (paragraph 45, 122).

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

85. Progress identified in the last inspection has continued; significant improvements in both the quality of education provided and standards have been achieved. Although in the recent past the Unit has provided for up to 25 pupils, at present there are 16, each with a statement of special educational needs for moderate learning difficulties.
86. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils, with the exception of ICT. Most lessons take place in the Unit in the two classes provided. Mainstream provision has increased for all pupils. Some subjects are taught by specialist teachers whilst in others pupils join in lessons with their peers from the main school. This provides very good opportunities for inclusion and integration, supporting pupils' personal and social development in particular. Older pupils in Key Stage 4 are increasingly studying GCSE or other nationally accredited courses and have achieved well in relation to their ability, especially in science, mathematics, geography and history. The focus on gaining nationally recognised awards helps to provide clarity and focus to the work they do and represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. All pupils have specific targets for the development of their English, numeracy and social skills. These provide an effective framework to guide the work of both the teachers and teaching assistants. Curriculum planning takes full account of the National Curriculum. Staff in the Unit have worked closely with specialist teachers from the mainstream school to ensure plans are up to date and meet statutory requirements. Again this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Provision for the development of ICT skills is unsatisfactory. Pupils in the Unit do not have regular access to a suitable quantity of computers, so they cannot easily practise new skills, nor do they have sufficient access to programs designed to meet their particular needs.
87. Teaching is consistently good, often very good, in all subjects. Teachers and support staff know pupils very well. They have high expectations of and for them. They challenge pupils to do their best at all times, for example in an English lesson where pupils in Year 9 were asked to consider Lady Macbeth's motives at the beginning of the play. Pupils respond very positively to the demands made of them with the result that progress both in lessons and over time is good and often very good. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils in Year 8 were expected to calculate quickly and accurately real life problems associated with money. They made noticeable improvements in their ability to perform mental calculations.
88. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good indeed and this makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers and support staff use a good range of methods to gain and sustain the attention of pupils during lessons. The work they provide is well matched to the pupils' abilities and lessons are well paced, with clear learning targets. As a result, pupils concentrate well and work hard. They want to do well and are pleased with their successes, however small.
89. Pupils respond well to the high quality teaching in the Unit. They are enthusiastic about learning. Pupils quickly develop their self-confidence and are always prepared to try to achieve what they are asked to do. Pupils quickly develop independence and become quite capable working with minimal supervision when required, as seen during a 'skills' lesson, where they were responsible for organising and completing their own work appropriately prepared by their teachers. Relationships between pupils are very good and mirror the high quality relationships pupils have with the staff. In an English lesson, for example, pupils praised one of their classmates following

his attempt at reading out loud. They are courteous and polite to each other and to the staff. Behaviour is excellent both during lessons and social times.

90. Staff in the Unit maintain careful records of the progress pupils have made. This helps them to plan effectively for the next stage of learning. Informative reports and records are compiled about each pupil and these help to guide decisions about future plans. This is especially useful and effective when statements are being reviewed. All statutory requirements for the annual review of statements are in place. Procedures are systematic and rigorous as is the organisation of pupil files and information.
91. Although the headteacher takes overall responsibility for the Unit, it is the teacher in charge who has responsibility for its day-to-day management and for the development and implementation of policy and practice. She carries out these responsibilities very well and is ably supported by the second teacher and support staff. A real strength is the excellent teamwork that is evident, which makes an extremely valuable contribution to the quality of education provided. The school should consider how best to develop the Unit as a resource to other members of staff so they may disseminate the undoubtedly very good practice that exists.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	131
	Sixth form	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		68

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	5	36	63	27	0	0	0
Percentage	4	27	48	21	0	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	4	19	12	0	0	0	0
Percentage	12	54	34	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	968	189
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	61	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	143	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	44

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
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	94	94	188

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	54	69	69
	Girls	74	75	77
	Total	128	144	146
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (71)	77 (73)	78 (78)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (33)	52 (54)	39 (45)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	55	68	66
	Girls	74	80	72
	Total	129	148	138
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (69)	79 (77)	73 (76)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (32)	43 (53)	39 (44)
	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	113	87	200

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	62	100	107
	Girls	48	78	80
	Total	110	178	187
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	55 (59)	80 (93)	94 (97)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42.9
	National	39.8

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A level or AS level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	38	39	77

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.5	20.3	19.4	-	-	-
National	16.9	17.7	17.4	-	-	-

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	9	100
	National		

International Bacculaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Bacculaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	-	-
	National		-

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
1116	86	0
6	0	0
9	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
10	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
7	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: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	61.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	31
Total aggregate hours worked per week	845

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	0.74
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23.96
Key Stage 4	21.27

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
----------------	--------

	£
Total income	3337629
Total expenditure	3354371
Expenditure per pupil	2966
Balance brought forward from previous year	273237
Balance carried forward to next year	256495

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21.25
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	26.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1147
Number of questionnaires returned	185

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	56	10	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	32	59	5	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	63	11	4	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	56	21	6	3
The teaching is good.	17	68	5	1	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	55	18	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	47	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	49	1	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	19	53	16	5	6
The school is well led and managed.	26	52	6	2	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	59	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	44	17	1	9

Other issues raised by parents

The state of the toilets.

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

- Attainment is rising at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- Good procedures for identifying and supporting underachieving pupils.
- Good quality support for revision and exam techniques.

Areas for improvement

- The use of specific advice in marking on how to improve.
- The provision of full schemes of work which offer good guidance, promote consistency and identify opportunities for teaching ICT skills.

92. The attainment in GCSE examinations of pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2002 was in line with the national average for the percentage attaining A*-C and A*-A. All pupils entered for the examination received a pass grade. The percentage of grades A*-C has remained constant over the past three years. The attainment of girls is higher than that of boys, but this disparity is smaller than nationally. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment is currently at least in line with the national average and pupils with still some months to go before their examinations are on course to attain slightly above the national average. This judgement agrees with the school's own targets, which are realistic and based on regular assessment. This represents maintenance of the standards reported after the previous inspection.
93. Pupils in Year 11 started their GCSE course with attainment which was closely in line with the national average and they are achieving well to reach standards which promise to be a little above the national average. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also good. They make particularly good progress in the research and planning of their essays to produce structured answers which meet examination requirements. Most pupils have good understanding of their texts and develop their use of textual reference and quotation to illustrate their responses. A strength of the department is that all pupils, including those who experience difficulty with the way they express themselves in writing, show a thoughtful and sensitive response to literature. Across the attainment range pupils develop their written style by using successfully more precise language and, where appropriate, more description.
94. In 2002 the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in National Curriculum testing was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the level expected of pupils of that age and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was very similar to what is seen nationally. There has been a steady rise in the average points scored by pupils in these tests over the past five years from a level where this score was considerably below the national average to the most recent score very similar to the national average. The attainment of girls is higher than that of boys but this disparity is smaller than nationally. The pupils who were in Year 9 in 2002 attained well to reach the national average. This represents maintenance of the standards reported after the previous inspection.
95. A full range of evidence seen during the inspection indicates that the attainment of pupils in the current Year 9 is in line with what is seen nationally. They entered the school with attainment which was below the national average and they are on course to be in line with the national average in their National Curriculum tests. This represents good achievement. The achievement made by pupils with special educational needs is also good. Pupils make particularly good progress in response to their reading, which goes beyond the level of appreciation of plot or subject matter to comment, for example, on the way in which writers use language to appeal to

their readers. All pupils make good progress in their informed response to more challenging literature and begin to use specialised language in order to comment more precisely. Pupils across the attainment range make good progress in adding interest to their own writing by varying the structure of their sentences and using an increasing range of description. Higher ability pupils develop a mature writing style. Pupils are generally articulate, enjoy discussion and make good progress through opportunities to exchange their ideas with others.

96. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and sometimes in Years 10 and 11 it is very good. The good quality of teaching successfully promotes good learning. Pupils show interest, work hard and behave well. Teachers have clear objectives for the activities and learning to take place in their lessons and pupils know what to expect and what is expected of them. They plan for a range of activities to meet the needs of all pupils and in order to maintain concentration and commitment throughout the lesson. Teachers offer good opportunities for discussion and make good use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Generally good relationships help pupils to contribute their ideas without fear of ridicule. Teachers cater for pupils across the attainment range by varying the type of questions they ask and by directing more probing questions at pupils of higher ability. Pupils respond very well to this and make good progress from exchanging ideas with others. Those of lower ability sometimes express surprise and pride at the amount of progress they have made with a challenging concept. A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding of audience and purpose, in both their own writing and in the writers they study.
97. Teachers make effective use of their good subject knowledge to make very clear explanations of the way in which writers use language to create an effect on the reader. Pupils studying Macbeth, for example, responded to a good explanation of why Shakespeare chose to write sometimes in verse and sometimes in prose by making independent perceptive comments on this. Very thorough and rigorous preparation and support is given to pupils for their revision and examination techniques in both Year 9 and Year 11. In response to this, pupils develop effective note-making skills which support them well in their examination preparation and make good progress with their revision. In the particularly successful lessons, which were all seen in Years 10 and 11, teachers made very good use of working in small groups, which then exchanged their ideas, to get through a great deal of work in the time available. Teachers use very good, imaginative activities and resources to clarify more challenging literature. In a lesson on a West Indian poem on the theme of alienation and homesickness, for example, a teacher used a series of contemporary press photographs to make the poem both accessible and memorable. Although marking is regular and supportive, there are many examples, especially in Years 7-9, of missed opportunities to include specific advice on what pupils need to do to improve their work.
98. The leadership and management of English is good overall. Commitment to raising attainment is clear and proving successful. Good procedures for assessment of pupils work are consistently applied so that pupils know how well they are doing, although there is insufficient emphasis placed on making sure that pupils understand what their targets are and how to achieve them. There are good procedures for identifying pupils who are underachieving, for supporting their efforts to improve and ensuring that they keep up with their coursework. A good start has been made in planning a completely new scheme of work which reflects changes in national requirements. However, the draft schemes lack sufficient detail, do not offer sufficient guidance to teachers and do not promote consistency between classes. They do not identify opportunities for the teaching of ICT skills. At present, although there is some teaching of these skills and opportunities for pupils to use them in their work in English, this does not happen in a planned and consistent way.

Drama

99. Drama has a high focus in the school. The outstanding provision in the sixth form is disseminated to the rest of the school by the sixth form students taking rehearsals for younger pupils, coaching them for both school and external productions. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a very wide range of theatre visits, performances and workshops. It was not possible to see much lower school drama during the inspection owing to timetable constraints, but one very good lesson was seen where pupils were studying the Soweto massacre in South Africa and produced a series of

dramatic enactments, including using a banner of protest, with a high level of performance. An extremely powerful picture of an African leader's dead body in his brother's arms was used to stimulate pupils' writing of an epitaph. The lesson came to a very good conclusion with a South African peace song.

100. Teaching is very good. The head of drama is an advanced skills teacher and disseminates expertise very well. Pupils lose no opportunity to undertake dramatic presentations. The Lower School Festival, for example, included several Year 7 pupils in an excellent performance of Roald Dahl's 'Little Red Riding Hood' and a good opportunity was taken to use the German language in the play 'The Princess and the Pea'. There was also a very good dramatic and amusing presentation of 'Albert and the Lion'. Drama is used to great educational effect in some other subjects. In history, for example, pupils engagingly acted out the life in the Second World War using work done with the University of the Third Age, based in school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The high results when compared to national averages and other subjects in the school.
- The good relationships between teachers and pupils that create a positive learning atmosphere.
- Well-planned lessons given in a manner that challenges and inspires pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Marking, so that pupils have a better idea their level of working in Years 7, 8 and 9 and how they can improve their standards.
- The use of computers to support and enhance learning.

101. Results in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 9 were well above average compared with all schools and average when compared to similar schools. This represents very good progress as these pupils' standards of attainment when they entered the school were slightly below the national average. Girls' results were slightly better than boys, contrary to the national picture. Although these results show a slight drop from the previous year, results are rising at a rate that is greater than the national rate of increase. Pupils' average points score in mathematics was higher than that in English or science.

102. The results in GCSE examinations were well above the national average for A*-C and A*-G grades for all schools and similar schools. Boys achieved significantly better results than girls, contrary to the national difference, but there is no particular pattern over time. Pupils gained higher grades in mathematics than in most other GCSE subjects. When compared to pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9, these results represent good progress and results were above those expected. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented make equally good progress, in relation to their ability. Results have been rising over time at a rate that is greater than the national rate.

103. Pupils achieve well in mathematics because of their positive attitudes which are fostered by the good teaching they receive. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are above the national average with higher ability pupils confidently solving shape and space questions from level 7 of the National Curriculum. Average pupils work from levels 5 and 6, and those below average reinforce their number skills and work from topics at levels 4 and 5. The proportion of pupils working at average and above average levels is high; this represents good and, for many, very good progress since they entered the school with attainment below average.

104. All pupils follow an examination course in Years 10 and 11 and a good proportion is working at a level that is broadly in line with or above the national average. The good progress made in Years 7 to 9 is maintained, and work seen indicates that pupils confidently use a range of skills necessary for their particular level of entry. Pupils in Year 11 following the course leading to the higher tier

use and apply the whole range of algebra skills necessary to gain the very highest grades. The motivation of many pupils following the intermediate level is good and this encourages them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. They confidently use their knowledge of shape and space to solve two-dimensional problems. Lower ability pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in their number work so that they can achieve a good standard at foundation level. Overall, standards are rising because pupils' attainment on entry is higher now.

105. Teaching and learning are good; some is very good or excellent. Pupils learn well because they are encouraged to work hard in lessons. Thoughtful planning and the use of open style questioning encourage pupils to think, give reasons for answers and search for alternative methods. This development of thinking is a major contributory factor in sustaining the high standards achieved. This technique was well used in a very good Year 7 lesson investigating 'Happy Numbers'. As a result pupils became very involved in the investigation and there were many animated discussions between pupils and their teacher as the results became available. It was also very well used in an excellent Year 11 lesson to revise a range of associated topics when reviewing simultaneous equations, so that pupils were linking different parts of the syllabus. The outcome of this was that pupils revised all their graphical techniques and generalisations in a short space of time.
106. Teaching is mainly direct explanation and includes brisk and wide-ranging question and answer times. Investigational and practical work is also used when appropriate. Challenging but not daunting examples are well chosen to confirm and reinforce understanding with homework being used to reinforce work covered in lessons. Pupils are grouped by prior attainment and lessons are well planned to suit pupils' abilities, although a few lessons would benefit by having different examples for the range of abilities within the class. Teachers regularly mark work. Comments are generally encouraging but there is insufficient information given to pupils on where they are in relation to national expectations and how they could improve their standards of work. Teachers regularly use a 'clinic' after school to support pupils who want extra help; this has been beneficial in helping pupils to improve their grades in examinations.
107. The department is well led and managed. The new head of department has successfully continued to raise standards and is well supported by all teachers of mathematics. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good and sustains the high standards. The comprehensive scheme of work covers all attainment targets and includes timings of topics, but it would be enhanced if it included references to the National Curriculum or the National Numeracy Strategy. There are regular assessments to monitor progress but more analysis to improve standards would help. The good links with local partner primary schools ensure good knowledge of pupils' abilities when they enter the school so that their previous knowledge can be built upon. There is a lack of computers in the classroom but the department has adequate access to the whole school facilities. Other resources are satisfactory but there are insufficient textbooks in Year 7 to support independent learning. Most classes in Year 7 are taught by two different teachers and, although this is not entirely satisfactory, teachers liaise to ensure that pupils' progress is not hindered. The accommodation is in adjacent rooms on two floors; some of these rooms have inadequate curtains so that bright sunshine hinders pupils' concentration. The area is enhanced by some displays of work and posters illustrating mathematics in the wider world. This is an effective department with much strength. All teachers share a commitment to sustaining and improving the high standards achieved.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Results in external examinations are above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Years 7-11.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- The management and leadership of the subject are good.

Areas for improvement

- Further develop the methods for assessing the progress made by pupils in lessons.
- Provide all pupils with a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that class work and homework both contain sufficiently challenging activities to help all pupils improve their thinking skills.

108. In 2002, standards in science at age 14 were above average compared with other schools. The attainment of girls and boys was similar. Standards were higher than those in English and similar to those in mathematics. The results achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were in line with those schools where pupils' attainment at age 11 was on a par with that at Wood Green. Between 1999 and 2002, standards increased in line with national trends; the performance of boys improved more than that of girls during this period.
109. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, standards in science were above average; they were better than the previous year. Most students were entered for the GCSE examinations in double award science; the rest took the single award examinations. Pupils on both courses all gained at least grade G. The percentage gaining A*-C grades in double award science was significantly above the national average. The percentage gaining the highest grades (A*/A) was also above average, particularly for boys. Whilst boys' results were higher overall than those of girls in 2002, girls' attainment had been better than that of boys the previous year. Compared with other subjects in the school, the performance of both boys and girls in double award science was significantly better. Although the results in single award science were below the national average, they represented satisfactory achievement for the lower ability pupils entered for these examinations.
110. The attainment of pupils in science on entry to the school varies from year to year. In the present Year 7, attainment is above average. Most pick up new ideas quickly and are developing very effective scientific skills. They are adept at collecting and interpreting information, which they use well to increase their understanding of the subject. This was the case in a very good lesson on food substances; pupils made good use of their observational skills and learned how to distinguish between glucose, starch and protein.
111. When pupils in the current Year 9 entered the school, their overall attainment was below average. However, as a result of well-structured and supportive teaching, they are making good progress and standards are now close to the national average. Most display a knowledge of basic scientific ideas that is appropriate for their age; they use this effectively in lessons to develop further understanding. In an excellent lesson on respiration, for instance, most pupils quickly learned to link the various stages involved in the process and began to appreciate how the body uses chemical changes to release energy from food.
112. By the end of Year 11, attainment is generally above average, with some higher ability pupils reaching a very good standard. Achievement over time is good. Many pupils make effective links between different aspects of the subject and apply their knowledge of scientific ideas well to unfamiliar situations. In a lesson on rock types, for example, most pupils associated the nature of igneous rocks with the processes involved in crystal growth. However, in many lessons, the inability of some pupils to recall essential scientific ideas hinders their progress. The department is fully aware of the need to improve pupils' skills in this area and has already begun to introduce structured revision programmes.
113. Most pupils have the necessary skills in literacy and numeracy to enable them to make appropriate progress. There has been an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use key words effectively in lessons to help pupils develop their scientific vocabulary and provide good support for mathematical activities. However, some pupils find it difficult to interpret questions relating to the work that they have covered; they require more help in using the formal language of the subject. This would also be assisted by greater use of extended writing, which at present is under-utilised. Although the standards of written work are often good, some pupils take too little care over presenting their work; this diminishes their opportunities for future revision.

114. The achievement of boys has improved since the last inspection and is now generally comparable with that of girls throughout Years 7-11. In some lessons, however, boys tend to dominate; this results in teachers occasionally paying less attention to girls. Because of this, some girls are reluctant to seek the necessary help in lessons and occasionally lose interest. Teachers need to consider more how their approach in lessons affects the attitudes of all pupils. Compared with the last inspection, however, teachers now provide good support and encouragement for pupils with special educational needs; as a result, such pupils achieve well. Individual education plans now provide good information and are used effectively. Teacher assistants also play a significant role in helping pupils to make good progress. This was the case in a good Year 10 lesson on the reaction of metals. The teacher's patient approach, accompanied by clear explanations and an effective practical demonstration of the main principles, resulted in lower ability students recognising the patterns involved. Supportive teaching, together with individual assistance from a teacher assistant, enabled the pupils to make good progress; many of them began to use chemical word equations confidently.
115. Throughout Years 7-11, pupils behave well and respond positively in lessons. They are usually keen to learn. Relationships are very good and pupils co-operate well when working in groups. Whilst most concentrate effectively on their work, a few do not listen well and lose interest easily. As a result the flow of the lesson becomes disrupted. During the inspection, teachers usually coped with this effectively and managed a small amount of challenging behaviour in an appropriate way. In the few lessons where pupils were disruptive, the work sometimes lacked variety or was set at the wrong level; usually, however, it resulted from pupils relying too much on the teacher for information and direction; they failed to work effectively on their own. At present, insufficient opportunities are provided in some lessons for them to work independently and as a result they fail to take adequate responsibility for their own learning.
116. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some lessons being very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In the majority of lessons, pupils know exactly what is expected of them and the work is organised so that they learn in a structured way. In a very good mixed ability Year 8 lesson on the fire triangle, for instance, the teacher provided a good range of activities that assisted pupils to reflect on their existing ideas. Questioning and explanation were used very effectively and, as a result, pupils reached a good understanding of how combustion could be controlled. However, although the teacher worked well with individuals during the practical session, more attention could have been given to ensuring that the higher ability pupils were all provided with sufficient challenges to extend their learning. Whilst teachers use their very good knowledge and experience to plan and deliver lessons effectively, greater consideration needs to be given to what and how well pupils are learning.
117. The procedures for assessing how well pupils are attaining over time are good. The results of end-of-unit tests are used effectively to monitor progress. Whilst teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' attainment, they are not always fully aware of how well they are learning in lessons. At present teachers spend insufficient time checking their understanding. Questioning is too general and often demands just one-word answers. While homework is set regularly, it often fails to extend pupils' thinking sufficiently. As a result, homework is not always a good guide to how well pupils are achieving. Marking, while carried out regularly, is inconsistent and provides too few comments aimed at assisting pupils in knowing what they need to do to improve. They are not always fully aware of how well they are achieving and need to be provided with clearer targets for development.
118. The department is aware of the need to make more effective links between teaching and learning and has welcomed the introduction of the national Key Stage 3 Science Strategy as a means of addressing this. There is already evidence in lessons that this is beginning to have an effect. Teachers are using the national framework as a guide when planning their lessons and are clearer about what they want pupils to learn. Most lessons across the department have a similar structure and planned activities are being introduced to help pupils recall and understand scientific concepts better. In some cases questioning is starting to become more searching, which is helping to develop their thinking skills. Those teachers who are particularly comfortable with the Strategy are also beginning to include aspects of the framework in lessons in Years 10 and 11.

However, teachers still need more time to adjust fully to the changes taking place; better sharing of individual teachers' strengths could assist colleagues in becoming more confident.

119. Although the provision made for ICT is better than at the time of the last inspection, pupils still make too little use of computers in lessons. In particular, there are no opportunities provided for them to learn about the scientific applications of ICT, for example through the use of remote sensing and data-logging. The department is aware of this deficiency and has made it a priority in the development plan.
120. Science accommodation has improved since the last inspection and teaching and learning resources are generally of a good standard. However, teaching would be enhanced if more stimulating and interactive computer-assisted visual aids were introduced; this could assist pupils to grasp some of the more complex ideas in the subject better. The library has a very good stock of science books, which pupils use well. The display of their work in laboratories and corridors is of a high quality. Whist schemes of work and textbooks are adequate, these will need to be updated for Years 7-9 if work is to be brought fully into line with the Key Stage 3 Strategy; the department is already aware of this and is awaiting further guidance.
121. The leadership and management of the science department are good. The few issues identified in the last inspection report have been largely addressed; there has been good improvement. Effective guidance is provided on procedures and policies and staff and resources are deployed very well. Although planned monitoring of teaching occurs, this needs to focus more on identifying the good practice that already exists in the subject. A strong team approach exists in the department with teachers and technicians contributing very effectively to the work. There is an evident commitment to continue raising standards and a clear capacity to succeed.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Provision overall is good.
- Good teaching and learning with very positive attitudes and high expectations.
- Strong emphasis on the development of drawing skills.
- Good assessment procedures.
- Well developed independent learning skills.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT as part of taught courses for all.
- The use of homework in Year 7.

122. By the end of Year 11, pupils make good progress in drawing and painting, as well as in the use of three-dimensional materials such as papier-mâché, card and wire. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average for A*-C grades and above average for A*-G. The examination results have maintained an upward trend in recent years and were very close to national averages last year. The standard of current work in Year 11 is above average. Many pupils have developed good observational drawing skills that show impressive levels of concentration and shading techniques as the result of the strong emphasis the department places on this aspect of learning. Skills in the use of colour, acrylic paints and oil pastels are also well developed. Processes of research and experimentation are increasingly well presented, frequently extensive, make good use of literacy and show the development of skills over time in a good variety of well used two- and three-dimensional media. Much of the resulting finished work is developed to good standards of artistic competency and originality. Pupils' knowledge of traditional and contemporary artists is generally good and is influential in the development of their practical and written work. Whilst the cultural diversity of western civilisation is well used by teachers in the development of pupils' work, the traditions of other cultures could be explored more effectively as a means of extending pupils' knowledge, understanding and personal development. Within each well planned unit of work,

pupils are encouraged and expected to work independently and to pursue individuality of response, within a very good framework of teacher support and subject knowledge. This is successfully reflected in the diversity of outcomes and is a strength. The variety and quality of work in response to the theme gadgets in Year 10 and to flora and fauna in Year 11 are good examples.

123. Whilst there are no data available to establish levels on entry, by the end of Year 9 the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of drawing and painting skills. End of key stage teacher assessments confirm this. Standards seen in lessons and completed work are average overall. There is a strong emphasis on the development of observational drawing and painting techniques as the result of well planned, well taught course delivery. Pupils learn how to use a variety of shading and colouring techniques effectively and to apply them in an interesting and challenging variety of tasks. Work is increasingly based on research and experimentation. The development of artistic skills is constantly related to the work and styles of famous artists who inspire pupils' own artistic development. The imaginative and skilful work inspired by the mechanical head unit in Year 8 and the disciplined approach to observational drawing that led to some impressive outcomes in the fruit and vegetable unit in Year 9 are good examples. Whilst the use of regular homework supports the development of classwork and independent learning skills in Years 8 and 9, provision in Year 7 is insufficient.
124. Progress in art for pupils of all abilities is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Provision for higher ability pupils is effectively addressed through differentiated tasks in class and an additional after school class in Year 10. Pupils are taught to work successfully with a good range of two- and three-dimensional materials which include card, papier-mâché and a wide variety of constructional materials. It is regrettable that the good pottery facilities are unable to be used by pupils as part of the art curriculum because the essential cleaning duties necessary in pottery currently cause water damage to the floor below. Whilst a number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 choose to make good use of the department's three computers, the use of ICT has not been appropriately integrated into the schemes of work and provision does not meet statutory requirements in the lower years or in the main school. Current timetabling only provides single lessons for art in Years 10 and 11 and this is a constraint to continuity and learning outcomes in a practical subject.
125. The overall quality of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers are well organised and have high expectations of their classes in behaviour and pace and output of work. Units of work are varied, interesting and challenging. There is a good balance between instruction in technique and process. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are continually encouraged to explore the potential of art media and this is evident in the wealth of investigative creative and written work in many of the sketch books in Year 11.
126. Written work that is increasingly creative and imaginative in presentation is a well established aspect of art in Years 10 and 11, although satisfactory methods to improve basic skills are not consistently applied. There are examples of good and very good teaching in differing year groups, where teachers make demands on the ability of pupils to think about the development and quality of their work and to explore different forms of expression. Good procedures for assessment are well established and used effectively by all teachers to inform pupils of their standards of attainment and ways in which they can improve their work. Individual target setting is used with increasing effectiveness and pupil satisfaction in Years 10 and 11.
127. Opportunities for reflection, well used in some lessons and involving pupils in the evaluation of learning outcomes, are not consistently and effectively developed. Pupils at all levels enjoy art and the majority responds well to the work they are given. Many take a pride in their achievement. This is due to their increasing success as the result of good teaching and course organisation, which many pupils acknowledge. Behaviour and attitudes are good in the lower years and very good in Years 10 and 11. Many pupils are able to sustain concentration, to become actively involved in class discussion and to talk sensibly about the development and standards of their own work.

128. The department is well led and managed by an experienced and enthusiastic specialist who sets and maintains good standards. Interesting and challenging schemes of work are in place for all year groups but planning needs to be more specific regarding the provision for ICT and aspects of citizenship, literacy and numeracy. Learning resources are at best adequate and are effectively managed to support teaching. A very good range of extracurricular activities increases learning opportunities. A good team spirit has been engendered and the quality of technical support makes a very positive contribution to the work of the department. There is a shared commitment to extend provision and raise standards. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The art department makes a valuable contribution to the cultural life of the school and good displays of pupils' work are prominently displayed in the art room and public areas of the school, as a celebration of pupil achievement.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Very well planned and structured programme.
- Pupils learn very well about the society in which they live.
- Very good use of extracurricular activities.
- External agencies and speakers are very well used.

Areas for improvement

- Involving all subject areas in the teaching of the programme.

129. All pupils are included in the activities that enhance their studies. These give them very good opportunity to develop their understanding of the society in which they live and increase their awareness of what it means to be a good citizen. An audit of the personal, social and health education scheme of work and those of several subject departments has resulted in the development of a very good programme. Pupils are, therefore, taught citizenship through a variety of subjects, which enriches their educational opportunities. Their achievements in this work are now being included in reports to parents.

130. Activity days and sessions are very well planned to support this work. Pupils in Year 7 ICT, for example, undertake a very good project on animal rights. Pupils in Year 9 prepared an outstanding display in the school entrance hall for the Holocaust Day project. The excellent support in this work given by the local MP, the local magistrate and a holocaust survivor exemplify very good links the school has with its local community. Pupils are also encouraged to take an active part in the school's very good charitable work. In addition, some excellent extracurricular events further develop the learning opportunities in citizenship. An excellent example of this was the recent mock trial contest. Nearly 50 pupils took some part in this competition run by the local magistrates' court; victory over ten teams from other schools was an outstanding success. The visit to the Houses of Parliament, involving pupils in role play as members of the cabinet, was another excellent learning opportunity that pupils enjoyed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching overall with good subject expertise.
- Good standards of practical work including modelling.
- Good relationships in all areas.
- A positive learning environment created in all areas.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring with a sharper focus across all areas to include teaching, learning and pupil progress.
- Implement CAD/CAM in pupils' learning.
- Develop a more accessible assessment system to include a map of progress across all areas of study.

131. Standards of work in Year 9 are in line with the national average and results of recent teacher assessments indicate similar standards. From below average attainment on entry, pupils achieve a good level and make good progress from Year 7 to Year 9. Practical work is usually good. Girls usually produce a better standard of work than boys, particularly in their design folders, which are generally neatly presented.

132. Good work by higher ability pupils was seen in a Year 7 key-fob project making appropriate use of templates and good use of colour. In Year 8, such pupils showed good ability to research a food

project looking at different bread products and their country of origin. Good product analysis in a Year 9 pizza project included good evaluation. Where the work is weaker - mainly that of lower ability pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 - it is due to poorer presentational skills both written and graphical, drawings in pen not pencil and unfinished work.

133. Standards of work in Year 11 are above average overall across the specialisms, showing an improvement from the 2002 GCSE results which were in line with the national average. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. In 2001, results were above the national average overall for A*-C grades with particularly good performance in systems and control. In 2002 results in resistant materials and systems and control were above the national average; those in food technology and graphic products were below the national average. Higher ability pupils produce good and very good work in all areas of the department. In graphic products they showed good research into pop-up mechanisms and interactive materials when designing a visitors' guide to Oxford, and good investigation into a packed lunch project, where information and communication technology and photographic evidence was used in designing a healthy and nutritious meal. They demonstrated very good research and development in a systems project when researching and designing a bicycle stand and good work in a child's toy project in resistant materials, where safety and suitable material considerations were well researched. Weaker work was seen in all areas and included overuse of commercial material in research, missed opportunities to use information and communication technology in presentation, weak written and graphical presentation and work not completed. Achievement is good overall in design folders and particularly good in practical work, including modelling.
134. Pupils' attitudes are generally good. They respond well when suitably challenged. They work well in groups and share equipment when needed. On some occasions, pupils do not readily respond to teachers' requests for attention and some classes can be noisy when working. Literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily used; skills of information and communication technology are generally well developed and used appropriately in pupils' work.
135. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with a proportion of very good lessons seen, especially in Key Stage 4. None was unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, learning is increased and good progress made because teachers use good subject knowledge to develop or expand ideas, good pace to sustain motivation, communicate lesson objectives and manage pupils well. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson where pupils increased their practical and social skills when working in pairs making a pasta and vegetable sauce. In a Year 9 graphics lesson, pupils were realising their designs making scale models of a good standard, and in a Year 10 systems lesson pupils increased their understanding of mechanical movement by having direct experience of various mechanisms. In a Year 11 graphics lesson, pupils were using ICT appropriately in designing questionnaires for evaluating their models. In a Year 11 resistant materials lesson, pupils were making good quality products with the expectancy of high standards of finish. In some lessons pupils do not readily respond to teachers' requests for attention and teachers tend to talk over pupils. There is some inattention during teacher explanations or demonstrations. The use of some resources does not help the expectation of good standards for example when using a traditional workshop for teaching graphics.
136. Leadership and management of the department are good. Documentation is good and revised schemes of work are in place. The head of department has a good vision for future developments in the area and there is a good team approach to the work. A positive environment has been created with a good display of work to support learning. Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Monitoring of teaching and learning requires a more formal focus across all areas and assessment, including marking, needs further development for consistency of practice and ease of tracking pupil progress from Year 7 to Year 11. The use of ICT is generally good but CAD/CAM is not yet implemented in pupils' learning in sufficient depth. The curriculum meets requirements and plans are in hand to include textiles in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE level. Not all pupils take a technology subject to GCSE level. The department contributes to citizenship when considering materials and their effect on the environment including recycling concerns. Moral and social development is good with cultural issues discussed in food technology. Spiritual development is not addressed and there is no policy in the department handbook. Teaching staff

have good subject expertise and give of their time freely at lunchtimes and after school for pupils to continue with their learning. Technician support is good in both areas. The presence of teaching assistants in lessons provides very good support to pupils, including those from the Unit who make similar progress to other pupils. All pupils integrate well.

137. Accommodation is located in two parts of the school and is a mixture of new and more traditional rooms. Some rooms have been recently refurbished and, although rather small, all rooms give a positive learning environment. Resources are satisfactory and the ICT room is a good feature being next to the graphics room. The use of CAD/CAM equipment is not yet fully implemented in the curriculum.
138. Improvements since the last inspection include a mixture of new and refurbished rooms, revised schemes of work, better display of pupils' work and integration of ICT into the curriculum. Food technology at AS level was introduced in September 2000.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Variety and range of teaching and learning methods.
- Good teaching with some excellent features.
- Relationships are very good.
- Assessment procedures are good with self-assessment and target setting being developed.

Areas for improvement

- Greater consistency in the quality of teaching and setting of homework.
- Continue the improvement of fieldwork and coursework and the development of ICT.
- Schemes of work to include greater detail on cross-curricular links and to make explicit the spiritual dimension of geography.

139. Standards in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well above the national average, with all pupils passing and more achieving A*-C grades than all other subjects except one. There was no significant difference between the results of boys and girls, and the results show an improvement since the previous inspection.
140. The 2002 teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were also well above the national average, on all measures, with the proportion obtaining level 6 or above being particularly high. Boys and girls achieved equally well at level 5 or above, but girls did better at the higher levels. As this group entered the school with below average attainment, this shows a remarkably significant achievement.
141. Current standards are good in Years 7 to 9, varying with topic, teaching group, learning method and time of day, particularly in Year 9. One Year 7 mixed ability form made very good progress in understanding and analysing a complicated line graph on population change, yet another form studying settlement factors did not achieve as expected in the last lesson of the day, with some idle chatter and time wasting by pupils. Year 8 and 9 are loosely set in pairs of forms; this helps teachers challenge the above average pupils and support the least able in smaller groups. Support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good where learning support assistants help, such as in a Year 8 group preparing presentations on the benefits of Northern Italy for commercial development.
142. The geography department has developed an extensive range of teaching methods to help pupils develop many skills along with understanding of concepts. Learning activities include discussion in pairs, group-work, sorting statements, drawing mind maps and flow diagrams as well as reading many different formats of information and writing for different purposes. One Year 9 group developed awareness of features of the Amazon rainforest and the advantages and disadvantages of different types of development by researching for homework and then presenting their findings

verbally to the class. Another Year 9 group of pupils with lower ability was successfully considering which type of tourism might suit the Amazon rainforest, using photographs of eco-tourism and commercial mass tourism to prompt their ideas and discussions. A third group had completed the assignment on the rainforest and the assessment against National Curriculum levels showed very high attainment. Verbal and written comments were made by the teacher, using National Curriculum descriptors to help pupils know what to do to improve. All outcomes of pupils' work are assessed and corrections made to written work, usually with constructive comments. The geography department is developing methods to involve pupils in self-assessment, and setting targets for improvement.

143. A large proportion of pupils in Years 10 and 11 choose to study geography and show interest and positive attitudes. Empathy and knowledge of other cultures form an important part of learning about place and the study of rural to urban migration in Bangladesh in Year 10 contributed to pupils' understanding of human processes and resultant geographical patterns. Key words are stressed throughout all geography lessons and are learned and used well by pupils. Writing frameworks are used to help pupils organise their thoughts and develop greater knowledge and understanding. Diagrams on A2 sheets after discussion in pairs also help learning; a Year 11 lower ability group for example, revised earlier work by using only words and pictures to convey a concept. This group had very thorough notes in their books and also referred to textbooks, to the teacher and to the support assistant and all pupils accomplished a great deal in the hour's lesson.
144. Teaching is good and often very good; it is sometimes excellent. Teachers' knowledge of geography is very good, including up-to-date information and thorough understanding of how to teach. Class management skills and relationships with pupils are very good, with appropriate use of humour and excellent questioning techniques. Planning and preparation of lessons is very good, with relevant use of a variety of resources, including a range of videos, pictures, books and worksheets. Ongoing assessment is very good and levels and grades used appropriately. Homework is set, but is not always consistently matched to the needs and aspirations of pupils. Schemes of work are very comprehensive, following Curriculum 2000, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines and GCSE syllabus closely and would be excellent with more detail on the development of literacy, numeracy, ICT, citizenship and the spiritual dimension of geography.
145. Higher ability Year 11 pupils are prepared well for GCSE. Teachers use examiners' comments effectively to demonstrate exactly the degree of knowledge, understanding and skills needed. They encourage pupils at all levels to delve more deeply into the subject by posing searching questions for them to answer themselves from their own knowledge, which develops understanding. Skills of constructing and interpreting maps and graphs are dealt with well by teachers and pupils' numeracy levels are high. Pupils in all years use ICT well to present coursework, homework and projects and the Internet is used effectively for research.
146. Leadership and management are very good, with an enthusiastic new head of geography as well as the previous head of geography working part-time and contributing to the whole school development of thinking skills. All geography teachers are well qualified, with varied relevant experience and collaborate well as a team. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, with standards raised, good teaching maintained and much better accommodation, with spacious well-equipped rooms in a new block.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good.
- Pupils are well supported in their work, by their teachers.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

- The management is good and teachers are highly committed.

Areas for improvement

- Marking of work needs to be regularly monitored.
- Pupils need their levels and targets available in their books.
- Some pupils need work and textbooks that better match their needs.

147. In 2002 teacher assessment of the standard of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 shows that it is above average. As their attainment at entry was just below average, these pupils' achievement is good. The GCSE results for 2002, based on average points score, are below average. Fifty-three per cent of candidates entered gained A*-C grades. Twelve pupils achieved the highest grades possible, A*-A. This is a good improvement upon the number gaining these grades at the time of the last inspection. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, as pupils were average on entry to the course. However, six pupils failed to gain a pass grade.
148. For pupils in Year 9, standards are average and achievement is good. The standards being attained by higher achievers are above average. Although pupils with special educational needs relating to learning generally make good progress, their standards are often well below average. GCSE pupils in Year 11 are working close to expectations; achievement is satisfactory. Year 10 pupils are slightly above expectation; their achievement is also satisfactory.
149. In Years 7, 8 and 9, most pupils are well motivated. They work very well in pairs and collaboratively. Those who achieve well take control of their own learning and are eager to question their teachers in order to develop their understanding of history. Pupils with special educational needs work enthusiastically. This is partly due to the very good use of challenging activities in most lessons. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work hard and behave very well. The good range of activities, including the use of video and Internet helps to maintain their interest in their work.
150. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils learn well because the work is challenging. They are generally well engaged by the tasks they are set. These activities help pupils develop good techniques in their analysis of sources and their writing. Opportunities are created for pupils to practise the use of correct historical terms and to talk to others about what they know and think. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 begin to show a good understanding of the impact of history upon the world in which they live. Work on the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, which led to World War I, is well compared by many pupils in Year 9 to the crisis in modern Iraq. The use of the essay plan, spider diagrams, filling in missing words and writing frames in lessons helps them to progress well. As a result, pupils begin to take responsibility for their own learning. In a very good Year 10 lesson, pupils gave a very good presentation, based on their own research, to help the rest of the class learn about life in Nazi Germany. Where a teaching support assistant helps or the teacher designs good extra materials for them to use, pupils with special educational needs, too, make good progress. However, some below average pupils' work is sometimes not sufficiently matched to their needs. The language and layout in the books they use, particularly in some of the Years 8, 9 and GCSE lessons, is too difficult for them. As a result, several pupils with literacy difficulties progress less well, although they do make sound progress overall.
151. Pupils are well taught and have a sound understanding of how people lived in the past. This is because their teachers have good expertise and work hard to present the subject well through good planning. Very good use is made of ICT in some lessons, such as those on the Crusades and the First World War. Similarly, teachers develop pupils' command of historical words very well by explaining the key words, displayed in every classroom. Pupils have some opportunities to use their number skills, for example through time-line construction on the Tudor and Stuart monarchs in Year 8 and by collecting data in GCSE work on membership of the Hitler Youth. GCSE pupils' work, using Internet searches, shows that they have sound investigative skills. They talk about their own views satisfactorily and challenge views held by others. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and the use of careful, supportive questioning encourages individual pupils to do their best. Pupils' work is generally well marked and suggestions are made on how their standards can be improved. However, this is not always the case and there is a need to check regularly that all pupils receive this help.

152. Management of the department is good. The curriculum is well planned and schemes of work are clearly designed to support the progress of pupils. The programme to monitor teaching is beginning to identify areas for improvement and to benefit pupils' learning in class. Very good opportunities are created in the schemes of work that help pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and citizenship awareness. The GCSE course has a particularly strong moral, cultural and citizenship component in the study of Nazism and the Vietnam War. Year 11 pupils go to Ypres. Display in the department's teaching area is outstanding and celebrates pupils' work well. Some excellent residential trips are arranged to supplement the curriculum, such as that by the Year 8 pupils to Ironbridge. The teaching resources for history are well managed, but there is a need for new textbooks that match pupils' needs, particularly for the Year 8 Black Americans course and the GCSE. Homework is satisfactorily used but the completion and marking of it needs to be monitored more closely.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good for Key Stage 3 and unsatisfactory for Key Stage 4.**

Strengths

- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject teachers set high expectations and facilitate good learning.
- Good leadership with a vision and determination for improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Provide the full National Curriculum entitlement for the majority of pupils in Years 10 – 11.
- Regularly assess and monitor the progress of these pupils.
- Ensure consistency and continuity in the quality of teaching between classes and year groups for Years 10 – 11.

153. In Key Stage 3 tests in 2002, pupils' attainment was well above the national average, with no significant difference between the progress made by boys and girls at this stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Analysis of pupils' work and that seen in lessons shows that these high standards have been maintained. At the time of the inspection no formal teaching of the National Curriculum for ICT took place for Year 9. The majority of pupils use a spreadsheet to budget for a disco. They enter the fixed and variable costs to predict the profit for different situations. They analyse this data in graphical form.

154. By the time pupils have reached the end of Year 11, the skills and understanding of many aspects of ICT of the majority are below that which can be expected. These pupils do not take a qualification in this subject and they are not assessed to National Curriculum levels of attainment. For these pupils, statutory requirements are not met. Compared nationally, the standard of their work is below average. However, approximately 25 per cent of the pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 are now studying for a GCSE qualification in Business and Communication Studies. The first group of pupils have yet to sit the examination for this new course, but from an analysis of their coursework the standard of their work is in line with national expectations. Approaching the end of Year 11 these pupils set up an IT system for a small business, for example. They design a company logo for bespoke letterheads and other stationery. They establish a database of personnel and present sales data graphically. They make a multimedia company presentation using "PowerPoint" and design and upload an Internet web site. In the GCSE course in Year 10 and Year 11, boys achieve slightly higher standards than girls although more boys study this subject beyond Year 9. At Key Stage 3 standards have much improved for all pupils since the last inspection. The unsatisfactory standard of work for the majority of pupils in Years 10 – 11 remains the same as reported in the last inspection.

155. The quality of teaching is very good in the lessons dedicated to ICT. These take place in Year 7 and Year 8 and for a small number of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11, taught formally by subject specialists who teach well-planned lessons with enthusiasm. Appropriate and challenging work is

set so that pupils complete their tasks and have the flexibility to fulfil their need to explore and try out new ideas. All pupils receive good individual support and are included in the learning process. The specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge relevant to the age range of their pupils and all teachers in the school have completed training in ICT.

156. Many pupils enjoy this subject and work for long periods of time sustaining their concentration on the tasks set for them. They are enthusiastic and motivated and they can work on their own when required to do so. They are confident in their skills and they are prepared to explore new ideas and work creatively. They work well together supporting each other's learning. Consequently the quality of learning is very good in the lessons dedicated to this subject and outstanding in the first two years. In these classes, it is the synergy between the teachers' skills and enthusiasm and the pupils' interest that leads to very good learning and progress in this subject. The quality of learning about spreadsheets was outstanding in a Year 7 class. A knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher delivered a lively lesson that caught the interest of all the pupils. The teacher knew the pupils well; all were very well supported and an "advanced group" were fired up with enthusiasm to find ways of completing more challenging tasks. The pupils were made to feel confident and this empowered their learning.
157. The incompleteness in the curriculum beyond Year 9 adversely affects the overall quality of learning. This has led to slow progress in the pupils' acquisition of many of the more advanced skills, knowledge and understanding that can be expected of older pupils. However the pupils use ICT to good effect for the presentation of their project work in subjects such as geography, history, music and design and technology. In these subjects they consolidate and put to good use the skills they have previously acquired such as the production of word-processed coursework with graphics and the use of a database or spreadsheet to organise and compare information.
158. Assessment matched to National Curriculum levels of attainment is carried out regularly and to a very good standard for pupils in Years 7 - 9. Beyond this there is no formal system for regularly assessing pupils' learning against national standards except for the relatively small number of pupils studying for a GCSE course. At the end of Year 11, many pupils receive no formal recognition of their achievements. Their progress is not carefully monitored. This situation is unsatisfactory and in this aspect there has been no improvement since the last inspection in 1997.
159. The time specified for the teaching of this subject is insufficient for pupils in Year 9. For pupils in Year 7 and 8 there is a very good scheme of work that ensures high standards. Beyond Year 9 there is no detailed programme of study for many pupils who are not studying for a GCSE qualification. The monitoring of pupils' work and their progress is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. Consequently there is inconsistency in the standards of pupils' work across year groups and inconsistency in the progress made by these pupils. For these older pupils there is insufficient time to develop their skills or to extend their knowledge and understanding, for example in using computer simulation and modelling for problem solving, processing and interpreting information using a data base application. They are not able to extend their experience of control technology.
160. Currently no pupils have experience of the use of a computer to monitor data directly from experiments through connection to sensors. However, this is in the school's immediate plans for improvement. Many pupils benefit from the good access to the Internet, which helps them to improve their research skills through the exploration of many educational facilities available on the World Wide Web. They have produced their own web-site that has achieved the Guardian School website of the Year Award. Of particular advantage to learning is the school's Intranet. This allows parents and pupils to access information and educational materials on the schools' servers from their homes. Pupils also have the opportunity to use ICT to search and find library books and other resources, using key word searches.
161. Skills in literacy are developed when pupils give a short talk to the class, for example, accompanied by their PowerPoint presentation. Good attention is paid to the pupils' correct use of key words and the accuracy of technical explanations. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to develop pupils' social skills and cultural understanding. They use email to communicate with pupils in Uganda. The ICT teachers enable the computer rooms to be

available out of lesson times. Many pupils take the opportunity to extend their skills during these times. Some use of ICT is made to help pupils with special educational needs, for example to improve writing skills and numeracy.

162. A very effective subject leader is making significant improvements to ensure that all the pupils in the future will have equality of access to all parts of the National Curriculum. A small but talented team of subject teachers work very well together to support these improvements. The senior management team and governors have this as a priority in the school's strategic plan. There is total commitment to improvement. This is evident in what has already been achieved in the last three years. A network manager and technician make a valued contribution to the quality of learning by keeping the computers running to maximise their use. These factors and the substantial improvement in the computer facilities are a significant improvement since the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Pupils are positive about learning languages as a result of good teaching and high expectations of achievement and behaviour.
- Teachers are committed to improving standards of achievement and attainment and plan their lessons carefully so that they motivate and challenge all pupils.
- Pupils are given lots of opportunities to speak, listen, read and write in French and German and are confident users of all four of these skills.
- Teachers make extensive use of French or German in lessons and pupils are used to hearing and using the language for real communication.

Areas for improvement

- There is too little time for pupils studying two languages in Years 8 and 9.
- Teachers need to make more use of ICT in their teaching.

163. Standards in GCSE German and French have been below national averages for the past two years for both boys and girls. In German, the number of pupils attaining grades A* - C in 2002 and in 2001 was below the national average, but above in 2000. In French, the number of pupils attaining A* - C grades in 2002 and in 2000 was also below the national average, but closer to the national average in 2001. Standards seen during the inspection showed pupils to be working at the expected level in both languages, and targets have been set for 2003 to raise the levels of attainment. Teachers are monitoring pupil progress closely and have been supported by senior management in introducing better setting arrangements in Year 10 to help pupils make better progress and improve results. Nearly all pupils in Year 11 obtain a language qualification at GCSE, with a small number of pupils obtaining a qualification of Certificate of Achievement.

164. Results of teacher assessments in Key Stage 3 for 2002 are above average, with boys' results in line with national averages and girls' results higher than the national average. Results have been improving steadily since 2000, as a consequence of the appointment of more new teachers and the development of teaching plans which introduce pupils to the use of past and future tenses at an earlier stage than previously. The department has purchased new course books for French and German which provide a better approach to promoting higher standards and this has contributed to the improvement in results. Standards of work seen during the inspection at Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations, with pupils using present, past and future tenses. However, there is not sufficient time for those pupils who are learning two languages to build really secure foundations in grammar or vocabulary and this will make it difficult to improve results in GCSE. Several pupils with special educational needs gain GCSE grades; some others use the time profitably to undertake a work related programme.

165. The teaching of both German and French is good overall in Years 7 to 11. The majority of lessons seen were good or very good and one was excellent. As a result, pupils learn well in both languages. All teachers have excellent accents and very good knowledge of their subject and as a consequence, pupils' pronunciation is clear and confident. In most lessons seen, teachers gave pupils many opportunities to develop and practise their skills in understanding spoken and written French or German, as well as to speak and write it. They use a variety of teaching activities in every lesson and in most lessons set a fast pace which the pupils find challenging and motivating. Pupils are keen to complete tasks, especially when the teachers use points to award scores to individuals, as seen in a Year 9 German lesson, or teams as in a Year 7 German lesson. In a number of lessons, pupils had to show by answering a question at the end of the lesson what they had learned before they could leave the classroom – and they all succeeded. In all classes, pupils worked well together and were supportive of one another. In one Year 8 class, pupils were preparing a play in German to perform to younger pupils as part of the lower school festival, using quite challenging language with confidence. Most pupils participated well, including those with special educational needs.
166. Teachers are clear about the levels in the National Curriculum and use them in their planning and assessment. Descriptions of the levels are displayed in every classroom and pupils are helped to understand the levels for themselves through the use of marking in their exercise books and regular tests. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a modular GCSE course in both French and German and teachers give them good written and verbal guidance about how to improve their levels and grades. Some pupils in a Year 11 French class described their own preferred way of learning and had clear plans for revision. One pupil, for example, was focusing on learning how to begin the answers to questions, another on revising specific areas of vocabulary. They were all determined to improve their grades. Teachers have identified those pupils who need extra support and mentoring to achieve their potential grades. In a Year 11 German class, the teacher has created special grouping arrangements to make sure that pupils are working at the correct level for their ability. In a Year 11 French class, one half of the group, aiming for foundation level at GCSE, was working in a separate room with another teacher, allowing the class teacher to stretch the pupils working at a higher level. The teachers are aiming to develop a simple and consistent system for keeping records in their mark books, but this is not yet in place.
167. The department is well led and managed. In the three years since being appointed, the head of faculty has systematically reviewed and revised team policy and practice in line with whole school and, as a result, there is obvious consistency of approach in all areas, for example, lesson planning and use of rewards. The sharing of good practice amongst team members is encouraged through discussion at faculty meetings. The use of an activity which requires pupils to find a piece of language information from clues distributed around the room and communicate that information to a partner was used to good effect in two lessons observed. This idea had been shared at an earlier meeting. However, team members do not get enough opportunity to visit each other's classes, and to share good practice through observation. The head of faculty has too few opportunities to see members of the team teaching and to monitor the impact of departmental policies on pupils' learning.
168. There is a good range of language activities on the school's intranet. One Year 7 French class used these programmes to develop vocabulary on clothes. However, ICT is not developed extensively in both key stages.
169. Pupils have good opportunities to learn languages. With very few exceptions, all pupils, including those with special needs, learn either French or German in Year 7; most learn either French or German in addition in Year 8 and are then in Year 9 able to choose to continue both languages, or one language in accordance with their own preference. A majority chooses to take two languages in Year 9, but the number of pupils taking two languages to GCSE is small. The team aims to increase this number through earlier identification of pupils with the ability to study two languages and the senior management team has been supportive in changing option arrangements to facilitate this. There are good opportunities for visits, residential visits and exchanges to Germany and France. One Year 7 pupil spoke enthusiastically of his visit to the Christmas market in Lille; two Year 11 pupils described how helpful it had been for them to take part in the exchange visit to

Bavaria. The language department benefits from its links with the language departments at Oxford University School of Education and with the neighbouring language college. These help promote up to date thinking and developments in language teaching and learning.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Good progress is made at every age from 11 to 19 because of good teaching.
- Extracurricular learning activities are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment for pupils in Years 7 to 9 needs improvement to raise standards.
- The range of music for performing groups should broaden to attract even more pupils.

170. Standards overall are average in Year 11. GCSE results for 2002 were below the national average for candidates gaining grades A*-C, with boys doing better than girls. In 2001 and 2000 results by this measure were well above the national average. GCSE music has increasingly attracted more boys than girls, a trend that still continues. Among current pupils, performing and composition are relative strengths of some high ability pupils in Year 11.

171. Teacher assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2002 was well below the national average for those reaching level 5 and above, with girls better than boys, as they are nationally. Work seen and heard during the inspection showed attainment much higher than this. A majority of Year 9 pupils is demonstrating the expected standard, with smaller numbers of pupils reaching even higher or lower levels. All pupils show good achievement overall. Older students following AS and AL courses in music, some aiming for higher education courses, provide very good role models and good incentive for younger pupils. This boosts achievement and the standard of the very good instrumental groups.

172. Pupils in Year 11 are positive about their choice of music, most being deeply involved beyond school. In a listening lesson they showed good recall of terms for the music of Indonesia and India but needed the teacher's help to explain the concepts they represent. Most use computer programs in school or at home for compositions. One talented and versatile pupil has produced several outstanding pastiche compositions. The 12 pupils in Year 10 invent motifs to create an 'instant' class minimalist piece. Those in Year 9 improvise fluently within a given structure on classroom instruments or others that they learn. Many use notation with ease; others use note names when they need not. One pupil with special educational needs showed his higher than average ability well when given a challenging task on keyboard. Younger pupils sing, usually tunefully, and most show a good level of ensemble playing through listening. Levels of concentration and literacy vary widely. The range is shown in a written project, for which the highest ability pupils use the Internet well for information on gamelan, with very good word processing, while others demonstrate little effort in either research or presentation.

173. A higher proportion of pupils than is usual in maintained schools learn to play orchestral instruments, drum-kit and guitars from 11 visiting teachers. Generally these make good progress, many reaching high standards. This makes a strong contribution to classroom learning in every year group, especially because pupils are expected to use their ability in class lessons. This work also makes possible the large and effective performing groups run by teachers in the evenings.

174. The quality of teaching in music is good overall for all years. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Pupils learn well because teachers know them well as individuals. Relationships are good because teachers are patient, cheerful and enthusiastic. They have good subject knowledge and skill, which they use to good effect in enabling learning. They use questioning techniques well, usually pushing pupils for precise answers which use technical language. Good classroom management includes imaginative use of the available space for learning activities. Teachers usually expect

differing levels of attainment from pupils in mixed ability classes, often providing different tasks which enable all to achieve. Teaching develops pupils' aural skills, helping them to think musically. They encourage artistic music making and ask pupils to reflect on the effects of music.

175. Teachers' instructions and explanations are not always made as clear as possible, because of hesitations, interruptions and unnecessary repetition. They do not always expect higher standards of attention which will speed progress of pupils and raise attainment. Teaching does not always model a new task to help all pupils to understand more quickly what to do in a learning activity. Most importantly, assessment for pupils aged 11-14 needs urgent development to reflect criteria for National Curriculum levels as required, to enable pupils to be clearer about how to improve. Targets for individual pupils should be used more often and more precisely.
176. Progress since the last inspection is good. None of the limitations about curriculum provision in that report now remains. Computers are used well by older pupils for music tasks and preparations to extend such use in Years 7 to 11 are advanced. The number of pupils and students involved in instrumental learning and extracurricular groups has increased and a choir re-established. Annual overseas visits of these groups are valued and celebrated by the school. The high profile for music is enhanced by sixth form activity. A local education authority Saturday music school is held at Wood Green, to mutual advantage. Leadership and management are good, with work shared effectively between the two teachers. The faculty link with drama and art provides support with appropriate priorities for development, but is not used well enough to strengthen curriculum planning which will help pupils understand common concepts in the arts and support development of assessment in music. Action is needed to use display in music rooms to support learning. Resources do not match the number of pupils being taught at one time and need to include a wider range of music of other cultures. More small rooms are needed for group work. Senior management shows its support in various meaningful ways. It should consider the current workload of the head of music if the present good provision is to expand and standards are to rise further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Leadership and management of the department.
- Extracurricular provision and take up by pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The development of lesson planning and teaching based on the pupils' intended learning outcomes.
- Pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of physical education vocabulary.

177. Standards of attainment in physical education by the time pupils reach the age of 14 were average as shown by the standardised teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2002. The proportion of pupils following the physical education GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in 2002 was above the national average. Comparison of pupils' standards on entry to the course and the standards achieved in the GCSE examinations shows good achievement through Years 10 and 11 for all pupils.
178. By the end of Year 9 pupils have developed competence of basic techniques in most activities. Their development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups. However, they are not always aware of what they should be learning by the end of a lesson. By the end of Year 11, pupils working towards the physical education examination have developed knowledge and understanding of the basic shots in badminton. They transfer these techniques when playing a game where they select shots, taking account of the positioning of the opponents. The progress of some pupils is restricted by a lack of opportunities to develop their understanding and use of physical education vocabulary.

179. The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good features. The strengths of the teaching include very good knowledge of the subject, class management, use of varied teaching styles to ensure that all pupils are involved in learning, positive interaction with pupils and a commitment to their moral and social development. Pupils, therefore, learn through appropriate activities and in an environment which encourages learning. There is good planning and provision for pupils with special needs. However, above average pupils are not always appropriately extended. In lessons where teaching is not so good, learning is restricted by a lack of planning based on what pupils can do. Some pupils, therefore, are moved onto new activities before they are ready to do so. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and most pupils are well motivated and well behaved.
180. Leadership and management in physical education are very good. The head of department has a clear vision for the future to raise standards. More planned opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge, understanding and use of physical education terminology and consistency of teaching based on achieving intended pupil outcomes would raise standards faster. Assessment procedures are now established, but pupils do not always know at which level they are working, nor do they set targets to improve. In general, the quality of accommodation and resources has a good effect on learning. However, rooms for A level physical education are small for the size of the group. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is very good provision of extracurricular activities, which enhances learning; take up of these activities is very good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 9 and their attainment in line with the expectations of the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils underachieve at age 16 and standards are low at GCSE examination level.
- A shortage of textbooks in all years has an adverse impact on standards.
- There is too little teaching time in Years 10 and 11.

181. In the 2002 GCSE full course examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well below the national average for religious education. Their average point score was well below the national average. Generally, pupils achieved three quarters of a grade less well than in their other subjects. Standards were slightly lower than in the 2001 examinations. However, comparisons with national averages are insecure, because, except for a minority who entered for the Certificate of Achievement, all pupils were entered for the examination. This was an unusually high proportion, both in comparison with similar schools nationally and with other humanities subjects taken in the school. Furthermore, the school allocated significantly less time to teaching GCSE religious education than to other comparable subjects. Boys and girls do less well in this subject.
182. There are no national standards for religious education at age 14. However, in work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 9 was broadly in line with the expectations of the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus for their age. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country and of their origins and distinctive features. They have a sound grasp of religious language, concepts and ideas. They understand why the beliefs of practising members of faith communities are important to them and how they shape their lives. Their skills in making a personal response to religious questions are well developed. However, their evaluative skills are underdeveloped.

183. In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 11 pursuing the GCSE full course was below the expectations of the examination syllabus for their age. Direct comparisons cannot be drawn with standards in the 2002 examinations, because of significant changes to the school's provision from September 2002. From the start of this academic year, higher ability pupils only have followed the full course, with average pupils pursuing the short course and those below average the entry level course. The attainment of pupils in Year 11 following the short course was well below expectations for their age. In both courses, pupils' knowledge is stronger than their skills and understanding. In particular, their analytical, interpretative and evaluative skills are underdeveloped.
184. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall at age 14. This is because they are challenged with work of increasing depth and complexity as they move through the school. Boys achieve as well as girls because they are given clear short-term targets in closely planned lessons. Pupils from minority ethnic and faith backgrounds achieve satisfactorily, because teachers create a secure ethos in the classroom, in which they can take risks in their learning, knowing that their contributions will be valued. Within that context, however, higher ability pupils and those with special educational needs do not always achieve appropriately because work is not always well enough matched to their individual needs.
185. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall at the age of 16, despite satisfactory teaching. Pupils following both the full and the short GCSE courses are underachieving. In the case of the full course, this is principally because the time allocated to teaching the syllabus is still far too low for it to be studied in appropriate depth. In the case of the newly introduced short course, it is because the syllabus has yet to become fully embedded and because a significant minority of pupils bring unsatisfactory attitudes to lessons. In all years, but particularly at GCSE level, a shortage of textbooks has an adverse impact on attainment and achievement, hindering the development of pupils' skills of independent learning, research and enquiry.
186. The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, and good or better in nearly half of lessons observed. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a good grasp of the subject, know clearly what they wish their pupils to learn, routinely share their aims with them and at the end of lessons evaluate with them how far they have been achieved. They plan their lessons well to achieve their aims and catch and hold pupils' interest through a good variety of interesting and challenging activities and tasks that are well matched to their individual needs. Year 9 pupils, for example, made very good gains in understanding the Christian concept of forgiveness. This was because the teacher brought the subject alive through excellent use of powerful video clips of real-life victims of serious crime discussing their feelings towards the perpetrators. Through whole class discussion and challenging written work, these pupils were equipped to make a personal response to the issues and to grasp how Christian teaching on forgiveness is rooted in its concept of God.
187. Teaching makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all years, through, for example, the study of the Holocaust in Year 9 and religious responses to ethical issues in Years 10 and 11. Teachers regularly set meaningful homework that extends the learning in class; it was a pleasure to see the pride that Year 7 pupils studying Christian worship took in the models of churches that they had crafted. This good teaching is underpinned by the good relationships that teachers engender with and between pupils. Where teaching is less secure, it is sometimes overly directive in style and does not give pupils enough responsibility for their own learning. Extension work is not set often enough for higher ability pupils. Work is not always well enough matched to pupils' special educational needs. Marking, although regular and conscientious, does not do enough to help pupils understand how to raise the level of their attainment.
188. The head of department, who has a clear vision of the education direction the subject should take if standards are to be raised, exercises effective leadership and management of the subject. Under this leadership, much has been done to improve the quality of schemes of work and introduce innovative learning activities such as the Year 9 Holocaust project, which has received public recognition. There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the previous report. The quality of teaching has been raised and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Schemes of work have

been significantly improved and statutory requirements for teaching the Agreed Syllabus are now fully met. A much stronger contribution is now made to the personal development of pupils. However, if standards of attainment are to be raised, the school should ensure that adequate time is made for teaching the GCSE full course and improve the provision of textbooks in all years.

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

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

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A E		% gaining grades A B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	1	0	52	0	2	0	0.8
Business	1	100	76	0	12	1.0	1.6
Chemistry	1	100	43	0	5	1.0	07
Economics	1	100	73	0	22	3.0	1.9
Mathematics	3	33	62	0	15	1.0	1.5
Leisure and tourism	11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.2	10.0

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A E		% gaining grades A B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	100	96	17	46	5.7	6.5
Biology	22	95	88	41	34	5.8	5.2
Business Studies	12	100	92	33	32	6.5	5.5
Chemistry	10	100	90	80	43	7.4	5.9
Communication Studies	20	70	93	30	31	4.3	5.5
Computer Studies	3	100	86	67	23	7.3	4.6
Drama	14	100	99	43	38	7.1	6.6
Economics	12	100	89	50	36	7.5	5.5
English Literature	20	100	95	35	37	5.8	5.9
English Language	3	100	92	33	30	6.7	5.3
French	1	100	89	100	38	10.0	5.6
Full design and technology	9	100	91	56	30	6.7	5.4
Geography	14	100	92	57	38	7.1	5.7
German	6	83	91	50	40	6.0	5.8
History	15	100	88	53	35	6.8	5.4
Mathematics	19	95	87	47	43	6.8	5.8
Other social studies	5	100	87	60	34	8.0	5.3
Physics	12	92	88	17	40	4.7	5.7
Religious Studies	10	100	92	80	38	7.8	5.8
Sociology	1	100	86	0	35	6.0	5.3

Sports/PE Studies	10	100	92	30	25	5.6	5.1
-------------------	----	-----	----	----	----	-----	-----

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focus was on mathematics, biology and physics. Chemistry was sampled. Courses are offered in mathematics, further mathematics, biology, human biology, physics and chemistry at both A and AS level; a non-practical course in science for public understanding is offered at AS level. In the two chemistry lessons seen, teaching was very good. Year 13 pupils were studying chemical synthesis and Year 12 pupils were looking at intermolecular forces. Levels of attainment were above average in both.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- The very good results achieved in Advanced Level examinations by students.
- The very good relationships between students and teachers that sustain a positive working atmosphere.
- The effective range of modules offered to students so that their needs are best met.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers within the curriculum to further enhance learning.

189. The percentage of students gaining A and B grades for 2001 was high and above the national average. Results achieved in 2002 were higher than these but there are no national figures available for comparison. This represents very good progress even though all students gained good grades in their GCSE mathematics examination. The numbers of male and female students varies and comparisons between them are not relevant because of small numbers.

190. Students achieve very well because of their positive attitude, the very good relationships with teachers, and the very good teaching they receive. The work seen of all students, in both Years 12 and 13, is at a good level for the course. All students study a bridging module of work during the gap between finishing their GCSE course and starting their A level course. This develops their capacity for individual study and consolidates their previous knowledge so that the course can build upon this and progress rapidly. The bridging course is a major contributory factor in the good progress that is made. Students' algebra skills are developed well so that they study the first module that involves calculus and advanced algebra with confidence. The very able students also study further mathematics and, again, standards are very good.

191. Very good learning is elicited from very good teaching. Teachers have very good, confident subject knowledge and use this to prepare lessons well. Lessons have good pace, well-structured question and answer sessions and challenging examples. Students are mutually supportive and they confidently discuss their work with their teachers and their peers. This discussion develops a depth to their understanding that is used well when they solve examination questions. Feedback to students on their work is generally verbal and involves the whole group. As part of this, students annotate their own work with solutions and indicators for future improvement. This establishes an atmosphere of continual refinement and improvement. If asked, teachers readily give students additional help outside normal teaching time.

192. The management of the sixth form courses is very good. There is a range of modules planned for students and in the second year of the course students choose to study mechanics or statistics. This has proved beneficial and supportive to other courses in the sixth form provision. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and they are well deployed according to their particular strengths and interests. All staff are mutually supportive; this unity has enabled the mathematics department to make continual improvements so that results have risen. The consortium arrangement works well and the close liaison is effective in planning and developing mathematics

courses. The use of computers is, at present, limited but is a part of the planned future developments to mathematics teaching.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Good standards of attainment and above average examination results.
- Good teaching resulting in pupils making equivalent progress.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students encourage students to enjoy studying.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient curriculum time to cover the wide range of AS level modules.
- Insufficient use of ICT.

193. The standards of attainment at AS and A level biology were above average in 2001 and were similar in 2002. The AS level human biology results were well below average in 2002, the course proving to be too demanding for the majority of pupils, many of whom had not achieved a high enough standard at GCSE. However, four students are continuing the course to A level. The standards of work seen in both biology and human biology lessons were above average. The progress made by the students is at least good during lessons and over time. As they proceed through the AS and A level courses, students' independent learning skills develop well and by the end of the course they take on responsibility for their own learning. This is illustrated by the high standard of coursework they are currently producing and their ability to research, prepare and present work on given topics.
194. Students' good progress is the result of at least good teaching and the very good support and guidance that they are given in the early stages of the course. The teachers' long, medium and short term planning is thorough and at AS level biology, their medium-term planning ensures complete coverage of all the required units of work within a very short time frame. Teachers' lesson planning at both levels ensures the revision of students' prior knowledge to provide a firm knowledge base for the building of new and more demanding work. They set clear learning objectives at the start of lessons and assess the extent of the students' level of achievement of these objectives during the course of and at the end of the lessons. Teachers also endeavour to make lessons interesting by including a variety of activities.
195. In a Year 12 lesson on diet in the health module, for example, the teacher assessed the students' existing knowledge and helped remind them of their earlier work by starting the lesson with a competition involving the examination of the nutritional details on food packets. The exercise was fun, provided a revision opportunity and informed the teacher of the students' level of understanding. In a Year 13 human biology lesson on reproduction and hormonal control, the teacher gave clear explanations, checked the students' understanding with regular questioning and gave them an exercise using word cards to place in the correct sequence to explain the effect of the various hormones. The exercise stimulated discussion, enabled the students to learn the names and effects of the hormones and to increase the depth of their understanding of feedback mechanisms. The Year 13 biology students, having reviewed the module 'the application of genetics' with their teacher, were set the task of selecting, researching and writing about one aspect of the topic. One student's chosen topic was the ethics of genetic engineering and his delivery was of an exceptionally high standard. The presentation considered a wide variety of examples and the possible advantages and disadvantages of each. It was thought provoking, tempered with humour and induced intelligent and sometimes passionate argument, the students expressing themselves articulately. The teacher asked questions to encourage the discussion and to develop the students' thought processes. This work reflected the effect of good teaching during the whole AS/A level course. These students are now taking responsibility for their own learning and are well prepared for higher education study.

196. During the course of their studies, students are given opportunities to widen their experiences through their involvement in various projects such as a sixth form conference on diseases at Oxford University. The subject's contribution to students' literacy and numeracy development is considerable but there is insufficient use of ICT. Students use word processing for their course work projects but few use datalogging and teachers do not make the best use of ICT to enhance the quality of their lessons.
197. The leadership and management of biology are very good. Teamwork is good and subject development planning, including regular evaluation. Assessment procedures are rigorous and assessment findings are used to guide further planning. Ongoing assessment in lessons helps to ensure that students achieve the learning objectives. Marking is of a high standard and post module tests enable the tracking of the students' progress and guide them in their self evaluation, helping them move toward the achievement of their targets. The regular monitoring of students' work in books and in the classroom is good, as is teachers' marking. Teaching, as well as student self-evaluation, ensures the good standards of attainment in biology.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Good teaching ensuring students' good progress in lessons.
- Good student teacher-relationships, which encourage students to study.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results are below average indicating below average standards.
- The monitoring of students' written work and assessment procedures lack rigour and need to be formalised.

198. Standards of attainment at A level, as revealed by examination results, were below the national average in 2001; the percentage of students attaining grades A - B was also below average. The AS level results were also below average. Results in 2002 at both A level and AS level remain below the 2001 average but school analysis reveals an improvement on previous years' results. At both levels the percentage of students achieving higher grades had increased. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' books is variable, but satisfactory overall. The rate of progress being made in lessons is good but is variable over time as revealed by work in students' books and module test results.
199. The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress in lessons. In Year 12, students studying eye defects and correction in the module, 'spare-part surgery', are making very good progress as a result of the teacher's very good planning and delivery of these lessons. The teacher had reviewed the students' prior knowledge and provided the opportunity for them to revise and extend their knowledge and to practise their experimental skills through the investigation of the lenses of a variety of old spectacles. There were good quality written guides and follow-up homework for further reinforcement. In their next lesson the students affirmed their clear understanding in their quick completion of assignments prepared for their arrival and in their responses to the teacher's clear questioning. The teacher's lively and animated approach encouraged the students' interaction during discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of contact lenses and spectacles. They participated with enthusiasm in the ensuing demonstration of the effects of combinations of various lenses and this enabled all the students to appreciate the mathematics involved allowing them to manage the calculations in the problem-solving exercise which followed.
200. In a similarly well structured lesson combining practical investigation, careful explanation, discussion and continuous assessment of each student's understanding, the Year 13 group revised previous work on matter and acquired a thorough understanding of specific heat capacity and how to calculate it. In another Year 13 lesson on ionizing radiation, the teacher enjoyed sharing his enthusiasm for the subject with the students, some of whom, in discussion, displayed

their developing higher level thinking skills. The notes in some students' books are not always well presented and some work is incomplete or has too few examples of examination questions or of various calculations. Other books contain extensive notes. It would appear that while some students have the motivation and independent study skills to take responsibility for their own learning, others do not and continue to need teacher guidance to ensure that they read, make notes and practise exercises with a frequency that will ensure their progress. However, there is no evidence that the students' work is monitored and, while the marking of assignments and tests is evident, it does not include comments of encouragement or advice to help the students make progress or to inform them of what is required to help them improve their grades. Some A level students use various computer web sites in their independent study or make use of the disks that accompany their text books and some have used word processing and data-logging to produce their coursework assignments. However the use of ICT is not used to its best advantage by all students or by teachers.

201. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the development plan has prioritised the need to improve standards. It recognises that too few girls choose to study physics and therefore that fewer students with the necessary higher standards in science and mathematics are studying physics at A level than might. Girls will need to be encouraged to enjoy the physics modules of science lessons through recognition of their ability and success and through raising their awareness of the work of women in science. Some students do not have adequate prior knowledge or sufficiently well developed independent learning skills; these facts need to be recognised and planning put in place, including better monitoring, marking and revision to ensure that all the students are enabled to make good progress. Monitoring and assessment procedures also need to be formalised.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Courses in design and technology are offered in product design at AS and A level and in food technology at AS level. These subjects were not inspected.

BUSINESS STUDIES

This was not part of the inspection. An AVCE in leisure and recreation is available. Economics was sampled; teaching and learning were very good in the lesson seen in Year 12 where students were studying inflation and unemployment as part of their AS level course.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The school participates in the consortium to extend the range of choices in computing and ICT offered in the sixth form. Teaching of AS level ICT and key skills ICT takes place at Wood Green. AS level ICT has been running in the school since September 2002 and no external results for completed courses are available. This subject was fully inspected. The school also offers business studies and economics at AS and A level.

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

Strengths

- Excellent effective teaching, showing very good subject knowledge.
- Good achievement by students.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students, with excellent attitudes to learning.
- Very good use of assessment data to monitor progress and set targets.

Areas for improvement

- Further enhance resources with interactive whiteboard.

202. Students undertaking key skills ICT level 3 in 2002 have been successful in obtaining pass grades. Performance in the unit tests for AS level ICT taken in January 2003 was good. The majority of

students obtained grades in line with predictions; some reached higher levels and a few performed below expectations.

203. Standards in AS level are above average. Students write effective specifications for coursework, as seen in a menu project. They explain well what they see as the task requirements and how they used the technical facilities available to produce good work. Coursework meets requirements, such as providing a professional looking menu for a local restaurant and is a strength of the department, reflecting the high expectations that teachers have of students' work. The task three multimedia presentation on recycling, for example, is of a high standard. Students' files in Years 12 and 13 are well organised to support subsequent work or revision. They show that students are acquiring good skills across the full range of application of ICT. Achievement is good.
204. Teaching and learning are excellent; teachers have very good rapport with their students, who take a mature attitude to their studies. A very high level of subject expertise ensures confident teaching at a good pace. Explanations of theory are well linked to practical examples and students are well supported. Teachers make good use of the range of teaching resources available, but lack use of an interactive whiteboard that would enhance learning and understanding. Lessons are very well planned with objectives that are communicated to the students. In a Year 12 lesson on multimedia presentations, well focused questioning probed students' understanding and sustained their interest. The students show good ICT skills and worked hard throughout the lesson. Teachers monitor students' individual projects closely and guide them well, yet leave overall responsibility for the work with the students themselves. Deadlines for work are reinforced well in lesson time.
205. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Students' needs have been effectively audited and courses provided to match the range. Discussions with them reveal how well aware they are of how they are doing in the various parts of the course. They value the range of opportunities offered in ICT lessons and the way that the school has helped them develop their personal and social skills.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education was not inspected, but one theory lesson in Year 12 was sampled. Students are offered courses in A and AS level and for the community sports leader award. By the end of Year 13, students make satisfactory progress. They have good knowledge and understanding of the movement of different joints and can relate this knowledge to sporting activities. Teaching and learning in the lesson observed were very good. There is no provision for a sixth form enrichment programme.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and drama were inspected in full and music sampled. Evidence of sixth form music was by observation of a Year 13 A level class of seven students, discussion with individual students in Years 11 and 12 and hearing some work. The standard of performance and composition is high for most. Students need to be prepared earlier for the necessary personal commentaries on their work. Teaching is shared with a neighbouring school. Students are content with this, but there needs to be closer liaison in making them aware of their progress and giving targets for improvement. As sampled, teaching was good. Several students are anticipating grades which will allow them to follow their intention of continuing music study in higher education. Sixth form instrumentalists, including some who do not follow music courses, make a valuable contribution to bands and orchestra.

Art

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good with very high expectation and very good planning.
- Relationships are very good; students have positive, enthusiastic attitudes.

- Independent learning skills are very well developed.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of students gaining higher grades in Advanced level examination.
- Accommodation provision for sixth form outside timetabled classes.

206. The proportion of students gaining higher grades in the A level examination in 2002 fell below the national average for 2001 and did not match the high level achieved in the previous year. This was largely due to the earlier changes in course management and delivery resulting from the introduction of the new AS course in Year 12 and the negative impact this had on course outcomes in Year 13. The department has subsequently restructured and predicted grades for current Year 13 students indicate clear improvement in standards this year. The AS results for the current Year 12 students indicate a marked improvement in learning outcomes. The department is eager to return to earlier high standards and is working hard to make this a reality.
207. In the sixth form, students are creatively and intellectually challenged by imaginative and well planned themes. They are expected to select their own avenues of exploration, research and experimentation, within a very supportive framework of teacher advice and guidance. This approach leads to the emergence of strong personal styles and very well developed skills in observational drawing and highly personalised painting styles. Very well developed independent learning skills lead in many cases to a wealth of experimentation and the pursuit of individual responses in a variety of well used two- and three-dimensional media. In many cases, sketch books are very well presented, prolific in content and impressive in the insight they give to the development of very individualised and creative styles of work which also successfully combine the imaginative use of mixed media. The range and quality of two-dimensional work from a focus on bones and stones in Year 12 is a very good example. The high quality of painting, mixed media and construction work inspired by the theme memory provides examples of some high achievement in Year 13.
208. The quality of teaching is very good and allows suitable time for reflection and discussion. Teachers place great emphasis on student accountability and students are mature and articulate when discussing their work and their approaches to time management. They are well informed about a wide range of contemporary artists, whose work inspires and influences their thinking and the direction of their own work. Attitudes are very positive and enthusiastic. Students are aware of their personal and artistic development over time and appreciative of the quality of teaching and encouragement that has contributed to their success.
209. Art in the sixth form is very well managed by experienced and enthusiastic specialists who each possess very good subject knowledge. The limitations of the present unsuitable accommodation do not allow for the provision of a dedicated sixth form area which would give opportunities for further development and make a positive contribution to the ethos of the department.

Drama

The quality of provision in drama and theatre studies is **outstanding**.

Strengths

- Results have improved consistently over recent years and are well above average.
- Students are enthusiastic, work productively and make very good achievement.
- Teaching is rigorous and inspirational.
- The subject has grown in popularity and, with excellent new facilities, attracts students from other schools.
- The subject is excellently led.

Areas for improvement

- Technical support would enable students to learn more about and make better use of the lighting and sound equipment.

210. A level results in 2001 were well above the national average and the majority of students improved their grades from AS. In 2002, A level results were similar and AS results were high with a majority of students attaining grade A or B. The expectation is that students will continue from AS to a full A level, which most do. Results have improved consistently since the last inspection and students generally gain higher grades in drama than they do in their other subjects. The subject is growing in popularity and attracts students from schools beyond the partnership. There are currently two classes in Year 12 and a further two in Year 13.
211. The standard of work of current students is well above average. School performance data indicates that most are achieving above their target grades and progress very well through both Year 12 and Year 13. Students read and interpret plays with meticulous attention paid to relationships and character. This is helped by excellent teaching which challenges them to go beyond the superficial. Year 13, for example, followed up their recent visit to 'The Tempest' in London by delving deeply into Prospero's motives in the final scene. They gained more insight by creating their own still pictures of key moments and later by comparing this production to productions they had researched from the past. As a result of sensitive teaching, students in both years move from text to performance with self-assurance. They have a very good knowledge of drama conventions, learned and refined in earlier years in the school and this enables them to make informed decisions when choosing a style for performance. Their learning from visits to high quality professional theatre shows in their willingness to experiment and take risks. Year 12 demonstrated this well in their final week of rehearsals of 'Under Milk Wood'. They successfully sought ways to project the calm sadness of Captain Cat's memories and the moving singing of Rosie while maintaining the energy and momentum of the play. Students evaluate their work well and are self-critical. They show a very clear sense of the role of audience and of director. However, their understanding and use of the good lighting and sound equipment in the studios are relatively undeveloped and this is an area where technical support could take their learning further.
212. Students' attitudes to the subject are excellent. They are supportive and they learn well from one another. The extra effort they are all prepared to make in their own time is an indication of their interest, independence and self-motivation. Their written work is well planned and often imaginatively presented. There is pressure on students to widen their background reading, important for those who hope to reach the highest grades. Many of the higher ability students choose to further their theatre interests by continuing their studies in higher education.
213. All teaching in the few lessons seen was excellent. Very good subject knowledge gives students appropriate, demanding work and the most talented are extended. Teachers' high expectations are apparent in the good formative marking of students' work and the very good guidance given on how to improve. Teachers' clear understanding of the new examination requirements helps the students to feel confident and good organisation helps them to meet deadlines. Teachers plan their lessons very well and activities take place at a brisk pace. Drama skills and terminology are learned and revised so students may continue to build on a strong foundation. Teachers keep track of students' progress very well, helped by very good school assessment procedures and readable data. Students are given targets to aim for which they frequently exceed.
214. Three new, excellently equipped drama studios have had a significant impact on the rise in standards after many years of using the hall and mobile classrooms. Students regularly perform for public audiences in these spaces. Video recordings of Year 13 performing extracts from 'The Trial', 'The Crucible' and 'Journey's End' are an indication of the high standard of performance and the high level of enjoyment of the audience. Students have a wealth of opportunity to visit quality productions both locally and in Stratford and London. The latest residential visit to London also included a back stage visit to the National Theatre, devised work with a storyteller at the Tate Modern and workshops at the Theatre Museum and provided an excellent stimulus to work in school. Sixth form drama students are good role models for younger students. They take a major part in the large school productions. They run a lunchtime drama club and they help younger pupils to prepare performances for local festivals and other community events.

215. Leadership is excellent. The courses are very well managed and documentation thorough. Changes in examination specifications are understood and results carefully analysed. Very good support is given to new teachers so that everyone in the small department feels valued and works as a team. Improvement since the last inspection is very good and close attention is being paid to ways in which the department could develop further and have an even greater impact on the creative life of the school.

HUMANITIES

Geography is taught to A level, with two groups in one option block in both Year 12 and 13, taking three modules in each year. A level results have been consistently high, 100 per cent passes in most years, and the proportion of A and B grades well above the national average in 2001. Teaching is very good, with a variety of learning methods and resources. In history, students benefit from studying an interesting range of historical periods and access to good resources. Standards are high and teaching is very good. Religious studies was sampled. Provision for AS/A2 Level is very good. In the 2001 A level examinations, standards of attainment were very high in relation to those achieved nationally. Students achieve very well because of very good teaching and the very good attitudes they bring to their work.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Very high standards at A level consistently over time.
- Teachers' knowledge of the subject is excellent with much up-to-date information.
- Relationships of teachers with students is very good.
- Good development of independent learning skills and use of ICT.

Areas for improvement

- Continue the development of teaching and learning methods.
- Maintain pace and productivity and retention of Year 12 students into Year 13.

216. Standards at A level have been consistently high, with 100 per cent passes the norm. In 2001 the proportion of A and B grades was well above the national average and higher than other subjects in the school. Results at AS in 2001 were also very good, higher than national averages. Results were higher than predicted from students' prior attainment, showing good added value. In 2002, all students taking A level passed, but higher grades were only slightly above the 2001 national average. The proportion of higher AS grades decreased in 2002; most students obtained a C grade, but several students did not complete coursework until Year 13 and several dropped out of Year 12. The numbers of students taking A level each year fluctuate, as does the proportion of males and females. Over time there is no significant difference in the attainment of male and female students.

217. In lessons, the standard of work produced by Year 13 students was above national expectations, though not as high as previous years. Independent learning skills are being developed well, as seen in the group researching damage to coral reef eco-systems using the Internet. Students recognise the importance of building up a range of detailed case studies and use the Internet and files in the library for that purpose. They quote unique examples of different places, local, national and global, to support their arguments about geographical patterns and processes. In a Year 13 lesson, students had prepared research on a trans-national company to consider benefits and conflicts in countries of varying stages of development and showed high levels of knowledge and understanding. The teacher had prepared an enlarged version of a table of figures from a past exam paper for students to annotate with notes to help them organise their thoughts before writing an essay answer. Teachers' very good use of past AS and A level papers is a significant factor in raising students' standards of attainment.

218. Year 12 classes are much larger; many students have chosen geography as an option this year and the majority intends to continue to A level, as they find geography enjoyable, interesting and relevant to their life and future career aspirations. Some of the lessons during the week of inspection were focused on completing their coursework projects, based on fieldwork in Swanage and Studland Bay. The geography department analysed results in each module the previous year (the first of the new AS course) to find coursework weakest overall and have developed new procedures to improve this element. Skills demonstrated in those projects completed are of a very high standard, and students' knowledge and understanding of coastal features and processes was impressive. Students felt that they had learned a great deal about physical and human geography in a different area by their residential fieldwork experience, as well as aspects of social and personal development.
219. Teachers prepare students for examinations thoroughly by using past examination papers in each module studied, developing map skills, in the use and interpretation of graphs and through literacy. The emphasis on the structure of examination questions was evident in a Year 12 lesson using photographs, maps, newspaper articles and other information on the Towyn flooding disaster of 1990. The concept of a coastal 'surge' was introduced and understanding of coastal processes and the social and economic impact of flood disasters as developed while working through an examination question, by discussion in pairs and then as a whole class.
220. The quality of teaching is very good, with four well-qualified teachers sharing the A level modules. Teachers' up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the connections between different aspects of geography are excellent and they transfer interest and enthusiasm to students. Relationships between teachers and students are very good, with appropriate use of humour. Questioning techniques are good, always asking 'why?' and 'so what?' to enlarge and enhance students' learning and depth in their answers.
221. Leadership and management of the geography department are very good, with an energetic and enthusiastic new head of department and a good team collaborating in the planning and preparation of A level work. Documentation and the schemes of work are good, with an emphasis on key skills and personal development. Resources and accommodation are good and appreciated by sixth-form students, contributing to their success.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good.
- Standards were high and students achieved well in 2001 and 2002.
- All aspects of assessment are managed and used well.
- Management is good and support for newly qualified teachers is excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Computers are not used in the classroom as a regular part of teaching and learning and seating in classrooms is not always adapted to the style of teaching used.
- Some students in Year 12 show a lack of commitment to the subject.
- Teachers are not always sufficiently clear about their expectations and deadlines for work are too flexible.

222. Results were well above the national average in 2001. All students passed, more than half at A or B grade. In 2002 results were almost as good, with 47 per cent reaching the higher grades. In AS all candidates met course requirements in 2002 although students did not do quite as well as in the previous year. The overall trend is very good. The majority of students achieve appropriately or better in relation to their results at GCSE; male and female students achieve equally well and most students stay on to the second year. Standards in the present Year 13 are good. It is clear from the number of A and B grades that the highest attaining students are fulfilling their potential and last year several chose to study history or related subjects at university.

223. Teaching and learning are very good. The work of individual students is of a high standard and Year 13 essays show that students have a good level of knowledge and the ability to address historical issues, for example those related to the extension of the franchise. Work on the Cold War indicates that all students understand that historians now have widely different views on why relations between the USA and the USSR deteriorated. They explain their approach to research tasks and all have responded very well to the challenge of the individual study option. They clearly value this opportunity for independent work and have chosen a variety of interesting subjects. In Year 12 the highest attaining students explain the ways in which social and economic factors were key factors in the development of the civil rights movements in the USA. All students show a good level of understanding of Black Power and they can evaluate the role of Martin Luther King as a leader who believed in non-violent protest. They show a secure knowledge of events in France that contributed to Napoleon's rise to power. In both year groups, the work of the highest attaining students shows a very analytical approach and the ability to use historical sources well. Students show a good general level of knowledge but the written work of some depends on narrative rather than analysis.

224. Learning is usually very effective because the key skill of communication is developed well in written work, discussion and group work. Students are encouraged to complete research tasks and share their findings, although the arrangement of seating in the rooms used does not promote this approach to learning. Some students fail to prepare adequately for group presentations and this affects the learning of the whole class. Teaching is very good; students benefit from well-planned lessons and well-chosen resources. Students use ICT very effectively for research and essay writing but computers are not available in the classrooms as yet. In both year groups, students are using unfamiliar vocabulary and some have problems with spelling and using difficult texts. Teachers address this issue well by providing glossaries, for example. They are really knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. Questioning focuses classroom discussion very well, assessment procedures are good and examination criteria are made very clear to the students. However teachers sometimes are not sufficiently clear about their expectations of students, for example with regard to preparing and handing in work.

225. Management is good and provides excellent support for new teachers. Appropriate procedures and documentation are in place. There are established procedures for review and evaluation. The library and departmental resources have been developed well. The range of historical periods has been well chosen to avoid repetition of topics studied lower down the school. Students judge their experience in the subject to be very good because of the quality of support that they receive.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was English literature. Courses are offered at A and AS level. Courses are also offered in French and German at these levels. There is a beginners' course in Latin. None of these subjects was part of the inspection.

English

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

Strengths

- Standards are high and are rising.
- Teaching is very good.
- Students are achieving very well.
- There are good procedures for the support of students.
- Students are very positive about their choice of English for A level.

Areas for improvement

- There is no scheme of work.

- Insufficient use is made of available data to measure students' progress during and at the end of the course.

226. In 2002, attainment in A level English was above the national average for 2001, the most recent year for which national comparative figures are available. The percentage of students who attained grades A and B was higher than the national average, while the percentage that attained the lower grades was below that seen nationally. All students entered for the examination obtained a pass. This represents a considerable improvement over the previous year, 2001, the first year in which students were entered for the English Literature A level. In 2002 the number of male students entered was very small and any comparison of gender would be invalid. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment is currently higher than that seen nationally.
227. Students who took their examination in 2002 entered the course with attainment which was above the national average and they achieved well to attain A level results which were also above the national average. Students currently in Year 13 are making very good progress in their preparation for their examinations and they are on course to attain well above the national average for 2001. This agrees with the department's predictions which are based firmly on regular assessments and the students' results in their AS levels, which were high. Students make very good progress in their use of close textual analysis of the language used by writers and the way this is employed to make an effect on the reader. They also make good progress in their understanding of the contextual background against which their texts are written. Students make very good use of the wide range of additional reading with which they are provided and make very good progress in the use of individual research in order to prepare their coursework thoroughly.
228. Overall, the quality of sixth form teaching is very good. Students respond to this by working hard and showing great interest in their work. They express a very positive response to their choice of English as an A level subject and to the quality of support they receive from teachers. Teachers plan their lessons well to include a very good range of activities and groupings to meet the needs of students. All students, including those who are less confident, do their best to participate fully in lessons and make very good progress in extending their understanding when comparing their ideas with the rest of the group. Teachers provide students with high quality additional reading material to add depth to their understanding and students use these well. Particularly timely and effective use is made of the writing being produced during the current war to place the study of the literature of war in clear context. Teachers place strong emphasis on the need for students to be familiar with the way their examinations will be assessed and on the development of good examination techniques. The quality of the marking of work is good and offers copious advice on what students need to do to improve.
229. The leadership and management of English in the sixth form are good. The clear commitment to raising attainment is proving successful. Good procedures for regular assessment are consistently applied; those for the identification of students who are experiencing difficulty or who are underachieving are also good; students are very appreciative about the support and advice they receive. There is a good programme for the enrichment of the curriculum through extracurricular visits, mainly involving theatre trips but also involving more imaginative visits such as a trip to Ypres to set the study of war literature in vivid context. There are no schemes of work for A level, although this has been recently identified as an area for development. While the teaching in the sixth form is very good, the lack of schemes of work leaves much to the initiative of individual teachers. Insufficient use is made of the full range of available information to measure the progress of students during and at the end of their A level course in order to ensure that all students meet their full potential.