

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HAYES SCHOOL**

Hayes

LEA area: London Borough of Bromley

Unique reference number: 101673

Headteacher: John Catmull

Lead inspector: Graham Preston

Dates of inspection: 22 - 26 September 2003

Inspection number: 259159

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1547
School address:	West Common Road Hayes Bromley
Postcode:	BR2 7DB
Telephone number:	(020) 8462 2767
Fax number:	(020) 8462 0929
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Eagle
Date of previous inspection:	10/11/1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hayes School is a large mixed comprehensive with 1547 pupils in 2003 and numbers have risen steadily since the last inspection when there were 1260 on roll. The sixth form has also increased significantly and has nearly 400 students on roll. It continues to be a popular school and is heavily oversubscribed by parents who value the usually high standards and wide range of enrichment

The school draws mainly from its more immediate geographical area that is above average in terms of socio-economic measures. Pupils come to the school with higher than average academic standards reflected in their primary school attainment. It has fewer than average pupils with special educational needs and the few for whom English is an additional language have secure language skills. Most pupils are largely drawn from white UK heritage backgrounds with a small number of others from Indian, Caribbean and mixed ethnic families. There are more boys than girls in the school overall.

The school has Media Arts College status reflected in its focus on media studies and in related subjects that include art and design and technology. It is also part of a successful local schools consortium that jointly provides training for graduate teacher trainees and overseas trained teachers. The school has a pleasantly 'green' school campus and good study centre facilities

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1990	Graham Preston	Lead inspector	
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	
19135	Derek Ebbage	Team inspector	Mathematics
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	Philosophy
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology
17404	Judith Tolley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Spanish (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
16042	Paula Heas	Team inspector	Business education (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science
18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
27585	Ken Hounslow	Team inspector	Biology (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
28097	Shelia Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	History History (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
11300	Barry Smith	Team inspector	Geography Geography (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
15472	Paul Andrews	Team inspector	Music (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
12226	Caroline Clarke	Team inspector	English 6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
6364	Geoffrey Strack	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
24142	Sylvia Argyle	Team inspector	Drama Media (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
15485	Roger Butler	Team inspector	Religious education
32169	Bob O'Hagan	Team inspector	Sociology
24453	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector	Physics (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
32173	Barbara Brown	Team inspector	French (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
32329	Andrew Stafford	Team inspector	Art and design Art and design (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
8183	Gillian Keevill	Team inspector	Physical education
11021	Leonora Davies	Team inspector	Music
17874	Daniel Moynihan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology

The inspection contractor was:

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

Hayes school is a very popular and successful school with a wide range of extra-curricular activities that contribute well to pupils' personal development. Its recent success in becoming a Media Arts College is now further enhancing the range of learning activities. Standards in the school are above national average with GCSE results well above national average and sixth form standards broadly in line with those nationally. Pupils and sixth form students have a positive attitude to learning and this, combined with teaching which is satisfactory or better, enables most to achieve appropriately. Although standards are often high, the school is underachieving because in a number of subjects, mainly in Years 8 and 9, the quality of teaching and assessment is weaker and a significant minority of pupils make unsatisfactory progress. The school leadership has more recently seized the opportunity to strengthen the senior management team in ways that address those weaknesses. Progress is being made but a considerable barrier to improving practice is the difficulty in recruiting good and experienced teachers in an expensive housing area despite the school's best efforts. The school provides satisfactory value for money

#### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Well above average GCSE standards that improved further in summer 2003.
- The very good quality and range of wider school activities including music, drama and sports
- The development of the school as a Media Arts College with an enhanced curriculum, additional resources and related links with the local community.
- The good staff training initiatives put in place to offset the shortages in experienced and trained staff.
- The positive attitudes that most pupils bring to the school particularly reflected in the high level of participation in the different school activities
- The strong guidance systems and the very good induction arrangements for new pupils
- A significant minority of pupils in the lower bands in Years 8 and 9 and some higher attaining pupils in other years, do less well than they should
- While staff are very committed to the school, the higher than average proportion of less experienced and unqualified teachers detracts from the overall standard of teaching particularly in Years 7-9
- Despite recent efforts to establish more rigorous assessment systems, there is a lack of effective and consistent practice across a number of subject areas.
- Curriculum provision for ICT, design and technology, citizenship and religious education has weaknesses and in some cases these do not meet the legal requirements.

The school has been mostly effective in meeting new challenges reflected in the building of a new learning resource centre and developing Media Arts College status. Standards continue to be above national average and there have been significant improvements in music. Most other subjects have sustained standards since the last inspection but this has been more difficult in science and French. The school has not fully met the weaknesses identified in the last report, including delivery of the ICT curriculum and consistent assessment practice in departments.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

#### **The overall standard of achievement is satisfactory**

Achievement across the school is satisfactory, although in Years 8 and 9 it is unsatisfactory because a significant number (mainly boys) make insufficient progress in the lower bands. Standards in reading and writing are mostly above national average with strengths in the use of specialist vocabulary in different subjects. Analytical and evaluative skills in the use of language are less strong. Mathematical skills are also above national average, though the competent use of ICT is patchy, depending on pupils' access to computers in earlier years and their take-up of the applied GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. Pupils often excel in their chosen GCSE courses such as music,

art, dance, drama, geography and media studies. In 2002, national comparisons in the table below indicated that GCSE pupils in Hayes should be achieving even higher standards. GCSE standards did rise significantly in 2003 and this trend looks set to continue based on achievement in the current Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	B	B	D
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	B	A	C	

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### **The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory**

Teaching is satisfactory overall with greater strengths in Years 10-13, where more of the lessons are taken by better qualified and more experienced staff. In those years over 90 per cent of lessons are satisfactory or better and reflect the teachers' strong knowledge and effective planning that enable pupils to reach the required standards. There is less effective practice in Years 7-9 and in about one in six lessons there is insufficient pace and challenge, that on occasion leads to lower pupil involvement and even misbehaviour. There are various examples of very good practice in the majority of subjects, though the proportion of good and better teaching is lower than might be expected in what is in many ways a successful school. Assessment is improving, though there are some weaknesses and good practice has yet to be established across all areas. Pupils are generally well cared for with good access to support and guidance, particularly in the sixth form. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.

### **The curriculum has a number of major strengths and though there are some weaknesses the range of opportunities provided is good overall.**

The successful bid to become a Media Arts College has enabled the school to develop exciting and innovative cross-curricular approaches to learning in Years 7-9 that involve media studies, art, ICT, music and design and technology. This initiative is beginning to strengthen provision in ICT and design and technology. ICT, citizenship and some religious education do not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Another valuable feature of the media arts initiative is the developing links with partner schools and the community. In Years 10 and 11 the school has also provided different curriculum pathways that better meet different pupil needs, including greater vocational and work related education. A key feature of the school is its wide range of extracurricular activities that include drama, music and sports as well as various visits and links in other subjects such as modern foreign languages.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### **Leadership and management are satisfactory with the potential to be good.**

The headteacher has the respect and support of governors and staff and changes in senior staff have enabled him, with the effective support of the deputy headteacher, to more recently establish a larger team of well motivated and talented senior managers. The governors are very well informed and have played an active part in the strategic development of the school. They have clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but have not ensured that the requirements for ICT, citizenship and religious education are fully met.



## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have high expectations of the school and readily voice any concerns they have about provision. However, the school is very popular and in the inspection questionnaire the great majority of parents express positive views about most aspects, particularly the range of enrichment activities. About one in eight of parents would like to be better informed about their child's progress.

Pupils have a positive attitude to the school and appreciate the range of experiences and opportunities provided. This is particularly so for the sixth form.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Use the developing pupil and student monitoring systems to identify and respond to areas of underachievement, particularly that seen in boys
- Monitor and improve teaching and learning practice with a focus on behaviour management and use more challenging and varied approaches that meet the needs of all pupils and students
- Build on current efforts to establish more rigorous assessment systems to ensure effective and consistent practice that shows pupils and students how they can improve their work
- Continue the considerable efforts to establish an experienced and effective teaching force through recruitment and training and more carefully deploy staff, particularly in Years 7-9
- Improve the range of practical learning experiences in design and technology.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure the study programmes for ICT, citizenship and Years 10 and 11 religious education are covered through more specialist teaching, effective learning schemes and better monitoring and co-ordination of provision

## THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 388 students. It is much larger than most and has doubled in size since the last inspection. Although many students progress into Year 12 from within Hayes School, over a quarter are drawn from other schools in the Bromley area and some from outside the LEA boundaries.

There are 5 pupils with special educational needs. 3 students do not have English as a first language but none are at an early stage of learning English. Students are required to achieve three GCSE subjects with grade B and two with grade C before embarking on an A-level course, although exceptions are made. At the end of Year 13, three quarters of students continue their education at university.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**Sixth form provision is satisfactory overall.** The sixth form caters well for its current students through a range of 31 A-level and 4 vocational courses, and provides a very positive environment for their personal development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory; students make satisfactory progress in relation to their qualifications on entry. Excellent pastoral leadership has contributed to the popularity and rapid growth of the sixth form. The school works very hard to value all students and to establish an ethos of trust and responsibility. The sixth form is cost-effective.

**The main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Standards and provision are particularly strong in the humanities and visual and performing arts and are excellent in music
- Students have very positive attitudes to the sixth form, which are reflected in the significant increase in student numbers over the past four years.

- The level of pastoral care in the sixth form is excellent; sixth form managers are well informed, open and very accessible.
- The school offers a broad range of enrichment activities, and organises a very full social calendar each year.
- Students feel that they are treated as adults and value the opportunities presented to assume responsibilities within the school.
- While provision in all sixth form courses is at least satisfactory students achieve less well than they should in some subject areas.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to develop and share best practice.
- While there is now a stronger focus on using data to evaluate and improve student progress, this is still underdeveloped.
- The quality of assessment and target setting varies considerably between subject and course areas.
- Students find insistence on their following 4 A-levels is onerous and may detract from them achieving the highest standards.

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	<p><b>English:</b> Good. Teaching strategies lead to positive achievement overall.</p> <p><b>French:</b> Satisfactory. Students attain above national expectations but are not sufficiently challenged by stimulating teaching to achieve at the very highest levels.</p> <p><b>Spanish:</b> Good. Students attain above average standards and achieve well because of effective teaching.</p>
Mathematics	<p><b>Mathematics:</b> Satisfactory. Standards at A-level are improving year on year. Nevertheless, a significant number of students do not continue after Year 12.</p>
Science	<p><b>Chemistry:</b> Satisfactory. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and deliver an appropriate curriculum to students, who are keen to learn.</p> <p><b>Biology:</b> Satisfactory. However, there are some variations in the quality of teaching and learning, leading to some student underachievement.</p> <p><b>Physics:</b> Satisfactory. Students benefit from the presence of good quality teaching and levels of achievement are rising from previous low levels towards a satisfactory value.</p>
Information and communication technology	<p><b>ICT:</b> Satisfactory. Teachers plan well and show good knowledge of the subject. However, there is insufficient focus on the strategies required to enable students to attain the higher grades.</p>
Humanities	<p><b>History:</b> Good. Achievement is good and students feel well supported.</p> <p><b>Geography:</b> Good. Good teaching and positive attitudes based on excellent relationships lead to good achievement.</p> <p><b>Philosophy and Ethics:</b> Good. Teachers are well organised and show a commitment to raise standards and improve learning.</p> <p><b>Sociology:</b> Unsatisfactory. Standards of achievement are too low. Teachers demonstrate a lack of depth in subject knowledge, and leadership and</p>

management are weak.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Design and Technology</b> was sampled rather than fully inspected. In the lesson seen, good teaching was helping students achieve well.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Music:</b> Excellent. Inspired, determined leadership and superb teaching lead to very high achievement levels across a rich range of musical involvement.  <b>Media Studies:</b> Good. Students learn well and are enthusiastic. The school has benefited from recent <i>media arts status</i> , which has significantly improved the range and scope of resources.  <b>Drama and Theatre Studies:</b> Good. Standards are above average as a result of good teaching, which encourages and engages students.  <b>Art and Design:</b> Good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations and offer a wide variety of opportunities. Students are well motivated.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	The school does not offer a course in this area though sports activities in the school are strong.
Business	Satisfactory. Some good teaching based on good knowledge of the subject and examinations leads to satisfactory standards of achievement.
Health and social care	The school does not offer a course in this curriculum area.
General education	This subject was not inspected.

*The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements 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'.*

A number of subjects were sampled during the inspection. There is good work, along with good teaching and learning in design and technology (product design), dance and in physical education. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in psychology.

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Sixth form managers provide an excellent quality of support and guidance in Years 12 and 13. Information about sixth form courses is good, although additional curriculum advice is required to enable individual students to make appropriate choices at the end of Year 11. Students benefit from a varied and extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, which give emphasis to the arts, music and sports. There are regular reporting and review procedures, but students could be better informed about their progress at subject level. There is scope to increase the provision of careers advice. The quality of advice offered in preparation for university entry is very good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The head of sixth form is exceptionally committed and very highly respected. He leads a very effective team of sixth form managers providing pastoral care and which is now involved in academic monitoring.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

105 students responded to the questionnaire. Discussion between inspectors and students both formally and informally, indicates that students are exceptionally positive about the sixth form, the range of subjects offered, the accessibility of their teachers and the personal support they receive.

The strengths identified are justified, as are the concerns expressed over the quality of assessment and the need to be better informed about academic progress.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards across the whole school are above national averages and well above the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 7-9 achieve appropriately or better in mathematics, geography and art, but a significant minority, including some lower band boys, do less well than might be expected in English, science and some other subjects. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in the GCSE courses, where standards are well above national average. Sixth form students also achieve appropriately and reach standards broadly in line with national averages. Even so, there are some subjects in Years 10-13 where pupils and sixth form students do less well than they should.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the GCSE courses are well above national averages and improved further in summer 2003, reflecting improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils throughout the 11-16 phase make good progress and achieve well in geography, media studies and drama, where the provision is interesting and challenging.
- Once involved in GCSE work, increasing numbers of pupils become highly motivated and make good progress, notably in applied ICT and art.
- Sixth form students do particularly well in the humanities and visual and performing arts, with excellent work in music.
- Where pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and the tasks well matched, they do well as in art, numeracy support and geography.
- A number of often lower band boys in mainly Years 8 and 9 make poor progress because of a combination of less effective and often inexperienced teaching, large classes and an unsatisfactory attitude to learning.
- While most make satisfactory progress in GCSE courses there are a number of able pupils who do not gain the highest grades and in some subjects, such as English, boys do significantly less well.
- Similarly, in the sixth form, while most students make satisfactory or better progress, there is some underachievement in a few subjects, including science and mathematics.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002*

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	63 ( 64.6)	50( 49.2)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97.4 (99.5)	88.9 ( 88.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98.3 (100)	94.5 (94.4)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	43.9	39.8

*There were 233 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Pupils come to the school with well above average end of Year 6 test scores in core subjects. Standards in other subjects such as music, modern foreign languages, art, design and technology and geography are much more mixed, often because of less emphasis on those areas in primary school. In comparison with all schools nationally the pupils consistently reach

standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average. However, when account is taken of the standards pupils had on entry to the school, their end of Year 9 results are a little below what might be expected.

2. In 2002 standards in the GCSE courses were well above national average and improved further in 2003, when nearly 70 per cent of pupils gained five grades A\*-C. When comparing the 2002 pupils against others nationally with similar end of Year 9 National Curriculum scores, there was clear evidence of underachievement. However, the improvement in GCSE results in 2003 would have much reduced the degree of underachievement. In terms of year on year improvement, all three core subjects improved their overall grades A\*-C rates. The areas that reflect the school's strengths improved considerably. Art, drama, music, media studies and geography all had significantly better results with around eighty per cent of pupils gaining the higher grades. Girls continue to perform better than boys overall especially at the highest level where girls gained over two thirds of the total grades A\*/A.
3. Standards seen in the inspection were above rather than well above the national average with most pupils in Years 7-9 making steady progress and achieving in line with expectations. However, a significant number do not. During the inspection inspectors judged that pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics but there is some underachievement in English and science.
4. In English, standards of reading and writing are above the national average and most speak confidently, though they do not readily challenge or develop each other's ideas through discussion. Girls participate more readily and listening skills are mostly good, though in Year 8 particularly, pupils lack the discipline and concentration to gain from instruction and feedback. These weaker features inhibit pupils' progress and achievement.
5. In mathematics pupils have well above average numerical and mathematical skills and the clear and structured learning programmes ensure that they make sufficient progress and achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 9.
6. Standards in science are well above national average and boys and girls have similar achievement. Pupils acquire a range of scientific knowledge and skills, though some aspects of teaching miss opportunities to stimulate and extend understanding. Consequently there is a measure of underachievement.
7. In other areas, too, where teaching and learning are challenging and involving, pupils do well. This happens in many lessons but there is less consistent good practice in Years 8 and 9. The pattern varies considerably in other subjects with pupils making satisfactory or better progress in art, geography, physical education, music, drama and modern foreign languages. However, in other subjects there is some underachievement where a considerably higher proportion of less effective teaching combined with large teaching groups in the lower bands slows learning, particularly for some less well motivated boys. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very much related to the variation in the quality of teaching and support though overall they achieve satisfactorily.
8. It is a much more positive picture in Years 10-11 where pupils are more focused and the teaching quality is, on average, better. Pupils achieve satisfactorily or better in most subjects including English, maths and science as well as the newer courses in dance, drama, media studies and applied ICT.
9. In English pupils interrogate texts well and select and use evidence critically to support their response. Pupils reach good standards in writing and are able to draft their work effectively. They make good use of research notes to understand the background to texts.

10. Pupils achieve appropriately in GCSE mathematics with little difference in the standards of boys' and girls' work. This reflects a positive pupil attitude to learning and generally effective teaching
11. In science, the higher attaining pupils show very good understanding, evident in their study of forms of energy and their inter-conversion. Pupils generally have a developing understanding of investigatory science, although there are some weaknesses in applying concepts and understanding the scientific method. Even so, standards are well above national average and pupils achieve satisfactorily in their GCSE courses.
12. In other subjects the pupils' positive attitude and good behaviour are a significant factor in their continued progress. In GCSE media studies girls outperform boys but both do well because of the good and better teaching. Pupils express their ideas in a creative and independent way and make effective use of ICT. A similarly positive picture exists in GCSE dance, where pupils achieve well in developing a range of dance skills and an ability to critically evaluate their own and others' work.
13. Those pupils with special needs are tested regularly and their progress against targets is carefully charted. In this way, it is possible for the SEN co-ordinator to show that the majority of special needs pupils are achieving and often bettering their targets. This is a good example of the professional approach that the department adopts. In most lessons, pupils with SEN match the progress of their peers and achieve satisfactorily although there are exceptions. In history, poor behaviour sometimes results in a lack of achievement, particularly in Year 8. In one ICT lesson, SEN pupils failed to make progress because they did not understand the work and so could not keep up. The further progress of SEN pupils is hampered by limited awareness of some subject heads about the use of Individual Education Plans and matching learning tasks to pupil needs. In Years 10-11 the lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, generally achieve satisfactorily or better, particularly where they receive good support and are well motivated by their courses. This was the case with those taking the ASDAN/NVQ programme, who enjoy their range of experience, including a college link.

## SIXTH FORM

### ***Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002***

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	98.9	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	34.4	39.4
Average point score per pupil	16.2 (19.4)	17.4

*There were 105 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

14. Over the past three years, results at A-level have fluctuated, showing a trend downwards. In 2001, A-level results were well above the national average though in part this was the result of all students taking additional courses such as general studies. In 2002, results were broadly in line with the national average. In 2003, the overall average point score per student over the full range of subjects dropped slightly. There is evidence that some of this fall can be attributed to students' being given a heavier than needed course workload. Over the past three years, girls have outperformed boys at both AS and A-level.
15. In 2002, the overall standards attained in intermediate level vocational examinations were above the national average. Standards in AVCE Business were above the national average.

16. In lessons observed and in the samples of work scrutinized, students are achieving in line with expectations based on their standards on entry. Students' work shows a satisfactory response to teaching. In almost all of the lessons students make satisfactory or better progress with nearly half making good or very good gains.
17. Students' standards in literacy are above average, while numeracy and oral communication skills are appropriate for the level of work. Use of ICT is good, with sixth form students making effective use of the internet for research and independent learning. Some teachers also make good use of ICT in lessons, but provision varies across the curriculum.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

**Most pupils have a good attitude to school and many are actively involved in the wider life of the school. Sixth form students have a very positive attitude.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good relationships with teachers and other pupils. They share a sense of responsibility and get involved in the different activities.
- Attendance is satisfactory, though monitoring procedures are less rigorous than they could be.
- Although behaviour is very largely good, a minority show a lack of personal discipline and respect where teaching is less well planned.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.5	School data	0.8
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

18. Pupils' attendance at 93.4 per cent is satisfactory and is improving. The school does endeavour to pursue absences as soon as possible though does not have an attendance officer or other arrangement to carry out first day response and in that respect procedures are unsatisfactory.
19. Pupils' behaviour is mostly good. Although some corridors and classrooms are very cramped, pupils move about them without jostling. They behave sensibly at break times and lunch times. Members of the inspection team were impressed by the courtesy shown to them by most pupils who were keen to show them around the school and demonstrate their achievements. In some lessons, particularly in Years 8 and 9, where teaching was unfocused, pupils demonstrated silly or unacceptable behaviour, which proved a barrier to their learning and slowed down the pace of teaching.
20. Pupils mostly display very good interest in school life and the range of activities provided. They are willing to take responsibility and are pleased to be elected to the School Council, be involved in the appointment of staff, raise money for local and national Charities (which they select), help at the local Primary School and act as peer group mentors.
21. Although some bullying is present at the school, this is mainly low level and is well addressed by staff who deal with all such matters seriously and immediately. Although the level of exclusions is fairly high (120 in the past year), these are always given for good reason and are meticulously recorded.



***Ethnic background of pupils******Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1336	110	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	18	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	8	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0

22. Pupils are well aware that they can approach staff if they have any concerns and they will be listened to with empathy and patience.
23. Pupils treat their own and other people's property with great care. Library books, computers and video facilities are treated with respect and the school is graffiti free.
24. Pupils' personal development is good and relationships in the school are very good. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week state they feel that the school has a family atmosphere and they feel safe and secure within it. Relationships among pupils and peer groups and pupils and staff are very good. Staff offer a high level of support to pupils and pupils feel confident that they can receive high quality advice and support if needed.
25. Pupils have a good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and can distinguish right from wrong. They well appreciate others' cultural traditions and the school has not reported any incidents of racial bullying or harassment. Pupils have a good understanding of their own and other people's cultural traditions, although the Citizenship programme is at an early stage of development.

**SIXTH FORM**

26. Students' attitudes to the school are excellent. As part of the inspection process, students were asked to complete a questionnaire. In addition, a significant proportion spoke to inspectors during lessons and more formal discussions. They were exceptionally supportive of the school and spoke very highly of the pastoral care in the sixth form.
27. Students generally settle well to lessons. They show a satisfactory level of commitment to learning and most can be relied upon to work well at home and at school. Many teachers offer good levels of support to students. Overall, the atmosphere in the sixth form is one of openness and respect. Students value the effort that most teachers make on their behalf and work productively, either on their own or in groups. Secure relationships, especially with sixth form managers, lead to impressive levels of loyalty and commitment.

28. The sixth form is a happy place. Students relate very well to one another and work cooperatively to organise a host of events and activities.
29. The personal development of students is very good. Students may choose to assume responsibilities and to contribute to the development of the whole school. In addition to initiating and organising whole school events, sixth formers are involved in SEN in-class support programmes, peer counselling and a transition-mentoring scheme with local primary schools.
30. A very good range of activities is open to students, especially in the domains of music, arts and sports. Many sixth formers contribute to sports teams, drama productions, concerts, and other school events, including overseas tours. Each year, sixth form managers organise a Year 12 conference in association with the Industrial Society. Year 12 students also have the opportunity to take part in a bi-annual exchange with Arlington School, Boston USA. Overall, sixth form students provide good role models to other pupils by contributing with enthusiasm to the life of the school.
31. Most students are well prepared for tertiary education by the time they leave the school.
32. Overall attendance is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in the school's system of monitoring attendance, which sixth form managers are now working to address.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Teaching is satisfactory overall with greater strengths in Years 10-13 where more of the lessons are taken by better qualified and more experienced staff. Teaching is weaker in the younger years where there is a higher proportion of less experienced and qualified staff. Assessment is improving, though good practice has yet to be established in many areas.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff teaching GCSE and sixth form courses have a very good command of their subject; this helps pupils and students considerably in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding
- Many teachers are able to encourage greater pupils' effort and interest through engaging activities, particularly in the creative and practical curriculum areas
- Lesson planning with the older pupils and students is good and resources are well used to engage interest and encourage independent working
- There are some good examples where learning support assistants are used effectively
- There needs to be better use of assessment data to track pupils' progress in some subjects
- Although most teachers demonstrate effective behaviour management, there are clear weaknesses in the less confident and less experienced staff, resulting in unsatisfactory pupil progress
- Even in the otherwise sound lessons there can be a lack of pace and challenge, particularly for some higher attaining pupils and students.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
[1] (0.5 %)	[20] (11%)	[67] (36 %)	[75] (41%)	[16] (8%)	[3] (1.6%)	[0] (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

33. While teaching is satisfactory overall there are clear differences in the quality of teaching and learning between Years 7-9 and Years 10-13. In part this is deliberate policy of the school to use, where possible, more experienced and fully qualified staff to teach the GCSE and sixth form courses. Given the difficulties the school has in recruiting such staff, this strategy seems to have worked and is evident in the continued improvements in GCSE results.
34. In those upper years nearly six lessons in ten have good and better teaching with just one in twenty lessons unsatisfactory. This contrasts with teaching in Years 7-9, where one in four lessons is good or better and one in six is unsatisfactory and, on occasion, poor. The school is working hard to address these weaknesses by recruiting experienced teachers and has clearly developed in-house staff development to meet the need of nearly a quarter of staff who are newly qualified or unqualified teachers.
35. Most teachers are specialists and even the less experienced, who are developing classroom methods, are well informed. The best teaching uses this knowledge well to provide the innovative approaches seen in a Year 7 religious education lesson. The very strong knowledge skills of the teacher in a GCSE music lesson enabled pupils to produce very effective performances and compositions. The modern foreign languages teachers are highly competent linguists who provide good role models and promote good speaking and listening skills.
36. The better teaching also fully engages pupils' interests and enables them to work with greater concentration and productivity. The different practical and creative subjects such as dance, drama and media studies have strengths in these areas. Good relationships are evident in those lessons.
37. Resources are generally well used, including the use of additional learning support in, for example, media studies. ICT is increasingly used in different subjects. Some of this is particularly effective, though this remains an area for development in many curriculum areas.
38. Planning and the choosing of suitable teaching strategies are more variable. It is often good in GCSE examination courses where there are clear learning objectives though less strong in earlier years. In a number of lessons in Years 8 and 9 the less experienced and, in some cases, unqualified staff have some difficulties in organising learning activities and demonstrating effective behaviour management. This is most noticeable in the lower bands for those two years where a minority of boys are often less engaged and misbehave. These concerns extend across a number of subject areas including English, history, mathematics, music, science, modern foreign languages, art and ICT.
39. Given the improvements in GCSE standards it is clear that much of the teaching is sufficiently challenging to ensure that most pupils reach comparatively high levels. Not surprisingly, the strongest teaching is in those areas showing considerable examination success, including geography, drama, music, media studies, physical education, and the high set groups in science. The school banding and setting systems endeavour to group together pupils with similar aptitudes. Even so, many lessons, while satisfactory, do not take sufficient account of the considerable variation of ability between pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly supported appropriately, although there are occasions, as in Years 7-9 ICT, where the tasks are too difficult, leading to disaffection. A further concern is the lack of further challenge provided for some higher attaining pupils, including those designated gifted and talented. This is evident in a number of subject areas, including English, science, and modern foreign languages.
40. The new senior management team have placed considerable emphasis on making effective use of assessment data to inform teaching and provide more rigorous monitoring and target

setting for pupils. There is still some way to go but a number of subjects are tracking their pupils well. These include physical education, geography, science and art. The school has established whole school policies but currently their implementation is patchy.

41. Homework and class work are regularly set and marked and there is some good ongoing assessment practice in a few subjects such as English but, in general, the school has been slow to develop shared assessment practice. Pupils in many subjects have some understanding of their progress but on a week to week basis they are less aware of the standards they are achieving and what they need to do to further improve.

## **SIXTH FORM**

**Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory overall and half of lessons are good or very good.**

42. Teachers generally apply their subject knowledge effectively and set clear objectives for their students. In the best lessons, challenging tasks involve students in a demanding range of activities. The quality of learning is diminished when teaching strategies are too dependent on the teacher and expectations are not high enough. This is evident in a number of subject areas, notably some sciences, mathematics and sociology. This contrasts with livelier and more challenging teaching in the humanities and visual and performing arts.
43. Good classroom relationships with groups of students underpin the best teaching seen in the sixth form. Students make good gains in knowledge and understanding when lessons provide them with the opportunity to rehearse their ideas. Generally, teachers' questioning skills are effective and encourage lively debate, but there are examples of higher attaining students' being insufficiently challenged in lessons.
44. Teachers know their students, but they are not always setting appropriate targets for individuals. Overall, there is scope for closer monitoring of student learning by academic staff and for the analysis of value added information. The quality of marking and the use made of examination criteria are variable. Diagnostic comments can be sketchy and do not always show students how they can improve their work.
45. Students with English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers.
46. Based on the student questionnaire and inspectors' discussions with students, it is clear that students particularly appreciate the fact that the majority of teachers are readily available to provide additional help and advice when it is needed.
47. The school has recently set up a quality assurance group to monitor learning. There is scope to extend this programme in the sixth form in order to raise standards and improve accountability. Models of good practice should also be identified.

## **The curriculum**

**The curriculum has a number of major strengths and, though there are some weaknesses, the range of opportunities is good overall.**

### **The main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new media arts college status is generating creative and innovative practice
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities in the main school and sixth form
- Provision is strong in art, PE, modern foreign languages and geography
- The different option pathways better meet the needs of pupils in Years 10-11
- The sixth form provides a good range of courses
- There are weaknesses in the provision for design and technology and citizenship

- The school does not meet the legal requirements for religious education in Years 10-11 or for ICT in both key stages
- The Key Stage 3 strategy for English has not been fully implemented

## Commentary

48. The successful bid to become a Media Arts College has enabled the school to develop C.Mat (Creativity through Media Arts Technologies), an exciting and innovative cross-curricular approach to learning starting in Years 7-9, that involves media studies, art, ICT, music and design and technology. This initiative is beginning to strengthen provision in ICT and design and technology, though these areas have suffered significantly from staffing problems.
49. Currently the range of design and technology experiences in Years 7-9 is limited and, unusually, there is no provision for food technology. Taught ICT courses have been limited recently and the National Curriculum programme of study is insufficiently covered for Years 7-9 or for those not taking a GCSE ICT course in Years 10-11. Another legal requirement for religious education is not met for pupils aged 14 to 16. There is insufficient time allocated to teaching and the taught curriculum does not follow the agreed syllabus sufficiently closely.
50. More positively, the school has also provided different curriculum pathways in Years 10-11 that better meet different pupil needs, including as it does a bias towards languages, business and ICT, with greater emphasis on work-related education.
51. Curriculum provision is good in art and physical education, reflected in the prestigious Artsmark and Sportsmark awards. Geography, too, is particularly strong, both in its taught programmes and the opportunities it provides for fieldwork. The provision for modern foreign languages is also good, enabling pupils to study two languages during years 7 – 9 and pursue them at both GCSE and GCE Advanced levels; they can choose two from three at GCSE level.
52. There has been a lack of curriculum co-ordination in some areas. The implementation of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy which is designed to improve teaching in key subjects has been slow. Some good work has taken place but its development has been patchy across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Similarly, the provision for personal, health and social education is largely good but the planning and co-ordination of citizenship is unsatisfactory.
53. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Many departments offer intervention programmes after school and at lunch-times to help pupils progress in their work in particular subjects. There is a range of clubs at lunchtimes. The sports department provides a range of sporting fixtures for all pupils and the music department has a healthy number of bands and choirs. There is opportunity for pupils to learn to play instruments through the use of visiting specialists as well as a recording studio with some links with the professional music industry. The music, art and drama departments work together in regular dramatic productions, while a further strength of the Media Arts College initiative is the developing links with partner schools and the community. Other subjects, too, are involved through an extensive range of visits and exchanges for pupils across the age range.
54. There are just sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum except in design and technology, where there is a lack of the necessary range of specialists. The majority of teachers have very good subject knowledge but there are a number of teachers who have limited teaching experience or experience of the UK educational system.
55. Several areas of the school have been extended or refurbished to a high standard. The covered area, “the street”, provides a very useful, spacious meeting area for students – especially in inclement weather and a useful collection area for meeting and organising student groups. The media arts college status provided a considerable sum for developments in

media-related areas and the science department has had some laboratories refurbished to a good standard. However, accommodation is barely satisfactory. The school is very short of classrooms and class sizes are often large and difficult to accommodate in some of the smaller than average classrooms. The previous report commented on the narrow corridors that are overcrowded at changeover times. The increasing school roll has not helped that.

56. Overall, resources in the school are satisfactory. Most areas have adequate resources to meet their needs. But the numbers of textbooks are sometimes limited and this restricts their use for homework. The learning resource centre was a major plus in the development of ICT facilities but demand is now considerable and limiting access.

## **SIXTH FORM**

57. The curriculum provision for the sixth form is good. The selection of subjects is well matched to the current students' aspirations and needs. Those Year 11 students who wish to select from a broader range of vocational courses are well provided for in the local area.
58. The curriculum includes very good expressive arts opportunities, with courses in music, media arts, drama and theatre studies, dance and art.
59. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual education is less well developed.
60. All students are required to participate in enrichment activities. A very good range of activities is offered both in and out of school hours.
61. There are 5 students with special educational needs in the sixth form, for whom the provision is satisfactory.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Hayes is a caring school which offers good provision for support, advice and guidance to its pupils.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have access to well informed advice
- Sixth form students, too, receive informed careers and higher education guidance
- Induction arrangements for pupils entering Year 7 are very good
- There are good child protection and first aid procedures
- The procedures for monitoring of and acting upon health and safety issues are unclear

### **Commentary**

62. Child protection procedures at the school are good and have improved since the previous inspection, when they were described as unsatisfactory. The Child Protection Officer is well aware of her role. She has received recent training and has arranged for cascade training to other members of staff. Records of pupils on the "At Risk" Register and "Looked After" pupils are good, as is liaison with the statutory authorities.
63. The school last arranged a Health & Safety Survey of buildings and accommodation in July 2001 and, although the Health & Safety Officer, together with the Site Supervisor, carries out informal termly Health & Safety Inspections, no written records are kept. The school is, therefore, unable to confirm whether items identified as being of concern have been rectified.

64. The school has an adequate number of First Aiders and good records are kept of accidents. Procedures for the administration of medicines are good.
65. The school gives good support and guidance to its students. The Pastoral System is well structured, with Form Tutors closely monitoring pupils' pastoral development and regular meetings and discussions take place between Form Tutors and Heads of Year to identify pupils experiencing difficulties which may be a bar to their pastoral development or learning.
66. Pupils are well encouraged to give their views. Good use is made of the School Council, to which two pupils from each year group are elected. The School Council meets regularly and provides a useful forum for pupils to give their views and opinions on many matters, including school life. Pupils are selected to be on the interviewing panel of senior staff appointments and have contributed to the setting of school rules.
67. Relationships at the school are good. Staff provide good pastoral role models and pupils feel free to go to them for advice or help if needed. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirmed that they knew who to go to for help or advice and valued the support they receive from staff.
68. Induction arrangements for pupils are very good. The Head of Year 7 visits most of the 30 feeder primary schools to meet pupils prior to their admission from Year 6 and pupils from the primary schools who have selected the school are invited to an Open Day with their parents prior to starting in Year 7. Pupils are then invited to an Induction Day where they are put into Form Groups and attend "taster" lessons. The school makes good efforts to ensure that Year 7 pupils feel secure in their early days at school by providing them with a dedicated play area.

## **SIXTH FORM**

### **Assessment and Reporting**

69. There are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment. Students are not always clearly aware of what they have to achieve or how well they have done. Overall, individual feedback and guidance could be a stronger feature of the assessment process. There are also inconsistencies in practice with regard to homework.
70. The assessment of progress records indicates satisfactory improvements in students' work over time. There is a good system of reporting to parents, including parents' evenings.

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

71. Students say that they receive good advice and guidance in relation to their studies and find the printed information covering sixth form subjects and courses clear, accurate and helpful. However, they would have welcomed further advice in Year 11, when making their initial choice of sixth form courses. Students felt that they would be able to seek guidance if they experienced academic difficulties.
72. Sixth form managers recognise that there is scope for the school to introduce improved systems of tracking to highlight students at risk of underachieving and to help them to analyse and evaluate their progress.
73. There is scope to extend the provision for careers education and the quality of access to specialist advice from the careers service the quality of guidance offered in respect of higher education is very good. The UCAS programme is monitored carefully and is constantly adapted to provide students with more extensive information and to ensure greater communication with parents.

74. Students have good access to the library and ICT when they need to seek information.
75. The school has good links with other schools and contributes to wider partnerships.
76. With the exception of attendance procedures, there are effective procedures to ensure students' health and safety.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

**Parents are very positive about what is a very popular school. The school has good links with the community and its local feeder schools. The school has a range of drama, music and other events that involve parents, though it is less active in terms of involving parents in the work of the school.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents, pupils and sixth form students think very well of the school
- There are very effective transfer arrangements from primary schools
- Educational links with other schools and contributions to other partnerships are strong
- The school is less active in involving parents through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Commentary**

77. Hayes School is the first choice for very many parents and pupils and is heavily over-subscribed. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive and thought that the staff treat their children fairly (88 per cent), their children are not bullied or harassed (85 per cent), their children liked school (91 per cent) and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem (86 per cent). A significant minority (13 per cent) thought that they were not kept well informed about how their children were getting on and that the school does not seek the views of parents or take account of their suggestions or concerns (11 per cent).
78. The inspection findings confirm the positive views of parents and, to some extent, the negative views expressed.
79. Links with parents and provision for parents with regard to information about the school and pupils' standards and progress are satisfactory. Written information is of a good quality, the school Prospectus is a well-produced document, which is parent friendly and contains well-written information on the school's policy and courses offered. In addition, a separate Prospectus is provided for parents of sixth form pupils and an information leaflet is provided for Year 7 pupils when they join the school. The school produces regular newsletters and a school magazine, both of high quality and providing good information about activities promoted by the school, staff changes and successes achieved in sports and other activities. The Governors' Annual Report to parents is well detailed and gives a good deal of information on the work of the school and all statutory information on results and finance.
80. Reports on pupils' progress, which are produced annually, are of good quality, give detailed information about what pupils have studied, grades awarded and target setting. Although some parents would like to see more regular reporting of their children's progress, the current arrangements of interim and annual reports in both the main school and sixth form are satisfactory.
81. The school arranges Parents' Evenings for each year group at differing times during the year, where parents have the opportunity to meet subject teachers and form tutors. Those parents' evenings follow regular progress reviews, though they do not necessarily coincide with the production of full annual reports. Parents have good opportunities in additional parents' evenings to discuss Year 10 GCSE options and sixth form course options. The school keeps



parents sufficiently informed through a promising school website, the use of e-mails and letters, as well as the school's magazine and student planner.

82. In other ways, the school is ready to receive comments and parental concerns and, though a few parents express disappointment about the occasional slowness in response, many of them speak highly of the skills and dedication of the pastoral staff. The school also readily contacts parents if it has concerns about or praise for pupils. A small number of parents provide work placements and their contribution is much appreciated. The school has arranged for "share your knowledge" events where pupils have the opportunity to train their parents in the use of media, ICT and other technology.
83. The school does not formally survey parents to seek their views but uses the Parent Teacher Association as an unofficial sounding board; however only a small number of parents (300) are members. The PTA is a very lively, pro-active body which works extremely hard to provide funds for school. Parents are not automatically members and have to pay a subscription. The PTA arranges a large number of social events such as an annual ball, auctions, open air concerts and last year raised the sum of over £18,000, which was donated to the school's Media Arts Department. Their efforts are much appreciated by the school.
84. Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils are very good. Parents receive good information about further education opportunities available to pupils and all staff in the sixth form are very pro-active in ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to apply for a further education course of their choice and that the choice is the right one.
85. Educational links with other schools and contributions to wider partnerships are very good.
86. The school works very well with five main feeder primary schools and is particularly successful in promoting the Media Arts, Year 6 Transition Projects and a Summer School where pupils from other schools are invited to study English, maths and science. The school also has strong links with Ravensbourne College of Art & Community where pupils attend on a sessional basis for specific projects.
87. Links with the community are good. Termly meetings are held with representatives of the school's direct neighbours and the Hayes Village Association, Hayes Traders Association, Connex and Community Police Department to discuss initiatives and issues relating to the Hayes community.
88. Regular meetings are held with the Hayes Village Association to monitor ways that the school can source the local community; with Hayes Traders Association to discuss traders' needs relating to Hayes extra curriculum activities. The school very well uses its Media Arts status to develop links with Age Concern and provides courses in conjunction with the local special School and local secondary schools.

## **SIXTH FORM**

89. Parents are very pleased with the sixth form and communications are good. Meetings are held regularly and parents receive a good level of information about sixth form events.
90. Students are very positive about the school. They feel that they are trusted and that the school is responsive to their views. They appreciate the opportunities provided to exercise choice.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory with the potential to be good. The headteacher is well respected by colleagues and provides sound leadership. The new and larger leadership group is providing satisfactory management, although there are some**

**weaknesses to be addressed. The governors have a good understanding of the school and are actively involved in its development but the governance is currently unsatisfactory because not all of its statutory duties have been fulfilled**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- the headteacher provides a clear vision of a school concerned with the rounded development of pupils and students
- He is well supported by members of the Senior Management Group and very effective sixth form leadership
- The sixth form is cost-effective
- The recently established larger management group provides a good mix of new and established staff who are committed to improving standards
- There are a number of good middle managers who have established good practice as in geography or are involved in new initiatives as in the media arts
- The governors are very well informed and take an active part in the strategic development of the school, contributing to its good financial management and development as a Media Arts College
- Earlier weaknesses in the senior management team have contributed to a lack of monitoring and development in some whole school aspects such as assessment and ICT
- The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and assessment have still to be firmly established at both senior and middle management levels
- There are a number of subject areas where the governors have not ensured that the school has met its statutory duties.

#### **Commentary**

91. The headteacher has been in post for over thirteen years and has played a major part in establishing a popular and successful school. He is committed to developing well rounded individuals and this is reflected in the considerable emphasis on both academic achievement and wider sports and arts pursuits.
92. In the last five years the increasing school roll, particularly the sixth form, led to much needed new accommodation including a new learning resource. During those years the distractions of building work, accompanied by increasingly serious problems in recruiting experienced and effective teachers took their toll on school management systems and provision in some curriculum areas such as design and technology, ICT and religious education.
93. In the last year or so the headteacher, working with the new deputy headteacher, has been effective in building a new and larger senior management team by promoting good middle managers and recruiting younger and talented managers from outside. These managers have begun to provide appropriate leadership in key areas such as the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, staff training and development, assessment and management of a growing sixth form.
94. A successful feature of school management has been its involvement in setting up initial teacher training through a local schools consortium accredited to provide training for overseas teachers and unqualified graduates and supporting the development of the many newly qualified teachers in the school.
95. All of this has partially eased the problems of staff recruitment. Deployment of new and less experienced staff continues to be problematic, evident in the greater amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 8 and 9.
96. There have been some successes in recruiting and developing middle managers evident in the improvements in music and more recently, religious education. Even so, there are continued weaknesses in the monitoring and co-ordination of particular curriculum areas such as ICT and citizenship. More generally, the larger senior management structure is better able to

monitor and support heads of department and other middle managers through more regular and planned meetings, though the system is in its initial stages.

97. Some middle managers in geography, physical education, science and mathematics are making better use of pupil tracking and assessment data but few areas have established best practice that helps pupils understand how to improve their work. Similarly, while the school has appropriate performance management procedures and is committed to evaluating and improving teaching methodology, it has yet to fully implement its plans for that area.

#### ***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4452899
Total expenditure	4355763
Expenditure per pupil	2779

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	242078
Balance carried forward to the next	339214

98. Spending per pupil is about in line with that nationally. The school financial management is good in terms of its planning, reflected in the building of a new learning resource centre with considerable ICT facilities. The school endeavours to ensure best value in its use of funding and resources. Its media arts college bid also reflected the good work of school managers and governors in developing a successful financial plan as well as raising some of the matched funding through the parents' association. The school accounts meet the requirements as confirmed by both local authority and independent auditors.
99. The governors have played a major part in the strategic development of the school and work closely with the senior managers to promote the school, evident in its successful bid to become a Media Arts College. Governance is deemed to be unsatisfactory because, though the governors have clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, they have not ensured that the curriculum requirements for ICT, citizenship and religious education are fully met.

#### **SIXTH FORM**

100. Very good leadership, emanating from the Head of Sixth Form, contributes to the distinctive character of the sixth form. Levels of pastoral care are excellent. Overall daily administrative arrangements, systems and procedures work very well. The sixth form is a very important part of the school as a whole. Students are known well individually and benefit from excellent levels of personal support. Sixth form managers are open, accessible and very generous with time. They balance professionalism with a genuinely caring approach. The social calendar of the sixth form is full and interesting. Sixth form managers work hard to draw a large group of students together in a spirit of conviviality and endeavour.
101. Students value the right to be considered for prefect status. They take their duties seriously and contribute very effectively to a range of school events. The school has recently adjusted the prefect selection procedure to include greater consultation and inclusiveness.
102. Each year the sixth form attracts a growing number of students from the local area, some from outside the LEA boundaries. Its popularity reflects in significant part the quality of the head of Sixth Form and the positive ethos he has established over the past three years. He is widely respected and regarded with affection by the student body. In the questionnaire, an overwhelming number of students said they would recommend the sixth form. Those students joining the sixth form are provided with very good support. Induction arrangements are very good. Students work well together and settle quickly in the sixth form.

103. The sixth form is cost-effective.

## **Resources**

104. Staffing arrangements are good. Overall, the number of teachers is in satisfactory proportion to the number of sixth form students. Teachers are well qualified for the courses provided. Students have satisfactory common room space and good study facilities. They are able to access a suite of computers and the Internet in the Study Centre. Overall, the sixth form is well resourced with learning materials.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **There is very effective provision for modern foreign languages**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are opportunities for pupils to take two languages in Years 7-9
- There is a wider than average choice in the sixth form
- Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive
- The languages department has very good linguists

#### **Commentary**

105. Provision is very good. All pupils take French from Year 7. Three quarters of pupils have the opportunity to take up German or Spanish from Year 8. In Years 10 and 11 pupils choose one of the languages to continue to GCSE, and keen linguists may continue with two, within the option system. In the Sixth Form pupils may take Spanish, German or French to A level and starter courses in Japanese and Italian.
106. Extra curricular opportunities are extensive. The department runs a regular languages club. Trips and exchanges are well established and frequent, ranging from a day trip to northern France for all of Year 7 to a week in Germany for older students. There is opportunity for Sixth Form students to do a work experience placement abroad. In addition to this pupils also have the opportunity to study other languages, for example Japanese and Italian, from scratch in sessions outside the school day.
107. Languages are well established within the life of the school. Older pupils are involved in links with primary schools and visit them to work with younger pupils. The school ran a Languages Week during the inspection. This featured the headteacher speaking Japanese in assembly, national dishes on offer in the lunch canteen and foreign movies shown each day.
108. The languages department has four native speakers on its staff. The school also hires foreign language assistants to extend pupils' opportunity to practise their speaking skills and has plans to create a language laboratory.

## **Work related education**

### **The overall provision is satisfactory**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The newer vocational pathway for some Years 10-11 pupils is worthwhile
  - All Year 10 pupils benefit from well organised work experience
  - A large proportion of pupils opt for the applied ICT and business GCSE options
  - The guidance for sixth form students not going into higher education is less strong.
109. In Years 10-11 all pupils benefit from good careers education and guidance as well as a well-organised work experience programme at the end of Year 10. The recent introduction of different curriculum pathways for pupils entering Year 10 is most notable for the ASDAN/NVQ

programme that enables lower attaining and SEN pupils to take particular National Vocational Qualifications in chosen occupational areas at the local college while continuing to improve basic skills. All pupils have access to business and vocational (applied) ICT as part of their GCSE option programme.

110. Work-related education in the sixth form has changed little since the last inspection in terms of the range of vocational courses provided. This was an action point at the last inspection, though the good links with the nearby colleges have ensured that students have opportunities to take vocational courses, though not at the school. Advanced Vocational education in business continues to be a particular strength, though attempts to increase the number of vocational areas to include leisure and tourism have been unsuccessful. The growing strengths of the school as a Media Arts College will be extended to the sixth form with the introduction of the Advanced Vocational qualification in media and communication. Guidance in the sixth form is good, particularly for those students preparing for higher education.

## **EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE**

### **Example of outstanding practice**

Exceptional work in music in a large sixth form of a comprehensive school that inspired students and set high standards of performance

At a lunchtime band rehearsal the forty or so students arrived punctually and promptly settled down for the session. Students buzzed with enthusiasm: "You really look forward to rehearsals". All the department's teachers were there, one directing and the others playing alongside students. After tuning, the director launched them into Blues Brothers Revue and, with great skill and energy, quickly raised the level of their performance, shaping and sculpting notes, insisting on precise, clean and polished phrasing, maintaining excellent rehearsal discipline with very rapid pace, good humour, and an almost aggressive intolerance of second best. With each intervention the performance standards improved as students concentrated fully and responded to the best of their ability. Within 20 minutes the band was playing at a near-professional level, tunefully, accurately, and with a high level of artistic accomplishment and enjoyment. The rehearsal ended with a fine play-through of the piece at a brisk tempo.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

Excellent lesson planning in a GCSE German class that, with a variety of resources and skilful questioning allied to humour, succeeded in getting pupils to practise their oral skills and develop confidence.

In this Year 10 lesson pupils made rapid progress in describing people in German as a result of the use of cartoons on the overhead projector, which engaged their interest and led to a lively and humorous discussion. German was used extensively and very effectively to conduct activities and pupils responded appropriately, rising to the teacher's high expectations. Despite the very short time the teacher had taught the pupils, excellent relationships had been established. Pupils displayed enjoyment in activities and participated enthusiastically and successfully in oral work because of the very skilful questioning used by the teacher and the well sequenced activities which enabled pupils to build effectively on previous learning and increase their confidence in speaking and responding.

# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at the end of year 9 and Year 11 are well above average.
- Pupils enter the school with well above average skills in literacy, but their achievement by the end of Year 9 falls short of expectations based on prior attainment.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are usually good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' work are good; however, assessment data is not analysed and used to raise standards further.
- The new head of department leads the department well and has begun to initiate changes for improvement.

111. Standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests and GCSE English and English literature examinations are well above national average and have been maintained since the last inspection. When compared with schools in similar contexts, the results were well above average. However, in relation to pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 6, they represent low progress from Year 7 through Year 11. There was a rise in the most recent 2003 GCSE results, showing significant improvement overall in achievement. The performance of pupils in English was slightly lower than in maths and science. Whereas boys' results exceed the national average for boys, there is a noticeable gap between their performance and girls'. A higher proportion of girls achieve the highest levels and grades in the National Curriculum tests and GCSE grades A\* to A. Over a quarter of pupils, mainly boys, do not achieve a high GCSE grade, indicating underachievement. In addition, only a small proportion of the gifted and talented pupils reach the highest level in the tests and GCSE grades A\*/A.
112. In lessons and from the sample of work, achievement is satisfactory. However, over time, it is unsatisfactory. The lower than expected achievement of pupils is linked to the patchiness in the quality of teaching because of difficulties with recruiting and retaining specialist teachers. Other factors included the low attendance of a small number of disaffected boys, pupils not coping well with the dual entry and the lack of provision of a scheme of work for non-specialists teaching pupils in Years 7 to 9. These have now been partially addressed.
113. While most pupils willingly answer questions, and speak confidently, they do not readily challenge or develop each other's ideas during oral work. They are more vocal during group work. Consequently, they miss opportunities to extend their thinking and learning skills through whole class discussion. There are some passive learners and overall, there is a higher level of participation from girls. Listening skills are good but a small minority of Year 8 pupils lack the discipline and concentration to listen well to instructions or feedback. Throughout the school, standards in reading are good. Pupils read habitually at the start of lessons. They use the recommended reading lists to select and read a wide range of genres. In response to reading and analysing complex ideas and characters, pupils use "mind- mapping" very well to tease out the main features. By the end of Year 9, higher and middle attaining pupils confidently analyse the implied rather than the literal meaning and give reasoned responses to more difficult texts such as *Lamb to the Slaughter*, normally reserved for GCSE. However, the comprehension work of middle and lower attaining pupils is often too brief. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils interrogate texts well, and select and use evidence critically to support their

response. These pupils focus on the use of language; nevertheless, they do not always sustain an in-depth analysis to gain the highest GCSE grades, A\*/A. Overall, throughout Years 10 and 11, pupils make good use of research notes to understand the background of texts as seen in exemplary work in the study of *Lord of the Flies*.

114. Most pupils reach good standards in writing and the process of drafting is used extensively in Years 10 and 11. Planning is well taught and most pupils plan carefully and are secure in organising their work in paragraphs. However, they are not well practised in editing and proof-reading their work, as there is a reliance on teachers to do this. Hence, errors in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation mar their work, especially the lower attaining pupils.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons seen, it was satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11, it was often good or better. There was one unsatisfactory lesson in the lower school. Teachers know their subject and there is a common approach to having clear aims and learning outcomes. In the best lessons, teachers challenge pupils to work to a high level regardless of their band. Activities are well balanced with short timed tasks that are matched to pupils needs. Questions are targeted and open with the aim of pushing pupils to extend ideas and develop analytical skills when evaluating their work. In these lessons, pupils learn quickly because they are expected to use a range of skills to explore their work.
116. Teachers explain, emphasise and model literary vocabulary, with a clear understanding that pupils will read and interpret a range of texts, accurately. In lower attaining classes, pupils with special needs accept the support and advice from learning assistants who are well briefed. Relationships are good, as is the mutual respect between staff, pupils, and learning assistants. Teachers ask questions frequently but, in some lessons, the level of participation is low and pupils are not pushed sufficiently to take part or extend their ideas. There are however, a number of weaknesses in lessons. Time is not always used effectively to challenge pupils to work at a faster pace. The choice of resource material to develop ideas does not always stretch the most able or the material is not fully exploited with pupils. There is a limited range of teaching styles in most lessons to develop thinking and learning skills. While classroom management is usually very good, it was unsatisfactory in one lesson. Marking generally gives guidance for improvement especially in Years 10 and 11.
117. The quality of pupils' learning is similar to that of the teaching. Their attitudes and behaviour to learning are usually good. Achievement is affected when a strong work ethic is not maintained. In the best lessons, they work productively and are more apt to use good discussion skills to explore their work in groups rather than as a whole class. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 display more independent learning skills. However, it is the most able pupils who display higher level skills of retrieving and analysing information. Pupils use information technology for word processing and research but it is not embedded in the curriculum.
118. The leadership of the department is good and is a strength of the provision for English. The new head of department works closely with the newly appointed assistant and has a clear grasp of the issues facing the department. The development plan reflects the key priorities with measurable success criteria; however, the action to be taken lacks precision. Since taking up post, the new head of department has taken action to stabilise the staffing crisis in the department. This includes supporting the inexperienced and newly qualified teachers, initiating booster classes in Year 9 and extension classes for the most able pupils in Years 10 and 11. The department is satisfactorily managed overall. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is well organised; however, while there are guidelines for teachers to plan work for Year 7 to 9 pupils, there is not an established scheme of work to ensure quality and consistency in planning and teaching. Links have been established with primary schools. The department has a rich body of data based on internal tests and examination results but as yet, it is not analysing and using it to improve teaching and learning and planning.



119. Since the last inspection, the department has made satisfactory progress in addressing the weaknesses identified. Target setting has improved in all year groups but there is scope for more rigorous monitoring. Questioning is a key feature of lessons, but there are insufficient questioning techniques to encourage pupils to participate and extend discussion. Target setting has improved and pupils now take part in self-assessment. The department is not yet analysing data to evaluate the quality of provision and pupils' attainment.

## **Modern Foreign Languages**

### **Provision in Modern Foreign Languages is satisfactory**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in German and Spanish are above average
  - Pupils' listening skills are well developed
  - Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and the languages are used effectively in lessons
  - Pupils' behaviour is very good and attitudes are positive
  - The languages curriculum provision is good and there is very good provision for extra curricular activities
  - Standards in French are below average and declining
  - There is considerable inconsistency in teaching and learning
  - Assessment is not used effectively to plan for the progress of different groups of pupils in lessons
  - Opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in speaking and responding, especially in French are not good
115. Standards are average overall in Years 7 to 9. In Spanish and German they are higher than in French. Teacher assessments indicate that standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average, but this is not supported by inspection evidence. At the end of Year 11 standards are average and remain higher in German and Spanish than in French. Pupils write accurately and have a good range of vocabulary; higher attaining pupils describe events in the past, present and future, link their ideas together successfully and justify their opinions. Pupils respond appropriately and promptly to instructions and questioning in the languages and listening skills are well developed. Speaking is however less secure and, in French in particular, it is inhibited by over dependence on written support. Results are in line with national averages overall. The proportion of candidates achieving A\*-C grades was broadly average in French in 2002, but appears to have declined to below average in 2003. In 2002 German and Spanish the proportion of candidates achieving higher grades was above average. Many pupils, particularly boys, gained C and D grades in French. In German and Spanish the spread of higher grades was more even. Girls achieve significantly better than boys and all pupils do better in other subjects than they do in languages. Behaviour is very good and attitudes are positive.
116. The vast majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. However, a significant proportion of higher attaining pupils in many classes are not adequately challenged by activities to achieve as well as they should. In a minority of lessons, lower attaining pupils achieve less well than they should because of inadequate detailed planning.
117. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Four out of five lessons were satisfactory or better and one in five was good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and the language being learned is used extensively in lessons; pupils have excellent role models and listening skills are well developed as a result. Teachers present new language clearly and skilful questioning enables pupils to respond successfully, particularly in question and answer work. Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise new language in pairs or small groups and this is effective in increasing their confidence. Opportunities for speaking are, however, too often restricted to rehearsal, rather than practising in meaningful contexts. Lessons are

usually well planned with appropriate and well sequenced activities which enable pupils to build effectively on what has gone before; however there is often insufficient detailed planning for the progress of different groups within lessons, so that not all pupils achieve their potential. The emphasis on reading and writing, although effective in increasing pupils' knowledge of how the languages work, inhibits pupils' fluency. ICT is used well to develop language learning and the effective use of the reward system is proving successful in some lessons to improve participation, especially amongst boys. Pupils used an interactive whiteboard to make presentations, and adapted text to develop skills in complex writing.

118. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department runs smoothly and is beginning to address issues for improvement. There is an internal training programme and new teachers are well supported. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure best strategies can be shared and spread. The department is beginning to set targets for pupils and to moderate assessment, although assessment information is not being used effectively to raise standards, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in French. There is very good provision to support and enhance learning outside lessons; the department has strong links abroad and provides opportunities for pupils to take part in exchanges and trips as well as to participate in e-mail exchanges with their peers abroad.
119. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The issues raised in the last inspection have not been adequately addressed although the department has begun to consider how this might be done. Standards in French have declined from above to below average. Standards in German and Spanish have kept pace with the national improvement and remain above average. The quality of teaching and learning is no longer consistent.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

120. Standards in literacy are generally in line with or above those expected nationally. Reading is well promoted in the English department, during tutorials and in some lessons such as history and geography. In most subjects, specialist vocabulary is used with understanding, but there is not a consistent approach in emphasising and displaying key words. Most pupils read confidently but their analytical and evaluative skills are not always sustained in their response. They undertake research work using the Internet and other source material but while they annotate and highlight key points, they do not always represent notes in their own words.
121. Attainment in writing is affected by weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and basic grammatical errors across all year groups while handwriting and presentation are uneven across departments. There is a strong emphasis on grammatical features in modern foreign languages. The geography department makes good use of writing frames to support pupils with special needs and encourage pupils to write imaginatively and at length. However, these practices are not widespread across other subjects. Marking is not consistent, with little attention to correcting spelling and sentence structure. Oracy skills are good. Pupils are articulate and there are examples of effective teaching of speaking and listening skills, notably in art, modern foreign languages, and geography.
122. The library inducts Year 7 pupils into the service and ensures that pupils and students can give feedback on the quality of its provision. It is well organised as a resource base and liaises well with departments to support teaching and learning. Since appropriate professional development was organised two years ago, there has been a lapse in managing literacy across the curriculum. Teachers are not making full use of the strategy to raise standards further. Provision for monitoring literacy is unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordination or guidelines for supporting and promoting literacy skills; neither is there an established whole school marking policy to provide pupils with clear guidance on improving their work.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership and management of mathematics is very good.
- Standards achieved by pupils are well above national averages.
- Teachers insist on good behaviour in their classes, which ensures that pupils concentrate on learning mathematics.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, and often very good, leading to good attitudes to learning.
- Assessment. The quality and thoroughness of marking are good.
- Induction of new teachers to the department is very well planned.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in developing mathematical concepts.
- On occasions, “Starters” in lessons are too long, and teachers do not allow enough time for productive plenary sessions.
- Further use of data to check on pupils’ achievement, including tracking of pupils’ attainment between key stages is required

### Commentary

123. Results and current standards in Year 9 are well above average. In 2002, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above and the percentage reaching Level 6 or above were both well above national averages. When judged on average points scores, the results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been well above national figures for the last four years. There is conflicting data when results are judged against similar schools. The test results have increased at a slightly faster rate than nationally over the last three years. Girls and boys perform at about the same level, although boys’ results are very slightly better than girls’ in most years. In work seen during the inspection, achievement is satisfactory.
124. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above national averages. The percentage of pupils gaining grades A\*/C is significantly above the national average. In 2002, this percentage was slightly lower than in previous years, but this year’s figures show a good increase. In 2002, the boys’ relative performance within the school was better than the girls’. The percentage of very high attaining pupils who gain grades A\* and A is above the national average; more girls achieve these very highest grades than boys. In work seen during the inspection, the achievement of pupils between Y9 and Year 11 is satisfactory.
125. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory. Almost all the lessons observed are at least satisfactory, and nearly half the teaching is good or better. Teachers show a very good command of the subject for the level at which they teach. Learning objectives are clearly specified to pupils at the beginning of most lessons. Long term planning is very detailed, but individual lesson plans lack detail. Several three-part lessons are seen, which follow the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. In a few lessons, the mental starter part of the lesson takes too long, and this does not leave enough time for the main part of the learning. Also, teachers do not always leave enough time for a thorough and detailed plenary session to confirm pupils’ achievements. Teaching approaches are mainly traditional, and pupils would benefit from more opportunities for practical and investigative work within lessons. There are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In almost all lessons, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour; this means that pupils apply themselves well to their studies. There is a reasonable supply of modern textbooks, but the use of ICT for learning mathematics is underdeveloped.

126. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers. In classes, pupils are keen to learn and take a very active part in question and answer sessions. They do so politely by putting up their hands before giving an answer to the teacher or to the whole class. Pupils are eager to make progress in mathematics. When pupils work in pairs or in small groups, positive relationships exist and good collaborative efforts are made.
127. Teachers assess pupils' work very regularly. Exercise books are thoroughly marked and teachers' comments give good guidance about how pupils can make progress. Teachers keep very detailed records of test and assessment results; these are carefully analysed to discover areas of knowledge that require further understanding. Targets are set and pupils know what they must do to improve their mathematics.
128. The quality of leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has an extremely clear vision about how to develop the mathematics department, and works incredibly hard. She understands the pressures to increase the achievement of pupils. Her planning, collection of data concerned with pupils' standards, development of the curriculum, introduction of new ideas and induction of new staff are all of an extremely high standard. She has coped very well with the pressures of recruiting and training new staff. Teachers who are new to the department comment that they have received very positive support. The staff shortages and the problems encountered in recruiting appropriately qualified staff have been vigorously addressed. There is rigorous self-evaluation of the department's work. She observes lessons in the department, keeps very detailed records of the quality of teaching and learning, and helps other teachers to develop their skills. She analyses pupils' exercise books and comments carefully on pupils' progress and on the quality of teachers' marking. Importantly, at a team meeting, the first item on the agenda is a new idea connected with algebra, which can be used at a high level as the 'starter' to a lesson. Teachers discuss the mathematical approaches knowledgeably; this internal sharing of ideas takes place before the meeting concentrates on administration. Areas for development are the use of ICT in mathematics lessons and extending the use of pupils' performance data. The head of department inspires and motivates a highly committed team of teachers. There are promising signs that pupils' achievement will continue to rise. Progress since the last report has been good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

129. Following staff training days, which were led by the head of department of mathematics, a whole school document on using mathematics in other curricular areas has been constructed. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented in terms of the three-part lesson in mathematics; this works well in some lessons. The department has shared practice across the school, allowing a policy to be contained in all departmental documents, with concentration on calculations, nomenclature and the uses of statistics. In science, there are no problems with calculations, and pupils use graphs well. Pupils use dimensions and changing shapes by shearing in design and technology. There is good teaching of numeracy in geography, where pupils measure time and angle in fieldwork. They understand latitude and longitude well, and use coordinates confidently to give grid references. In history, pupils use statistics dealing with the numbers of deaths in the First World War well, and represent these correctly in pie charts and bar graphs. The four rules of number are used verbally in French.

## **SCIENCE**

**The provision for teaching science is satisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a full team of science teachers who are well informed
- Effective planning ensures coverage of national curriculum and GCSE courses

- Teaching practice, while sound, has a limited range of teaching styles with insufficient attention to the Key Stage 3 Strategy and use of ICT
- There is a developing assessment database that will better target pupil underachievement but assessment practice is not yet sufficiently rigorous and consistent
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures as they relate to teaching and health and safety are underdeveloped
- There are good quality, refurbished laboratories but there is still a shortage of accommodation.

## Commentary

130. Since 1998 the standards of attainment in science at the end of Year 9 have been well above that seen nationally and there was a rise in 2002. The attainment of boys and girls is very similar and most pupils achieve in line with expectations. During the inspection pupil progress in Years 7-9 was slower than expected in a number of lessons.
131. The attainment of students in GCSE science is well above that seen nationally. Able pupils, for example, show a very good understanding of forms of energy and their inter-conversion, being able to relate these to a wide range of devices. Pupils in Year 11 generally show a developing understanding of investigatory science, though with some weakness in applying scientific concepts at a high level to their work and less appreciation of the scientific method. Progress from Year 9 to Year 11 is satisfactory overall, but some middle ability pupils do not achieve as highly as would be expected.
132. Teaching is satisfactory across all years with some greater strengths in Years 10-11. Learning is further assisted by mostly positive pupil attitudes and effective work schemes that include the promotion of specialist knowledge and use of key words.
133. The Key Stage 3 Strategy for Years 7-9 has yet to be fully implemented, with not all teachers using the three part lesson model. The teachers with limited experience have less developed skills in organising lessons and using resources and even some well planned lessons are also let down by teachers' not being sufficiently assertive, resulting in less pupil concentration and some underachievement. In general though, teaching is well informed and enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, particularly in GCSE courses. Where teaching was particularly effective pupils demonstrate good understanding and respond well. Even so, the over-reliance on worksheets results in missed opportunities for more exciting learning while there is insufficient use of ICT in lessons.
134. Higher attaining pupils make often good progress and those with special educational needs are sufficiently well supported, although there is, on occasion, a lack of challenge and variety in some lessons.
135. The building up of a comprehensive database on pupils' progress is helping staff monitor progress and identify underachievement, particularly for the middle ability pupils who do not always receive as much attention. This work is still in its early stages as is the marking of work including constructive guidance as to how pupils can further improve. Whilst the setting up of a database is a strength, the use of this data to target individual and departmental performance needs to be developed further. The marking of students' work and the provision of comments on how to improve is still limited and inconsistent, particularly in Years 7-9.
136. Departmental practice is satisfactory with strengths in team work and curriculum planning. The curriculum is affected, though, by the lack of textbooks, limited use of ICT and cramped science accommodation, in part because of the growth of the school. Management is satisfactory with regular meetings and sufficient documented procedures. Monitoring of teaching also takes place. There is a need for greater rigour in evaluating and improving practice.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Provision in ICT is unsatisfactory**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- The school has used its specialist status to introduce an innovative Media-Arts and ICT course in Years 7 and 8.
- New vocational GCSE and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses have been provided in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards in ICT are below the national average.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not taught the full National Curriculum programme of study in ICT.
- Leadership and Management in National Curriculum ICT are poor.

137. Teacher assessments of pupils' ICT capability in Year 9 were above the national average compared to all schools in 2003. GCSE results were also below the national average. For most pupils, their GCSE ICT results were not as good as their results in the other subjects that they took. One group of pupils took a vocational GCSE in ICT in 2003 and results were above the national average. Standards in the GNVQ work seen in Year 11 are good. Pupils show a sound understanding of how to use computer packages to solve real problems, for example setting up a database for a CD shop.
138. Standards in ICT in Year 9 are below average. This is because pupils do not experience a planned programme of teaching which covers full National Curriculum requirements for ICT. Due to this lack of opportunity to use computers, achievement is unsatisfactory. For example, some pupils are unfamiliar with basic concepts such as mail merging. In Years 10 and 11, standards of work seen in the new vocational GCSE and also GNVQ courses are sound. Starting with a below average understanding of the subject, pupils quickly learn how to use business software. However standards overall in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory because approximately fifty percent of pupils do not take an ICT course and receive no other planned experience in using computers.
139. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and use this to produce some high quality teaching materials, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11. For example, one imaginative lesson involved teaching about business documents by placing pupils in a realistic business meeting simulation. This led to enthusiastic learning. In lessons in Years 7 and 8, teachers sometimes use language and materials which some special needs pupils find too difficult and this can lead to misbehaviour. The department needs to produce teaching materials more closely matched to pupil ability.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

140. Leadership and management in ICT across the curriculum are poor. This is because the school has no overview of how and where the subject is being taught and therefore the school is not in a position to ensure that the required programme of study is fully covered. However, there is an ICT steering group that has developed priorities for resource development and staff training. There has been sufficient training and support for teachers including training in the use of media arts resources. Recently arrived and less experienced staff inevitably have more varied confidence and competence and some subjects do not make full use of computers.
141. The school has a good ratio of computers to pupils and the computer network provides good internet protection for pupils. As was the case at the last inspection, ICT is still not adequately coordinated and monitored across different subjects. For this reason, overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

**Provision in geography is very good.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in terms of national standards and against other subjects
- Teaching and assessment practice are very effective
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good
- The subject makes only modest use of ICT

#### **Commentary**

142. Results at GCSE, A/S and A level are consistently well above the national average. Standards at the end of Year 9, as represented by Teachers Assessments were also well above the national expectation. This represents good achievement because, although attainment overall, on entry, is well above the national average, geography knowledge and skills are less well developed. SEN pupils also achieve well, in line with the progress of their peers. Pupils of all abilities display increasing understanding in a number of areas and, after basic skills are consolidated in Year 7, embark on a programme that will eventually lead to considerable success at GCSE and for many at A and AS level. The sound basis for this progress is provided by good writing and speaking skills, the ability to use number well and the early introduction to enquiry techniques. These are seen in such work as an account in Year 7 of field work at Old Hayes and in project work such as a "Planet Guide To Italy" and designs for energy-efficient houses and novel meteorological instruments.
143. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above the average and improving each year. This too is good achievement starting from a high level 1. Girls do better than boys especially at the higher grades, but boys are still well above the average. Boys and girls alike who take geography do better than in other subjects they take. Pupils' knowledge of geographical patterns and processes steadily grows, as does their understanding of more complex concepts, seen in work on urban modelling and the completion of a conflict matrix for the Lake District. Pupils are able to use number in a variety of ways, from understanding river basins, using a flood hydrograph, to collecting and analysing data for coursework. Coursework is of a high standard and requires the pupils to hypothesise and gather evidence in order to arrive at proper conclusions. There are many good examples of this in the coursework on the Management of the North Sheppey Coastline. Although some work is improved by the use of ICT, there is room for greater use of this tool.
144. The quality of teaching and learning in geography is very good in Years 7 to 11. A strong feature of the effective teaching is constant reinforcement through good questioning and the insistence that pupils think for themselves. Pace of lessons is high, as is the expectation of teachers and the challenge offered by them. The department needs to ensure that good practice is shared throughout the department.
145. The leadership and management of geography are very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The department has maintained all those areas deemed good in the previous good report, and has improved both teaching and standards at the end of each key stage. A united and strong team has helped to achieve a high level of success and offers success to all pupils. There is a clear vision and good planning, and a capacity to improve further. Geography is rightly a popular subject.

## History

### Provision in history is satisfactory

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results (2002) were well above national averages
- ICT is used well to enhance the teaching and learning of history
- Most pupils have a good attitude to their work and the numbers who opt to continue their studies to CSE are increasing
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection
- The quality of teaching is variable
- Assessment does not sufficiently inform teaching and curriculum development
- There is underachievement by pupils in the lower bands of Years 8 and 9 and some underachievement by the most able students at GCSE

#### Commentary

146. GCSE results in 2002 were well above national average. Standards this year have fallen but are still above national averages. Girls do better than boys but the results vary with the ability profile of the option intake. In the past 2 years this has been around 12 per cent to 25 per cent of the year group. Numbers in this year's 10 and 11 have increased substantially.
147. Pupils' achievement in Years 7-9 is unsatisfactory, though standards are above average. This is because pupils in the wider ability bottom bands are not always challenged according to their individual needs and some higher attaining pupils are not stretched sufficiently. Classes in these bottom bands are too large, are often staffed by the most inexperienced or weaker teachers and they contain a substantial number of pupils on the SEN register as well as pupils who have low levels of literacy and others whose attainment is above the national average. Overall, though, by the end of Year 9 most pupils, including those with SEN, have a good knowledge and some understanding of topics they have studied and are developing enquiry and debating skills. Standards in the current Year 11 are above national averages and achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Hitler and the rise of Nazism and evidence evaluation skills are now well developed, as was seen in coursework on the Reichstag Fire. Higher attaining pupils, though, are not attaining at the highest level, because their use of the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation and their ability to make substantiated judgements have not been sufficiently developed. Writing skills are generally good, though spelling remains a problem for some.
148. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching seen ranged from poor to very good. Teachers have good specialist knowledge, relationships are generally good and most pupils are well motivated. ICT is used effectively as a tool to improve the teaching and learning of history. The best teaching had high expectations of pupils as was seen in a Year 10 lesson on workhouses in nineteenth century Britain, where pupils were challenged to interrogate sources of evidence. Where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory or poor, behaviour management strategies were ineffectual and pupils were rude, disruptive and inattentive. Generally, expectations are not high enough, pupils are too often spoon-fed and learning is too teacher-directed, so that higher attaining pupils are not stretched.
149. Progress since the last report is good. Many of the issues raised then have been addressed. However assessment still remains an issue. Insufficient use is made of assessment in planning pupils' work and setting targets. There is a commitment to raise standards in the department but monitoring and evaluation of teaching are insufficiently rigorous.



## Religious Education

**The effectiveness of provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is now consistently good and sometimes very good
- The newly appointed head of department has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve areas of weakness and determination to take effective action
- Both accommodation and resources for religious education are of a high standard and are well used
- There is a failure by the school to provide religious education according to the agreed syllabus for those pupils in years 10 and 11 who do not choose to study the subject for an examination
- Work on religions other than Christianity is not particularly well developed
- The use of ICT within religious education needs to be enhanced
- Assessment practice for pupils in years 7 to 9 is currently inadequate.

### Commentary

150. Over the last two years religious education has lacked a permanent head of department and many classes have been taught by non-specialist teachers. This has resulted in unsatisfactory achievement in the subject by a majority of pupils currently in years 8, 9 and 10.
151. For pupils now in Years 10 and 11 who follow the GCSE examination, achievement is consistently good. Although there were no examination candidates in 2003, results in 2002 compared very favourably with national results with 78% of entrants gaining grades A\* to C compared with only 44% nationally. Results in Year 10 internal examinations and in work seen during the inspection, suggests that the current Year 11 might do even better.
152. However, the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not follow an examination course and they are taught religious education by their tutors as a unit of work within a personal and social development programme. For them, constricted time, teaching by non-specialist staff, and the comparatively relaxed view to work done within the PSD programme, results in unsatisfactory achievement.
153. The two specialist teachers of religious education who now teach the majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9, and all examination classes, have very good subject knowledge and teach lessons that are consistently good and often very good. Resources are well used and teaching methods are sometimes innovative, as in a Year 7 lesson where a guided fantasy helped pupils to understand the reasons why the Sefer Torah is treated with such respect by Jewish congregations. A weakness is the lack of consistent assessment in Years 7 to 9 but this is now being addressed.
154. A new head of department had only been in post for three weeks at the time of the inspection. However she has accurately assessed current shortcomings and has planned to rectify them. She has been joined in the school this term by a newly qualified teacher and it is likely that they will make a strong team to carry the subject forward within the school.
155. Because of three years in which the school lacked a permanent head of department, and sufficient specialist staff the school has been unable to sustain the previously better provision and good results.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

**The quality of provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' standards and achievement have been below expected levels
- There is a lack of breadth in the design and technology curriculum
- There have been serious problems in the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers
- Help and guidance given to pupils in practical lessons is good, though at times the level of work is insufficiently challenging.
- Computing, CAD/CAM and control equipment is very good.
- Pupils' attitude and behaviour in lessons are good.

#### **Commentary**

156. Standards at entry to the school are above the national average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9 standards are no better than the national average. This represents an unsatisfactory achievement. Pupils are able to design and make simple products using wood and plastic satisfactorily. Some of the products incorporate simple mechanisms and structures. Pupils are not given opportunities to learn to use food or textile materials or electronics. Designing skills are better developed than making skills. Pupils can design simple layouts and packaging. Pupils with SEN are integrated in lessons and make satisfactory progress.
157. In 2002, one in six pupils opted to take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In the GCSE examinations fewer than half of pupils obtained the higher A\* - C grades overall; a result which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining A\* - G grades was in line with the national average. Pupils performed very much better in graphic products than resistant materials. In 2003, all pupils took the subject but the majority were not entered for the examinations. The unconfirmed results showed that standards were much worse. Girls performed significantly better than boys. This represents an unsatisfactory achievement. Pupils learn to design and make more complex and innovative products. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is restricted to graphic products and materials technology.
158. The quality of teaching and learning varies but is satisfactory overall; it is often good in Years 10 and 11. All teachers introduce lessons well and give good demonstrations. Pupils' involvement is increased by asking them questions as lessons progress. Teachers help and control pupils well in lessons. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are normally good. When teaching is less effective in Years 7 to 9, the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and the pace of lessons is slow. Teachers fail to relate topic to applications and the design and make cycle is not sufficiently embedded in projects. Teachers' expectations are often not high. This leads to underachievement. The method used to assess pupils' work in terms of National Curriculum levels overestimates attainment. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are not well informed about their progress and are not clear what they have to do to improve.
159. There have been many changes in the staff since the last inspection. The department has had difficulty in recruiting and retaining specialist teachers. This has led to a dramatic reduction in the range of courses offered and standards. The curriculum is now restricted and narrow with, for example, a lack of food technology. Changes since the last inspection have been poor. The new head of department has made much improvement since his appointment just over a year ago. Computing, CAD/CAM and control equipment have much improved and are now very good. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory but teachers are not sufficiently agreed

and committed to the necessary changes and improvement. Although aspects of the subject have been promoted within the media arts initiative, the subject has significantly declined since the last inspection.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results in recent years have been above the national average.
- Stimulating activities in group work and opportunities for independent study facilitate good progress.
- High quality use of data for assessment and target-setting gives all pupils the opportunity to achieve well.
- In some lessons pupils struggle with challenging work that is not suitably matched to their ability.
- Standards fall when there are inadequate strategies to combat lack of care with work, particularly that of boys.

#### **Commentary**

160. Standards in the current Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement for the pupils in relation to when they started at the school in Year 7. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, compared with the national expectation. Pupils in Key Stage 3 achieve well when they work in groups. They find this exciting and enjoy doing problem-solving activities. Pupils demonstrate an appreciation of the work of other artists. This was demonstrated by pupils in Year 9 studying the work of Chuck Close, an artist who constructs faces by forming grids containing motifs derived from pixels.
161. Standards in the current Year 11 are above national expectations. This represents achievement that is in line with the high National Curriculum levels attained at the end of Key Stage 3. All pupils are set GCSE targets based on these National Curriculum levels. This motivates all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well. This was seen when pupils were making large-scale gargoyle structures out of papier mache. Independent study is a strength of the department. This was seen when pupils in Year 10 were analysing artists' textile work. During the lesson the pupils structured their own work by referring to a set of objectives written on a whiteboard. These pupils were also given a computer-generated checklist and asked to complete the task for homework.
162. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but it varies from very good to unsatisfactory. This occurs when materials are not well-organised, or the work is too demanding for the pupils. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning for GCSE pupils is good. In general, there are different levels of difficulty in the activities and targets are set for all pupils, especially for those boys identified as underachieving. This enables all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
163. The leadership of art is good and is raising standards. All the key issues are identified and there is a vision for moving the department forward in the future. Management is very good. All policies are in place and are monitored carefully to ensure their effectiveness. Thorough analysis of data is used for assessment and to inform target-setting. Procedures for tracking progress are in place. This ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve well. Art is a strength of the school and this is recognised in its contribution to the recently awarded Arts College status.

164. Both drama and media studies were sampled in the inspection and were clearly providing well for pupils in Years 7-9 as well as those choosing those subjects as GCSE options.

## DRAMA

165. The GCSE results for drama in 2002 were above the national average. Over the last four years, results have either been in line with or above average. The proportion of pupils obtaining the highest grades, A\*/A is better than the national average and the 2003 results were significantly higher than in previous years. This is reflected in the current GCSE groups observed during the inspection where, in particular, Year 11 achieve well as a result of their high level of motivation and willingness to think and use their creative and independent learning to devise drama.
166. The quality of teaching is good or better with very good features. Lessons are very well planned with stimulating resource materials to encourage pupils to use their imagination and a range of drama skills. Teachers successfully use modelling with the expectation that pupils will emulate and develop specific drama skills. Pupils enjoy the subject, work with zest and interest, share their ideas as part of a team and critically evaluate each others' work.

## MEDIA STUDIES

167. Standards in the GCSE examination have consistently been high with a year on year improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-C. The 2003 results were higher than in previous years. The gap between boys and girls is not significantly different in relation to the proportion reaching the higher grades. However, girls outperform boys in obtaining a much higher percentage of the top most grades, A\*/A. The department is aware of the trend and has begun to address this by prioritising the curriculum to improve boys' results. Practical work and information and communication technology is given a high priority.
168. In the two lessons observed in Years 10 and 11, teaching was good or better. Teachers know their subject very well and use their expertise to lead discussion and model specific teaching points. Planning is very good and ensures that pupils achieve well. Teachers establish expectations, use well-balanced activities, a range of resources, and use talk as a central activity to develop pupils' learning. Pupils work productively with interest and concentration. They listen well and use talk effectively to approach their learning either as a whole class, or as part of teamwork. Sampling of pupils' work in lessons confirmed their good achievement. The subject provides the means whereby pupils can express their ideas in a creative and independent way.
169. The subject is a popular option and constantly attracts more pupils each year. The teacher in charge of the subject has a clear vision for increasing the profile of media within the Creative Media Arts provision. Forward planning is a priority with the aim of providing the most appropriate course for pupils within the next two years.

## Music

The quality of provision for Music is **satisfactory**. Extra curricular activities are **very good** and the head of department provides effective leadership.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE standards are above national average and the increasing number of pupils who take the subject achieve well
- The subject contributes significantly to the life of the school through its extra-curricular work
- Its development of music technology supports the Media Arts College initiative
- Aspects of teaching and curriculum in Years 7-9 are insufficiently developed.

## Commentary

170. Standards have improved since the last inspection. G.C.S.E. results are above the national average in grades A\* - C.
171. Standards in Years 7-9 are broadly in line with national expectations and most pupils achieve satisfactorily including those with special educational needs. Pupils in lesson use correct terminology and compose short pieces that demonstrate sound rhythmic and ensemble skills and show their understanding of the different musical elements. However, a lack of keyboard skills in Years 8 and 9 hampers pupils' progress to greater fluency. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are able to create effective variations and demonstrate ensemble skills although with greater challenge they would achieve more. ICT use is developing and in a Year 8 lesson pupils understood which intervals they were using as well as how to select and place notes using a Cubase programme. However in some Years 7-9 lessons the learning programme is insufficiently adapted to the needs of different pupils and on occasion the unsatisfactory behaviour of younger and less able pupils slows progress in lessons.
172. GCSE standards are good and modest numbers that take the course achieve well. Pupils in last year's G.C.S.E. group produced effective performances and compositions the above national average standards are reflected in the current Years 10-11. Boys and girls achieve equally well in most years including at GCSE level.
173. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with good practice in Year 7 and the GCSE course. The better teaching is well planned and matched to the different needs of the pupils evident in a Year 7 lesson that used good range of activities building on and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. Learning is less effective where the teacher has difficulty in engaging and involving pupils, evident in some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 8 and 9. Teachers are specialist and some have good music technology skills that contribute well to the development of the school as a Media Arts College.
174. On occasion there are missed opportunities for more practical music making and insufficient use and marking of music notebooks to consolidate knowledge and support literacy development.
175. The subject leadership is good and has helped raise the profile of the subject. In spite of the limited time in the lunch break the quality of music making in the extra curricula opportunities that include a well attended senior choir, jazz and concert bands, the school orchestra and a junior choir, is of a high standard. Music is also closely involved in other school activities and productions. Its impact will further grow with further improvements in teaching and curriculum in Years 7-9. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**The overall provision for physical education is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Standards are above average in GCSE examinations because of the good teaching.
- Students have very good opportunities to take part in and achieve high standards in sport through the very good range of extra-curricular activities offered.
- The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are good although the information is not yet sufficiently well analysed and used to plan teaching and learning.
- A good range of sports are covered but not enough time is given to some areas of activity and girls and boys do not have equal access to these activities.

## Commentary

176. In the most recent GCSE results for PE, attainment was well above the national average as it was in the previous year. Pupils studying GCSE dance are achieving well; there are no national comparisons for this course.
177. In the most recent statutory teacher assessments for Year 9, standards of attainment were judged below the national average. In this cohort there was a significant difference in the attainment of boys, whose results were in line with the national average, and girls, whose standards were well below the national average. Standards have been judged well above average in previous years but the school believes its assessment systems are now more accurate and better moderated.
178. By Year 9, taking account of the schools assessment data and the work observed in lessons, standards seen during the inspection are broadly in line with the national expectation. The achievement of boys is satisfactory. Whilst the achievement of girls is much better than last year they are not achieving as well as they could. The girls have good basic skills, such as the ability to pass and receive the ball in netball, but they do not apply these skills well in a game. Their tactical awareness is underdeveloped across all age groups. All students have a good knowledge about the games they play and they know and understand the purpose of rules in games. They show good control and co-ordination. By Year 11 students' achievement is satisfactory and they are likely to achieve standards in line with the national expectation. They are beginning to take greater responsibility for their learning and can devise simple training programmes, for example in athletics. They are improving their observational and analytical skills but across all age groups these skills are not as high as they might be.
179. Overall the quality of teaching is good and pupils are learning well. However teaching is generally much better in Year 10 and 11 groups, although good teaching was also seen in Year 7 lessons. In the GCSE groups assessment is well developed to provide clear improvement targets for students, and they know what they need to do to improve. Students are highly motivated in these groups. In nearly all lessons teachers give a good explanation about the work to be covered and recap well on what has been covered in previous lessons. Consequently, pupils know what is expected of them, they respond quickly and organise themselves well. In a few lessons the teacher is explicit about what students should achieve by the end of the lesson and this helps both the teacher and students assess progress at the end of the lesson. For example in a Year 7 boys' rugby lesson students were told they should be able to pass the ball accurately in a small-sided game by the end of the lesson and were given the opportunity to evaluate their success at the end of the lesson. More generally, learning outcomes for the lesson are not specific enough. In the best lessons pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for warming up and they know how to stretch parts of the body safely. In some lessons this part of the lesson is too directed by the teacher and warm-up activities are uninteresting and sometimes not well linked to the content of the lesson. Where they are given structured opportunities to evaluate and analyse performance, for example in a Year 11 athletics lesson and Year 9 girls' basketball lesson, pupils respond well and show they have, previously underdeveloped, abilities in this area.
180. The leadership and management of the subject are good. A clear direction for the subject is well established based on high expectations of the pupils and enthusiasm for the subject. This is reflected by all members of the department. The head of department, who has been in post for one year, has worked hard with the department to establish good schemes of work and assessment systems. There is a general understanding of where improvements are needed as shown in the PE development plan. Assessment and monitoring information is not yet sufficiently analysed or used to plan improvements in teaching and learning and these are important areas for development. The curriculum provides a wide range of sports but does not give sufficient time for areas other than games, for example gymnastics, dance and outdoor and adventurous activities to be studied in enough depth. Boys do not have the opportunity to

study dance in Years 7 to 9 and girls do not have the opportunity to study gymnastics, although they do study trampolining, which is not available to boys. These factors may account for fewer girls studying GCSE PE and no boys studying GCSE dance. In this the department is unsuccessful in its aim to challenge stereotyping in PE.

181. The accommodation for PE overall is satisfactory. However the changing rooms are small for the size of teaching groups, there are no shower facilities and the condition of the on-site playing field is poor. Use of off-site playing fields requires groups to cross a busy main road, where staff and pupils are at risk. A member of staff has been hit by a car failing to stop. These factors present significant safety hazards. Extra-curricular provision is good, providing well for all pupils and extension opportunities for more able pupils. This has been recognised by the award of the national 'Sports Mark' to the school. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The good standards of attainment and teaching have been maintained and the introduction of GCSE PE and dance has enhanced the opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation in PE.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

The school also provides business studies and the applied GCSE in ICT. Business studies was not observed but is a successful course in the school and maintains consistently high GCSE standards that are in line with or better than those nationally.

### **ASDAN/NVQ**

**The quality of provision in the programme is satisfactory.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The innovative course, well matched to the needs of low attaining and SEN pupils, is very good.
- The work experience opportunities are relevant and worthwhile.
- Collaboration with local employers and partner institutions is good.
- There is insufficient attention to the quality of pupils' work and its assessment.

#### **Commentary**

182. Work-related courses are a part of the innovative "S" pathway for low attaining and SEN pupils. Many pupils are at risk of exclusion. Pupils participate in key skills courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT at level 1; the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) silver award; and a flexible learning programme mainly at NVQ level 1. All courses have all been introduced since 2002 and none have so far been examined. Standards in the lessons observed are unsatisfactory and some times poor. However, achievement is always satisfactory and sometimes good. The work-experience is a successful feature and is fully evaluated and recorded in pupils' record of achievement.
183. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and sometimes good. All teachers introduce tasks well and use questions in lessons to improve pupils' involvement. They give good support to pupils in practical lessons. Learning assistants are effective and work in partnership with specialist teachers well. Teachers give particularly good help to SEN pupils to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Teachers are caring. In key skills lessons good use is made of ICT and pupils' writing and oral skills are developed satisfactorily. Some ICT lessons are not sufficiently focused and do not challenge the more able pupils enough. In ASDAN pupils may opt to learn a selection of subjects from information handling, the community, sport and leisure, home management, the environment, number handling, health and survival, world of work, technology, wider world and expressive arts. In the flexible learning programme, pupils learn either beauty therapy, building construction, hairdressing or motor vehicle maintenance. Some teachers are too willing to tolerate late arrival at lessons. Overall, attendance at lessons is unsatisfactory. Effective methods of assessment have yet to be

introduced in some courses. Teachers visit all Year 10 pupils during their two-week work experience and assess pupils' progress effectively.

184. The programme is planned and co-ordinated well by the 14-19 Director. An enthusiastic and experienced tutor runs each course. An experienced local co-ordinator has developed many good collaborative links with local colleges and training organisations in order to run the flexible learning programme. Employers willing to give pupils work experience in Year 10 are identified either by the school or the pupils themselves. All pupils have been provided with satisfactory work-placements in the past two years. Changes since the last inspection are good.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Citizenship**

**The effectiveness of provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some of the material developed for use in Personal and Social Development (PSD) lessons is good, and some tutors are delivering it very well
  - The geography department plans and delivers its contributions to citizenship very well
  - The school has not co-ordinated opportunities for all pupils to “negotiate, decide and take part responsibly in both school and community based activities”
  - The contributions to citizenship made by some other subjects that are being relied upon to deliver major components of the programme remain incidental
  - Work done within the Personal and Social Development Programme is taught by form teachers who have not been trained to teach citizenship and their work in this area is not monitored
  - The school has no procedures to assess citizenship and has not been reporting pupils' achievement in the subject in annual reports
185. Because pupils' work in citizenship has not generated substantial written work, and because only a single period of citizenship teaching could be seen during the inspection, it is not possible to make a judgement about standards of achievement. However, numerous Year 10 and Year 11 pupils questioned could not answer very basic questions about either national or local politics, or about the European Union, the United Nations or the Commonwealth.
186. A great deal of the delivery of citizenship is intended to take place in other subject areas. However, with the exception of geography, these areas have not adjusted their curricula to provide lessons with a specific citizenship focus taught to citizenship objectives. Other teaching of citizenship material takes place in a Personal and Social Development programme taught in mixed-ability tutor groups by tutors. This work is currently not assessed. In spite of no training having been provided for tutors to take on this subject some of it is very well delivered, as with a Year 9 lesson on conflict resolution seen during the inspection. However, overall teaching and learning of citizenship are unsatisfactory.
187. The teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating citizenship left the school last year and a new co-ordinator has not yet been appointed. The subject is currently managed by two members of the school's senior management team who both have numerous other responsibilities and so have been unable to give the subject the time and attention it needs. This is an unsatisfactory position.
188. There has been serious misunderstanding of the nature of the subject such that it was believed that enquiry and problem-solving skills taught in science and mathematics covered material required by the citizenship curriculum. The school is required by the National Curriculum to offer opportunities for all pupils to “negotiate, decide and take part responsibly in school and community based activities.” Charitable work and well-structured year and school councils offer some opportunities for all pupils to become involved at a school level, albeit in



relatively trivial ways (the provision of soft toilet paper is quoted by pupils as the greatest success of the school council; the school refuses to allow representations by the school council on other matters, such as the wish of many girls to be allowed to wear trousers to school). Opportunities for pupils to engage in community activities are largely absent.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 17 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 [latest year for which national comparisons are available].

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	36	88.9	90	38.9	42.7	37.5	39
Biology	18	50	81.6	5.56	33.2	16.1	33.2
Business studies	62	88.7	89.1	24.2	31.7	33.5	35.4
Media studies	75	100	94.2	58.7	36.1	45.7	38.5
English	58	100	92	39.7	29.9	41.4	35.7
Design and technology	10	50	89.2	0	32	12	35.7
Geography	43	95.3	88.3	51.2	36.4	43.7	36.3
German	7	100	87.6	42.9	34.7	41.4	35.6
History	23	69.6	91.8	4.35	37.2	21.3	37.8
Information technology	42	81	78.2	14.3	20.6	26.4	28.5
Religious Studies	10	90	90.9	30	38.9	39	37.9
Sociology	31	80.6	83.7	12.9	33.6	26.1	33.8
Sports/PE Studies	10	90	88.2	30	27.7	35	34.8

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	17	100	96.1	35.3	48.7	75.3	85.1
Biology	12	100	96.1	8.3	36.3	61.7	74.1
Business studies	32	96.9	96.4	21.9	32.8	71.3	76.5
Chemistry	5	100	94	20	45.9	72	81.1
Media studies	57	100	98.3	36.8	36.8	84.9	81.1
Drama	15	100	98.1	40	41.5	86.7	82.9
English	46	100	98.3	34.8	36.5	80.4	80.1
Design and technology	6	100	95.3	16.7	35.5	63.3	76.5
Geography	26	100	97.1	38.5	40.5	79.2	80.9

History	17	100	97.1	52.9	41	85.9	81.2
Information and communication technology	12	83.3	89.1	8.3	22.4	45	64.1
Mathematics	13	100	93.3	46.2	52.2	87.7	84.7
Music	8	100	97.7	37.5	41.8	77.5	82.2
Physics	5	100	92.8	60	42.8	96	78.6
Religious studies	5	100	96.3	60	44	92	82.2
Sociology	15	100	95.4	20	39.6	73.3	79.1
Sports/PE studies	16	100	73.2	50	29.5	82.5	73.2

### **Level 2 vocational qualifications**

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	25	100	87.1	20	16.5	70.4	60.1

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

### **ENGLISH**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Recent pass rates in AS and A level courses are good and consistently above the national average.
- Students have a sound grasp of their texts and most can make sustained and informed responses.
- Teaching is good and teachers are knowledgeable. The range of activities is effective in helping students to build their knowledge and understanding.
- In small groups, students share ideas freely and work well together.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- In some cases staff expectations are too low and students are not sufficiently challenged.
- On occasion less able students are allowed to be passive in class discussion.
- Resources for English are limited.

#### **Commentary**

189. The provision in English caters for some 150 students. AS and A2 courses are offered in English Language and Literature, the more popular of the options, and English Literature. GCSE English is offered as a re-sit.

190. AS and A level examination results over the last three years have been consistently good. In eight of the last ten years the pass rate in English Literature has been 100%. After the failure to achieve the higher grades in 2002, there was a significant improvement this year. However, all this masks the underachievement of boys at AS level. Retention rates are above average and attendance is good.

191. The standard of work of current students is also above average. In lessons observed in Year 13, students are doing well as a result of effective teaching which makes significant demands on them. In one lesson, students drew well on their knowledge of the conventions of Revenge

Tragedy as illustrated in 'Hamlet' in preparation for further study of *The Duchess of Malfi*.  
Reading skills are well developed .

192. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but are achieving much as expected. They show good knowledge and understanding and many can discuss the ways in which language, form and context can shape meaning. They can generally write accurately and clearly and their reading skills are being honed. However, a few students are reluctant to take an active part in discussion and there is scope, particularly among the male students, for more encouragement and target setting.
193. Teaching is good overall and, consequently, most students learn well. Teachers are knowledgeable. In one very good lesson, the enthusiastic teaching was challenging from the start. As a result, all students were actively and confidently involved in a consideration of 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. In a more pedestrian session direct questioning elicited responses from some students. Expectations were too low and analysis was limited to factual identification. Across the department there is little attempt to take account of differentiated learning styles.
194. Students work effectively together in pairs and small groups. Teachers give prompt and detailed evaluation and mark constructively correcting mechanical errors.
195. Courses are enriched by trips to the theatre, there is a new English Society and a debating one. Resources in classrooms are satisfactory to meet curriculum needs.
196. Leadership and management of English are good. Although the Head of Department is relatively new in post, he has made a good start. There is a comprehensive English Department handbook giving clear guidelines. Action is being taken to bring about improvements and build on strengths.

## French

Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**. Students attain above national expectations but are not sufficiently challenged by stimulating teaching to achieve at the highest levels.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge of the language and courses
  - Lesson objectives and plans are clear
  - Resources for independent learning are good
  - There is a lack of challenge for high ability learners
  - Lessons do not have sufficient variety and pace and not enough French is used in lessons
197. Results have varied over recent years at both A/S and A level. The retention rate on courses is good and all students who have taken the examinations have been successful. This success rate is above national averages. However, students have not attained the very highest grades and A grades are rare. In recent years the numbers of students continuing with French in the sixth form has been very variable so trends are unreliable. For example, there were no students sitting A2 level French in 2002 but there are currently nine students in year 13. The number falls to three in year 12.
  198. Students generally perform at a level of language skill which will result in grades B and C, and this in-school achievement is reflected in end of course grades. They encounter some difficulties with basic grammar structures
  199. Teaching is satisfactory. The two teachers sharing the delivery in both years work in close collaboration and, as a result, the lessons are well-planned and the topic areas and areas for focus are clearly defined. Students feel well-supported and appreciate the benefits of the different styles and approaches of the two staff. The teachers have good command of the

language, and excellent command in the case of the first language speaker. This, to some extent, provides a good model of language for students to imitate. However, they are not able to gain maximum benefit from these skills because staff do not use the language enough in lessons and tend to use too much English. Lesson objectives are shared with students so that they are aware of requirements and can work towards short term goals. Nevertheless, student response in lessons is weak, learners are reluctant to express themselves at length in the foreign language and many do not demonstrate linguistic confidence. When the content interests them, they are not unwilling to learn, but where pace is pedestrian or subject matter uninspiring, they are not motivated to extend their knowledge and skills. This relates directly to the lack of higher grades in examinations – students are not being sufficiently challenged.

200. The leadership and management of the subject at this level are satisfactory. There is some vision and direction and teachers have good professional liaisons. Assessment systems are clear in the schemes of work and the development of support materials for students' independent learning is good. The head of French has a satisfactory understanding of how to use data to enhance students' performance. However, many of the departmental systems need further development and there is evidence that the monitoring of teaching and learning has not been rigorous enough in the past.

## Spanish

The provision for Spanish is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are average and students achieve as they should.
  - The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables students to make good progress in lessons.
  - Students' attitudes are very positive and they have very good relationships with their teachers.
  - Standards in listening are below average.
  - Procedures to assess and monitor students' progress are not effective in ensuring students achieve appropriately in Year 12.
201. Standards attained by the end of Year 13 are average and students achieve as they should. Students speak confidently and write accurately and at length to express their views on a variety of topics. They have a good understanding of Spanish culture and use this knowledge to illustrate their arguments and accounts. By the end of Year 12 in 2002 a significant proportion of students failed to achieve a grade at AS level. Listening skills are below average and this was a major factor in determining students' results. The department is aware of this, is taking appropriate action to improve listening skills, and there appears to have been some improvement in results gained in 2003. Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning; they appreciate the help and guidance given by their teachers.
202. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subject and use the language extensively and very effectively to conduct lessons. Skilful questioning enables students to identify and apply patterns and to respond successfully and in detail. Lessons are well planned, with well sequenced activities designed to enable students to extend their range of language and to use the language themselves in discussion. As a result most students speak fairly confidently. They have very good relationships with their teachers and are not afraid of making mistakes. Detailed planning for the progress of individuals is not sufficiently developed to ensure all students make the best progress in lessons. Activities tend to be teacher led which decreases opportunities for students to work independently and at their own pace. In listening activities, for example, the pace is slowed to allow the lower attaining students to succeed so that the higher attaining students are held back.
203. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The department has appropriate plans to raise standards. The department provides good opportunities for students to take part

in trips, exchanges and work experience abroad and to have access to native speakers. However, opportunities to extend their learning locally are not fully developed. Day to day assessment is good and students are well informed about how to improve their work. However the procedures to track and plan individual students' progress and achievement in Year 12 are ineffective and need to be more rigorous to ensure all students achieve their potential and succeed in external examinations.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

204. Standards of language and literacy are above average in the sixth form though, like the main school, any policy for shared practice is undeveloped

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**. The inspection covered the A2-level and AS- level examination courses offered by the school: pure mathematics, mechanics, and statistics modules. Provision for students re-sitting GCSE mathematics was not inspected. The department does not contribute to courses developing the key skill of application of number.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in A2-level mathematics have improved year-on-year. Students completing the course now reach average standards. However, a significant number of students fail to reach their expected grades.
  - Teaching is at least satisfactory and seeks to develop students' mathematical understanding. Relationships between teachers and students are good.
  - Too few mathematically gifted students, or girls, take up the study of mathematics. There is a high drop-out rate at the end of Year 12, particularly for those students beginning AS-level courses from a too low GCSE base.
  - Marking and informal assessment are satisfactory but more could be done to identify underachievement early in AS-level courses.
  - The leadership of post-16 mathematics is sound.
205. Standards are average overall. The A2-level results for 2002 indicate an improvement over previous years, with students who completed the course reaching at least average standards. For this cohort, boys gained above-average results, and outperformed girls. The 2003 results indicate that one in four students gained the higher A and B grades. Results in pure mathematics are consistently lower than those in mechanics and statistics, reflecting the students' difficulties with manipulative algebra and some higher order numerical skills.
206. Almost one out of three students achieves less well than the target grades set by the school. There is a very high drop-out rate, almost fifty per cent, at the end of Year 12, mostly with good reason. Many of these students begin their AS-level mathematics courses from too low a GCSE base, or struggle with a heavy load of four courses. A very few students studied further mathematics in 2002 and 2003 and though these did well in 2002 there is little take-up of this option.
207. The standards of work seen in lessons and in students' records in the current Year 13 confirm adequate progress for those following A2-level courses. In a lesson on trigonometrical identities, however, students' manipulative algebra skills and lack of recall of earlier learning hampered their progress. Year 13 students re-taking the AS-level courses still displayed difficulties with higher level GCSE skills such as completing the square in their work on quadratics. Nevertheless, in each of the lessons sampled, students showed interest in their work but, particularly in Year 12 and 13 AS-level courses, students found difficulty in interpreting word problems and in applying skills to problem-solving activities. Students reported difficulties in making the transition from GCSE to AS-level courses without the help of a bridging course. They admit to limited independent study skills at the start of courses.

208. The teaching sampled was at least satisfactory and, on occasion, good. All teachers have a very good command of mathematics and understand clearly the requirements of the examination specifications. The best lessons give careful thought to the development of the students' thinking skills, as for example, in a lesson on trigonometry. Students report significant help and support from their teachers but indicate their difficulties with pure mathematics, and the ordering and timing of the AS-level modules. Relationships are good but students rely very heavily on their teachers rather than working towards independent problem-solving.
209. The leadership of post-16 mathematics is sound. There is a clear vision for its development and a strong team approach. However, the mathematics leader has very substantial whole-school responsibilities which detract significantly from the time available for the overall management of post-16 mathematics. As a result, the management of the AS-level modules is not fully effective and does not allow students with weaker mathematical skills on entry to achieve successfully. Monitoring of the students' progress, particularly in the early weeks of the course, is insufficiently rigorous or co-ordinated.
210. The previous inspection gave little prominence in the report to post-16 mathematics. However, given the year-on-year improvement in the mathematics results, progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Nevertheless, there is further to go in remedying the underachievement by some students, and to enrich the mathematics curriculum so that gifted students take up the study of mathematics.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

211. There is no formal policy for developing mathematics across the sixth form curriculum

## **SCIENCE**

### **Biology**

The quality of provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new sixth form subject leadership has introduced good schemes of work
  - It is now fully staffed with biology specialists
  - Increasing number of students are opting for biology
  - But standards have been below national average and there has been some underachievement
  - More monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice is needed.
212. Results at A Level have been well below the national average for the last few years. This year's results should be slightly higher but are still likely to be below the national average. A/S results have been below the national average for the last two years. The number of students choosing to study biology has increased recently. There are currently about fifty students divided into 2 groups in each of Years 12 and 13. Biology is a cost effective subject in the sixth form. Underperformance in Year 12 is usually why students opt out for Year 13.

213. The standard of work of current students is below average. Some students find the mathematical demands of the subject too much. In their investigations their graph drawing skills are below expectations. Students do not evaluate their work to a high enough level. Students' notes are not of the highest quality. Course requirements are met. However there is far too much reliance on worksheets by the teachers, resulting in too little writing by the students.
214. Students do not do as well as might be expected at both A/S and A Level. A significant proportion of students have failed to achieve the targets set for them by the department based on their performance at GCSE. Among the factors contributing to this underachievement are staffing problems, variation in the quality of teaching, and poor student attendance particularly in year 13.
215. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory but within that judgement there are causes for concern. There is too much variation in module test results and the quality of students' notes from the different teachers. Teachers do not give students enough opportunities to develop their self-study skills. It is imperative that the newly appointed head of Post 16 biology monitors the work of the department more closely so that good practice can be shared. Only in the last two years has the department been fully staffed with biology teachers. Previously the unsatisfactory arrangement of setting work for sixth form students had to be used.
216. The leadership and management for biology are satisfactory. Already the co-ordinator has introduced some new schemes of work. She has carried out a detailed analysis of module test results in 2003, which is an encouraging sign. Unfortunately the report did not relate results back to targets and consequently failed to highlight the underachievement. Year 12 students have rightly been put into groups dependent upon whether they are doing chemistry beyond GCSE. It is necessary to provide the non-chemists with a chemistry lesson additional to their biology lessons. Correctly the department enters students for a module test at the earliest opportunity in Year 12. The teachers do not use the results from these tests rigorously enough to combat underachievement soon enough.
217. Since the last inspection standards have fallen but the opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills have increased.

## **Chemistry**

Overall, provision for chemistry is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses:**

- The chemistry course is well organised to cover content.
  - Teachers have a secure knowledge of chemistry.
  - Able students show positive attitudes to work.
  - Standards of achievement in A-level chemistry are unsatisfactory.
  - Teaching lacks a sufficiently challenging approach that involves students more in their learning.
  - There is insufficient use of school and national data to monitor and review the performance of individual students.
218. AS chemistry results in 2003 show 100 per cent success in the A-E grade range with about two fifths gaining A/B grades. This is a rise on the previous year. The attainment of students in A-level chemistry has been typically below that attained nationally for a number of years. Attainment was above national expectations in 2001 when the 2 candidates entered gained B and C grades. 2003 results were again below the national average point score for chemistry and the majority of results were lower grades. This represents unsatisfactory progress from GCSE to A-level chemistry.

219. Year 12 work on materials is based on appropriate AS subject content. However, the quality of description, presentation and layout is not representative of higher grade work. In lessons, students were able to explain the composition of group 2 in the periodic table and the characteristics of its members, showing a grasp of fundamental chemistry.
220. Year 13 students' work shows progression from AS level. Students use chemical terminology more fluently, and show an increased depth of understanding. Whilst progression is logical through folders, not all notes are well developed and there is over reliance on worksheets, answers to textbook questions and teacher led work. Some students' results in a test on the "Medical Cabinet" showed insecure mastery of the topic. Essays on the need for, and impact of, increasing the chemical industry were leniently marked. During lessons, able students quickly grasped concepts and were able to anticipate teacher ideas, suggesting they could be challenged further. The majority of students were more passive in their approach.
221. Teaching overall is satisfactory. For AS students, there is a need for greater emphasis on concept development and discussion of ideas. Folders show a similar approach to that used at GCSE level with too heavy reliance on worksheets and answers to textbook questions. Teaching in A2 lessons shows planned sequencing and includes the use of well-prepared Power-Point materials. There is a need for students to discuss more, and for students to be given time to consolidate, summarise and record ideas from lessons. Strategies to challenge the most able and support those who find work more difficult would aid achievement.
222. Teachers set homework regularly through a scheduled homework plan. Homework is marked promptly and returned with feedback. AS targets have not yet been set, but A2 students have predicted target grades from their AS results. Examination data is reviewed but the tracking and achievement of individual students and the overall performance of the subject should be pursued more rigorously.
223. Students apply themselves well. At an early stage of their course Year 12 students are less confident in asking questions. Students in Year 13 have very positive attitudes to their work. The Salter's chemistry course helps develop independent learning skills. Opportunities are given to research topics and develop PowerPoint presentations. Open Book studies provide further opportunity for synoptic and less constrained response work. Students are also given the opportunity to plan practical work. The curriculum is enhanced by visits such as the proposed 3-day industrial tour. Whilst the newly acquired LCD projector is being used and students are advised to make use of web sites for research, the use of ICT for data collection and analysis should be strengthened.
224. Management of the chemistry department is satisfactory within the science department. Schemes of work are in place, which ensures good subject coverage. Whilst lesson observations have taken place, there is a need for greater rigour and frequency. The impact of teaching styles and the work of the department should be considered in relation to the overall achievement of students in chemistry - which is lower than it should be. Student data is analysed but this should also identify individual achievement based on prior attainment and the overall success of the department.

## Physics

Overall, provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a recent improvement in the A2-level examinations results and above average standards obtained for AS level in 2001 and 2002.
- There is good quality teaching by experienced physics teachers.
- There is a lack of rigour in the use of assessment data to monitor the students' progress and achievements and to evaluate the work of the department.



- There are limited opportunities for students to develop more independent learning skills.

225. The 2002 A-level results were well above the national average, following a five-year period of well below average standards. The 2003 results were also positive and suggest that the students' achievements are now approaching a satisfactory level, based on previous GCSE results. The 'AS' level results of 2001 and 2002 also indicated an above average level of attainment and broadly satisfactory achievement, although this was not the case for 2003, when the group contained many weaker and less well motivated students. Over recent years, although few girls study physics, their final grades have been comparable with those of the boys and frequently better.
226. Standards of work seen in Year 13, during a lesson on interference, indicate that students are making satisfactory progress. The students are taking particular care with the quality of notes made and better standards are being achieved in calculations, although for some this is still a difficult area. The work of students in Year 12 shows a broad range of ability. Weak algebraic skills reduce their progress, particularly relating to the difficulty shown by some students in manipulating equations. A significant number of pupils in the Year 12 group have an insecure knowledge of basic GCSE electricity theory.
227. The quality of physics teaching is consistently good and students are well supported and challenged by knowledgeable and experienced teachers. Lessons have an appropriate pace and the varied content, coupled with clear, careful exposition enable the students to make good progress in their learning. Homework is used to consolidate individual learning; and students are constructively informed of their progress. Students are encouraged to contribute their ideas in theory sessions. However, a greater use of more varied questioning techniques would involve more students in giving responses. In both year groups good working relations are evident. There is a good retention rate for students completing their AS or A2 course. Although there is some evidence of data-loggers being used in physics, a greater use of this equipment and other forms of modern technology, including computer applications and use of the interactive white board, would help to raise the profile of the subject. Greater use of CD-ROMs would provide further opportunities for independent learning.
228. Standards of attainment have recovered from their fall of earlier years and the 2002 results are at least equal to those of the last report. Standards of teaching are at the previous 'good' level. Even so, there is insufficient evaluation of the work of the department and performance data are insufficiently used to monitor the progress of the students and to set appropriate targets for individuals. Apart from the Head of Science, there is currently no single person with delegated responsibility for physics. As a result, the effectiveness of the department has suffered, creating a situation where the leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. This situation will shortly be resolved by a new appointment to fill this post.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Information and communication technology**

The focus of the inspection was on GCE computer studies and GCE information technology (IT) in years 12 and 13.

Overall the quality of provision is **satisfactory**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have experience of working in the IT industry and have good subject knowledge.
- There are good relationships between teachers and students.
- Students are very positive about the courses.
- Individual support is provided to all students.
- Monitoring and assessment practice does not provide clear enough guides for students to reach higher standards.

- Strategies for monitoring and improving teaching practice are under-developed.
229. Standards, as seen during the inspection, are average. In 2001, GCSE examination results were well below average, but for 2003 there has been some improvement, particularly in IT. However, they are still below average. With the better staffing and as indicated by evidence from the inspection, students are on track to further improve examination performances.
230. The Year 12 students on the AS Level both courses are able to add validation to database tables and apply this to their data-dictionaries. They understand these and make good use of what they have been taught. Other Year 12 students are able to apply the ENTITY (Primary Key, Attributes, Foreign Key) formula when dealing with data structure. Year 13 students are able to use lookups when dealing with transaction forms and correct understanding errors in the design of their projects.
231. Achievement is good. Students use computers and software confidently. The School admits students with low GCSE grades and those who have not done the subject previously, but they all make good progress in using a wide range of software to complete the units of work required for the examinations.
232. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good features include good subject knowledge and expectations that result in students making good gains in understanding and working hard. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of the technology, including data projectors. The sharing of objectives at the start of the lesson helps students understand and to focus on what is required of them. Teachers know their students well but could set more challenging targets. Students generally show independence but also co-operate well with one another and with their teachers. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and require more precise marking that informs students about the quality of their work and what they need to do to improve.
233. Management of the subjects in the Sixth Form is satisfactory. After a period of staffing difficulties, the number of teachers available and their qualifications match the demands of the curriculum. The head of department has put into place common standards for documentation and there are clear lines of responsibility. Documentation is well organised, planning is good, there is a shared commitment to improve and a capacity to do so. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. However, the monitoring of teaching is not documented and is still at an informal level. By not addressing this, the department could be missing an opportunity to further improve teaching and learning.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

234. All Year 12 students take level 2 ICT key skills other those who following specialist ICT courses. The sixth form shares with the whole school the need to further develop the use of ICT across subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above national average and students achieve well
- Teaching is good and enables students to learn effectively and to acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills
- Students have a very positive attitude to the subject
- There is a lack of planned use of ICT, and resources lack development in some areas

235. Recruitment to the post-16 course is high and retention rates from Years 12 to 13 very good. A-B grades at A level vary from year to year but, apart from a dip in 2002, A-B grades are well above the national average, with high average points scores above 70 and interpreted as above average against similar schools. A-E grades have been at 100% for the last four years. Girls have a better record at the highest grades. Currently boys outnumber girls 2:1 in classes.
236. The department has a flexible policy towards entry and occasionally there is a concentration of relatively lower ability boys in some groups. The department accepts those who gain a C grade at GCSE Foundation level.
237. AS level examination results mirror those at A level. Overall the results show good achievement. In Years 12 and 13 the majority of students are working at grades A-C.
238. Students in Years 12 and 13 have developed a good range of writing styles. They use skills developed across the key stages and extend understanding of more complex concepts and techniques. They use geographical modelling and consider a range of theories such as Valentine's ideas on coastlines. In addition they improve their use of statistical methods to add depth to their enquiries. Despite these improvements in methodology, there is still room for further development of sources and teachers might introduce more personal experience, from students as well, into lessons.
239. A good grounding in examination skills helps prepare students well for AS and A levels. Though there is not much use of Information Communication Technology in everyday classroom situations, there is considerable independent use. Students are able to focus well on interpretation and judgement rather than description, largely as a result of the training they have received from entry.
240. Overall, teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers are knowledgeable. They target probing questions in order to involve all students and they gain confidence in explaining their judgements. Students know how well they are doing and receive good feedback on all aspects of their work. In conversation students have no complaints about the workload. They feel well supported and secure and they are confident of their success. Very good relationships have been cemented following successful residential fieldwork. Students also feel that the AS course is useful training rather than a burden. The students appreciate the strong geography provision. They enjoy the school and think the atmosphere is better than in other schools.
241. The post 16 management, in common with the rest of the department, is very good. The work is delivered by an experienced and committed team. Very good case studies are used and pupils with a range of attainment levels are provided with every chance to succeed. Tracking is good and targets are appropriate, resulting in an upward improvement of standards. The department is training geographers, not just teaching geography.

## History

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in relation to their GCSE standards
- Relationships are good and students feel well supported in their studies
- Students have very good attitudes towards the study of history
- Some teaching is not challenging enough: it does not require students to use their intellectual and reflective skills to a high level
- Students do not read widely enough

242. Since the last inspection A level results have fluctuated, reflecting the ability range of the intake but, in 3 of the past 5 years, they have been above and well above national averages. In 2002 standards at Advanced (A2) level were above those nationally. Students in 2003 were all successful, though there were fewer high grades. AS students were mostly successful, with the girls performing better than the boys. Interest in the subject is growing and the department recruits a number of students from other schools. Achievement overall is good.
243. Current standards are in line with those nationally and achievement is good. Year 12 students, at the start of their AS course, already have an overview of the state of Tsarist Russia in 1905. Year 13 students have a good knowledge and understanding of the complexities of British politics in the age of Lord Liverpool as well as an understanding of the causes of the Russian revolution in 1917. Essay writing is of a good standard. It is well structured with evidence to support individual judgements in written questions such as "How reactionary was Lord Liverpool's ministry?" There is evidence of the use of the Internet for research but little evidence of wider reading around the subject. Students have appropriate evidence study skills and can analyse historical sources critically and evaluate a wide range of evidence effectively.
244. The quality of teaching students receive is satisfactory overall, though there are some good features. A Year 13 lessons was observed where students were given the opportunity to think critically for themselves and to develop debating skills by contrasting the policies of George Canning and Lord Castlereagh. Very good subject knowledge is used to motivate and inform students. They are provided with a wide range of support materials, but sometimes the teaching is over-directive. Students are not challenged to use their reflective and intellectual skills to a high level and teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Assessment is regular and teachers' marking is thorough, with detailed comments designed to improve attainment.
245. Leadership is good and reflects commitment; it promotes enthusiasm for the subject. Relationships between students and teachers are very positive and students feel well supported in their work in history. Management is satisfactory and the department has a good range of learning resources to support learning. However, the good teaching seen in the department is not sufficiently widespread, so that students cannot always be suitably challenged in all of their lessons.

## **PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS**

Overall, the quality of provision in Philosophy and Ethics is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching in the Philosophy module.
  - Teachers are well organized and lessons are well planned.
  - Teachers produce very good quality teaching materials.
  - The provision for active learning, including discussion and debate, is less developed in the Ethics module.
246. In 2002, results at A-level were above the national average and, as in 2001, when results were significantly above the national average, in terms of relative performance were amongst the strongest in the school. In 2003, attainment fell markedly and the results were amongst the weakest in the school. 38 per cent of students gained A-B grades and 86 per cent of students gained an A-E grades at A-level. This compared to 60 per cent A-B grades and 100 per cent A-E grades in 2002. At A/S level, 48 per cent of students gained A-C grades in 2003, compared to 70 per cent in 2002.
247. In the work seen standards are in line with national expectations. Students are making satisfactory progress in terms of prior attainment. Students in Year 13 are developing the

confidence required to reach sound judgments independently. Encouraged by their teachers, they are learning to think creatively and to consider different philosophical approaches and interpretations. Written work does not yet demonstrate the ability of all Year 13 students to challenge the assumptions implied in a question, or to select and use knowledge relevantly and effectively. When adopting a critical approach, higher attaining students can produce convincing arguments and reach coherent conclusions. Unless cajoled, weaker students tend to be passive learners. They lack confidence in developing their ideas in class discussions. To be prepared for university education, students need to become more effective independent learners.

248. The overall quality of teaching in philosophy is good. However, there is some lack of coherence in teaching style. In general, students respond with positive enthusiasm to an active style of teaching, which is characterised by high levels of discussion and debate. Interactive lessons that are designed to extend conceptual understanding and develop communication skills, result in very good learning. An overall strength of the teaching lies in well-planned lessons that identify what students must, should and could know.
249. Teachers recognize that marking should be regular and constructive. Diagnostic feedback provides students with some indicators for the improvement of their work, although this could be more closely focused. The department scrutinizes examination data, but there is scope for further analysis in order to measure value added and to observe emerging trends. Students have access to ICT for the purposes of research. The stock of school library books for extended reading in philosophy is rather thin. There is also scope to extend the provision of enrichment activities, including debates, in order to enhance students' learning.
250. The present head of department assumed responsibility in September 2003. She demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject and a commitment to raising standards. Schemes of work are well produced and teaching materials are of a very good quality.

## **Sociology**

Overall provision for Sociology is **unsatisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory.
  - Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.
  - Teachers use a broad range of teaching methods skilfully and give very good attention to the needs of individual students, though some lack specialist knowledge.
  - Assessment practice is insufficiently detailed to help student further improve their work.
- 
251. Standards in 2002 were below national average. While all students passed A-Level and 80 percent succeeded at AS level, few gained the higher grades. Results in 2003 were broadly similar and reflect unsatisfactory levels of achievement, with students, particularly the more talented, doing less well than they should.
  252. The teaching is satisfactory because, though some are non-specialists, the teachers are committed and their methods have strong features. Strengths include the wide range of teaching methods skilfully combined by teachers, some of whom have only recently been appointed. A further strength is the care and attention teachers give to students' individual needs and students respond very well in lessons. Students have good opportunities to develop their speaking and writing skills and they are confident in using the internet for research. However, two of the three members of the department are not specialists in the subject, and they are still developing their depth of knowledge in order to extend the learning of more talented students. Homework is set regularly and marked promptly and it focuses

effectively on preparing students for examination questions. However, the marking provides only limited guidance to help students further improve their work.

253. Staff are not well matched to the needs of the curriculum. In addition to the lack of subject specialists, the department has not had a stable team of teachers for some time. Moreover, students and teachers have insufficient regular access to sociology textbooks to support their learning. Many in Year 13 do not have a suitable textbook to support their homework. The provision of accommodation is satisfactory, although classes tend not to have a single base room.
254. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. As an experienced teacher, the head of department offers good encouragement and help to individual teachers. However, the team does not meet regularly to share planning and the monitoring of teaching and learning is at an emergent stage. Student performance data are not interrogated with sufficient rigour to identify the department's areas of relative weakness and there is no departmental development plan or other clear strategy for raising achievement.
255. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, though the subject has become increasingly popular in recent years since the introduction by the school of GCSE and AS-Level Sociology and there is a commitment to better provision.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

256. Advanced level Design and Technology was sampled during the inspection. Standards seen were above national average and students were achieving well, helped by good teaching.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

This is a very strong feature of the sixth form and four areas were inspected in depth. **Dance** was also sampled and in the lesson seen teaching was good and students were developing their choreography skills well.

### **Art and Design**

Overall the quality of provision is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCE results have in most years been above the national average.
  - The stimulating teaching motivates students to produce exciting responses.
  - On occasion the time taken to organise resources wastes time at the start of lessons.
257. In GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level results in 2002 were below the national average but standards in the current Year 12 are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their GCSE grades for those students who took GCSE and good achievement for those who did not. This is illustrated by the quality of work in digital photography. In this area students work with enthusiasm and insight and this was well demonstrated by a student who surrounded a doll from her own childhood with pills to pose moral questions about drug-taking.
258. In GCE Advanced (A2) Level results in 2002 were below the national average but standards in the current Year 13 are above national expectations. Pupils compile exciting sketchbooks as preparation for further study. This was seen in a sketchbook in which there was a study of the contemporary stereotype of beauty. The final outcome was a complex piece of sculpture containing many photographs of the human body. These ranged from those of body builders to anorexics and included the ways other artists portray the figure.

259. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers set complex tasks and students learn well because they are motivated by the demanding stimuli. This was demonstrated by a student who deconstructed a Robert Frank photograph by tracing three sections of it, overlapping them and photocopying the result. The outcome had an unexpected dreamy look to it. This prompted the teacher to ask the student to reassess the original work. The language used in the discussion was high-level, subject-specific and extended the student's specialist vocabulary in the subject.
260. The leadership of art is good and is committed to improving all aspects of the department's performance. Management is very good. There is energetic attention to detail that leads to the smooth day-to-day running of the department. Extra-curricular provision, such as visits to galleries and contacts with practising artists, is wide and varied. It is open to all students and provides very good support for the work carried out in school.

## **Drama and Theatre Studies**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in GCE A-level drama and theatre studies are good.
  - Students are highly motivated, work productively and achieve well.
  - Teachers have good subject knowledge and convey their enthusiasm. There is a shortage of texts and documentary material.
261. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were above the national average. They were also good in 2003, with over three-quarters of the students gaining grades A to C. There are more female students than male and their results are higher. Results since the last inspection have been erratic with a dip in 2001, but the trend is now upwards, with new staff and higher numbers of students opting for the subject. AS results at the end of Year 12 are average and most students continue in Year 13 to A-level. There is good achievement during the two years of A-level, particularly for those students who start the course with lower than average GCSE attainment. For many students, A-level drama and theatre studies is the subject in which they gain their best results.
262. Standards seen during the inspection were good, particularly in practical work. A particular strength is the confidence students display in devising their own group performances. Year 13 students are assured enough to take risks when dealing with sensitive social issues such as cancer and child abuse. Their secure knowledge of drama techniques enabled them in one lesson to convey subtle and abstract ideas effectively and take the occasional risks. Students quickly develop a trust in each other when negotiating ideas and this develops team building skills and very good relationships. The more articulate students have good conceptual understanding, supported by wide reading and research, and this is reflected in the good quality of their written work. Higher attaining students help raise the standards reached by others because collaboration is strongly encouraged by the teachers.
263. All students achieve well and this is notable for those students who join from other schools in Year 12 and quickly establish good working partnerships with those who have worked together previously for GCSE. Students in both Years 12 and 13 are highly motivated to improve and by Year 13, they are approaching work with maturity and self-assurance. They seek and respect guidance from their teachers and each other with the result that they are self-critical and learn quickly. They show a clear sense of audience and an understanding of the role of director. The combination of teachers' high expectations and good mutual support is a major factor in their success.



264. All teaching seen was good. Teachers' enthusiasm is contagious and inspires students in and beyond the classroom. Lesson objectives are challenging and well defined so students know what they are aiming for and work at a fast pace. Regular monitoring and discussion of progress and attainment gives students a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. This leads to good advances in knowledge, skills and understanding. The themes of lessons and plays studied draw effectively on issues important to the students, touching very well on spiritual and moral issues. Accommodation in the drama studios is satisfactory with good equipment for performance in the school hall. However, there is a shortage of texts for students and there is an over-reliance on photocopying.
265. A wide range of activities enriches the taught curriculum and offers good links with parents and the local community. There are many opportunities to visit the professional theatre. Students in the 6<sup>th</sup> form take a leading role in the musical theatre productions. They offer good role models as they work actively with younger students in the school.
266. Leadership and management are good. A well-drafted handbook is helpful for the students, giving course details and advice. A further handbook outlines clear expectations for the staff and this has enabled a relatively new team to work effectively together. The subject has regained the good standards evident at the last inspection and increased in size and scope. Many students hope to continue their drama work in higher education.

## **Media studies**

The quality of provision in media studies is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Recent results in GCE A-level media studies are good.
  - Students are enthusiastic and collaborate well with each other.
  - The subject is popular and growing rapidly.
  - The subject is well led and managed.
  - The school's new media arts status has allowed a significant improvement in resources to extend students' work.
  - Approaches to teaching the subject lack consistency.
267. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were above the national average. In 2003, results were similar. Female students did better than male, though not by a significant margin. Results have varied slightly over the past five years from average to very good standards. This represents good achievement, since students often start courses with average or lower attainment in GCSE. Results after one year at AS are average. Some students retake units in the hope of raising their grades. Almost all students who start the subject in Year 12 continue in Year 13. The number of students taking the subject has increased dramatically. The school's new media arts status offers better opportunities for students to make progress and enables them to study with excellent facilities. Many students continue their media studies in higher education.
268. Standards seen during the inspection were satisfactory overall and reflect the wide range of attainment with which students start the course. All students develop high- level technical skills and talk about their work with knowledge and enthusiasm. Their production work in video and animation is polished and occasionally outstanding. The excellent facilities and support from teachers and technical staff promote good learning in creating short films of a high quality. For many students this is their best work. Students know the main concepts within media and, in using them to analyse text and visual material, show an increasing awareness of cultural context.

269. Achievement is always satisfactory and often good. Students all gain knowledge of more than one medium. They quickly develop confidence in accessing and using the very good information technology resources available in school. Higher attaining students' writing develops with a sharp and critical understanding of the more complex ideas associated with media. Lower and average attaining students struggle with some of the media theory and vocabulary and also with the amount of wider reading required. They are more reliant on teacher help. However, relationships are good and students speak highly of the support they receive. The emphasis on good collaboration, where students feel supported by others, clearly supports progress.
270. Teaching is satisfactory and has many developing strengths. Teachers plan well and take into account the range of ability in a class. They encourage students to be independent and work to their strengths by choosing topics of particular interest. Teachers know the students well, evident in their caring personal guidance. Marking is thorough and new assessment systems involve the students in their progress, so that they know how well they are doing. However, not all teachers teaching the subject have specialist qualifications, and this leads to a range of expectations. Consistency in teaching and learning approaches is an area for development.
271. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Courses are efficiently managed, students' progress is well monitored and results carefully analysed. Teaching staff have good training within the department to help them make full use of the new facilities.
272. Although informal collaboration between the media arts subjects is beginning, it is early days for any formal course links. Since the last inspection, the successful development of media has been a considerable asset to the school and there is a strong commitment to the growth of the subject.

## MUSIC

The inspection looked in detail at the A level music course and sixth form instrumental music provision, and two lessons on the A level music technology course were also observed. The very good teaching of music technology is well-supported by a technician who is himself an accomplished and well-known performing and recording musician. This, together with the superb resources, the enthusiasm and commitment of staff and the students' obvious motivation and maturity, has created a strong department, one which is central to the development of the school into a regional centre of excellence in the media arts.

Overall the quality of provision is **excellent**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The tremendous range of musical opportunities in this vibrant department gives students a great richness of musical experience
  - Excellent and very good teaching enables students to achieve high levels of musical understanding and artistry
  - Students are keen, motivated and deeply appreciative of this excellent provision
  - The department is effective in its inclusive approach to students – in the words of a Year 13 student, “Both the “ear” and the “head” musicians do equally well here and (they) work well together.”
273. Standards in music are high. Examination results are good. Last year's 11 AS students did significantly better overall than the school had predicted. A level students generally achieve very high grades. Many students reach high levels of instrumental competence and some continue their studies at Music College. Students' compositions show an unusual and striking combination of originality, artistic beauty and technical competence, synthesising all the elements of their learning on the A level course. Students' involvement, as performers and as directors, in a broad range of ensemble work gives them a sense of the high standards of skill,

discipline, commitment, organisation and teamwork that are required in the professional world of music.

274. Students are aware and appreciative of the very good teaching they receive. They welcome the high levels of challenge, rapid pace of lessons, probing questions, thoughtful planning and preparation. They sense the teachers' warm, easy respect for and liking of them as young adults. They in turn respect their teachers for their very evident advanced musical skills, both in performance and in musical knowledge and understanding, and their capacity to deploy these skills to best effect in their teaching. A Year 13 student who had joined the sixth form for its music provision: "We might have got the high grades somewhere else but we wouldn't have enjoyed it all as much as we do here". She had just finished a lesson on Lieder, which ended with an analysis of Schubert's Doppelgaenger. In this lesson students had been visibly moved by the song. They discussed with fascination the dramatic impact of the strophic structure and the harmonic devices. The teacher had involved all members of this heterogeneous group of students in the learning process, maintaining a rapid pace, valuing everyone's contributions and deepening their understanding from students' individual answers and ideas. A great deal of learning took place at a variety of different levels.
275. Students value the department's high standards and its calm and friendly atmosphere. They like the inspiration and independence it offers for them to develop their own musical ideas, and they like what is for them a more comfortable ethos slightly apart from the rest of the school.
276. At the time of the last inspection, things were very different. In the words of a Year 13 student: "All we had was an air-raid hut and a bongo." It has been accomplished because of the head of department's excellent leadership, assisted by the impressive support, including some superb resources, that the school has been able provide. The head of department has brought to the department some exceptional qualities: clear ideas about what she wants, dogged determination, patience and perseverance, strong team leadership skills, commitment in abundance, and a high level of skill in her professional field. As a result, the department has quickly established a presence in the area. It is attracting good teachers and support staff. It is becoming the department of choice for musically talented students in the locality. It enjoys stronger links with the Bromley Youth Music Trust, and it is developing a range of community involvements both locally and internationally. Progress since the last inspection has been outstandingly good.

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

277. No courses were inspected in this area, though sixth form students do actively participate in sports, as this is a further strength of the school.

## **BUSINESS**

The school provides both the general and vocational courses in the subject and overall provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some good teaching results in students acquiring a wide knowledge of topics and concepts which they re-use well, especially in coursework.
- Teachers know their subject and the requirements of the examination thoroughly and students benefit from this expertise.
- There are ample opportunities for students to re-use and extend their skills of literacy, number and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Students are motivated in their work and generally apply themselves well in lessons and private study.

- Lessons could incorporate a broader range of resources and activities to accelerate the pace of teaching and learning, and to stretch the higher attainers.
  - Insufficient use is made of the business community.
  - The accommodation does not provide the best environment for learning
278. A level results fell in 2002 and were below the national average. In part this was the result of staffing difficulties. Results improved in 2003 with girls performing better than boys. The AS-level results in 2002 were in line with the national average. The results in the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education in 2002 were above the national average. Overall, these results represent satisfactory achievement as most students achieve the grades predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. The subject attracts a large number of candidates and the majority complete their courses and pursue the subject further in higher education.
279. Standards of attainment in work seen are in line with national expectations. Students have a wide knowledge of topics and a good understanding of business concepts. Their analytical skills are well developed as a result of skilled questioning by teachers. In a Year 13 lesson on business statistics, for example, students understood the difference between descriptive and inferential data, and the process of validating results. Students benefit from extensive practice in number skills, which they use well in such exercises as critical path analysis, time series, decision trees and probability, to name a few. The quality of students' coursework is often good. A feature of the work they undertake is the study and evaluation of model coursework, under the guidance of the teacher. As a result, students recognise the characteristics of a good piece of coursework. They select their topics well, sometimes building on sound foundations from their GCSE, sometimes selecting as a project a business in their own family circle or neighbourhood. One student was studying the advantages and disadvantages of moving her mother's travel agency business from its home base to the High Street. Students do extensive research in the media and on the Internet and present their findings well, often with the aid of ICT. Generally, students achieve satisfactorily, and gaps in knowledge and skills left by the period of unsatisfactory teaching are rapidly being filled. The higher attaining students have not yet caught up in order to reach the best grades they are capable of.
280. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Students are able to acquire a broad knowledge and a comprehensive range of skills because the teachers have a good mastery of their subject. Most teachers establish very good relationships in the classroom which encourage students to become involved in discussion, to ask questions to promote their learning, work co-operatively with each other and share ideas. Teachers have a very good insight into the requirements of the examinations. Work in the sixth form begins with a very careful induction course, during which the key concepts of the subject are revised and extended. Teachers make good use of case studies and computer simulations and they ensure that examination techniques are practised. Written work is often marked carefully, using the examination grades. Teachers set individual targets and make suggestions for how these can be achieved. The planning of lessons is usually satisfactory, but within lessons there could be a greater variety of resources and activities and a tighter use of time to ensure that learning is as effective as possible. In the weaker lessons, explanations and the instructions for exercises are unclear. There is a lack of challenge in the content of the lesson and the teacher does not always ascertain whether concepts have been properly understood.
281. The leadership and management of business studies are satisfactory. The head of department has a clear vision of how the subject should develop and is very aware of the areas for improvement. He keeps the curriculum under review to ensure it is up to date and matches the needs of students. The accommodation for the subject makes it difficult to create a satisfactory environment with modern resources and technology to hand. The department does not make sufficient use of the local business community to enrich the curriculum, especially on the A-level course. Since the last inspection, standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained. There is much better use of ICT and greater attention is paid

to writing skills. Leadership of the department is stronger but the problems with accommodation persist.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

282. There are no courses provided in this area

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

283. There is appropriate and worthwhile personal and social development education including strong higher education guidance but no general studies courses were inspected.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>3</b>
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4	4
How well pupils learn	4	4
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4	5
The leadership of the headteacher		4
The leadership of other key staff	3	4
The effectiveness of management	4	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*