

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGSMEAD SCHOOL

Enfield

LEA area: London Borough of Enfield

Unique reference number: 102044

Headteacher: Mr Giles Bird

Lead inspector: Graham Preston

Dates of inspection: 19–22 January 2004

Inspection number: 259160

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of students: 11–19 years
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1364

School address: Southbury Road
Enfield
Middlesex
Postcode: EN1 1YQ

Telephone number: 020 8363 3037
Fax number: 020 8366 3709

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Andrew Nicholas

Date of previous inspection: 16 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kingsmead is a mixed 11–19 comprehensive school. As an increasingly popular school it has a rising student roll and at 1364 is larger than average. Around half of the roll is white British, though, with students drawn from Turkish, Greek, African-Caribbean and Asian cultural backgrounds, the school sustains a strong and inclusive multi-cultural ethos. English is an additional language for around a third of students, though only about three per cent are in the early stages of learning English and some of these are recent refugees. The majority of students come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, including many who stay on to the sixth form. Over a third of students are deemed to have special educational needs and 23 students have statements. The school has particular strengths in the media and performing arts and is seeking to be a specialist college for those areas. The school is actively and successfully involved in developments to raise standards through 'Excellence in the Cities' and other initiatives to better support student learning, including that of the gifted and talented, as well as to further improve behaviour and attendance.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1990	Graham Preston	Lead inspector	
9472	John Edmond	Lay inspector	
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History 11-16, sixth form co-ordinator
1240	John King	Team inspector	Art and design 11-19
2793	Ross Maden	Team inspector	Business studies 11-19
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science 11-16, chemistry 16-19
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-19
18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English 16-19, English as an additional language (EAL)
32722	Ann Morgan	Team inspector	English 11-16, SEN 11-19
30563	Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Physical education 11-16
22849	Ron Catlow	Team inspector	Geography 11-19
19528	Roland Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-19
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	French, German 11-16
8076	Terry Bendall	Team inspector	Design and technology 11-19
24142	Sylvia Argyle	Team inspector	Media studies, Performance studies (drama) 16- 19
32169	Bob O'Hagan	Team inspector	Sociology 16-19
15201	Helen Blakeman	Team inspector	Music 11-16
14851	Graham Laws	Team inspector	Citizenship 11-16
32122	Judith Straw	Team inspector	Religious education 11-16

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Kingsmead is a good and effective school, which has continued to improve significantly since the last inspection. Its great strength over recent years has been a very strong and inclusive ethos that enables students of different backgrounds and cultures to develop personally and socially within a caring and supportive environment. Students benefit from good teaching, and the greater school focus on raising academic standards is having real impact and enabling students to achieve well. The school is very well led and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership of the headteacher, which has been central to the development of the school and which is well supported by a good and developing leadership team.
- Excellent care and support systems that help create a positive school ethos and result in very good students' attitudes and behaviour. As part of this the school has been very successful in its innovative behaviour improvement programme.
- Good teaching and learning by the highly committed staff, which is very well supported by many additional learning opportunities that enable students to achieve well in most subjects.
- Very strong provision in media studies and performing arts; this is reflected in the high quality teaching and successful outcomes at GCSE and in the sixth form.
- Lack of time to ensure good provision in ICT and RE; in the case of RE this falls well short of the agreed syllabus.
- Lack of breadth in the 11-19 curriculum needed to meet the needs of all students though the school is effective in ensuring that almost all students gain GCSE qualifications.
- Emerging good practice in target setting and assessment practice, which, however, has not yet been fully developed in some curriculum areas.

The school has significantly improved in most aspects since the last inspection, successfully addressing concerns in curriculum, assessment and development planning. Its very strong caring ethos has been sustained and standards have steadily risen, particularly in the last two years as a result of a number of positive and successful initiatives. Provision for religious education remains a previous issue to be addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards are below the national average overall, though **students achieve well** in terms of their GCSE performance, given their standards on entry to the school. The table below shows the average point scores for students in Years 11 and 13 compared with those of all schools. The Year 11 students' scores compare favourably with the scores of students from similar schools.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	D	D	B
Year 13	A/AS-level and VCE examinations	E	E	D	

*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 students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Students make good progress in Years 7-9 and noticeably improved their standards in mathematics and science in the end of Year 9 tests in 2003. Progress is satisfactory in English, though this is slowed by some weaknesses in reading and writing. GCSE results rose considerably in the last two years, particularly in some subjects such as business studies, media studies, drama and French, where teaching and learning are often stronger. Sixth form results have steadily improved, particularly in the proportion of students gaining passes at GCE Advanced level. **Students'**

attitudes and behaviour are very good, reflecting their positive response to the excellent care, guidance and support they receive. Attendance, though a little below the national

average, is much improved and students get to lessons on time and show pride in and commitment to the school. **Their social, moral and cultural development is very good while spiritual development is satisfactory.** Students overall development is helped by the wide range of school experiences.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. Students follow a mostly appropriate range of courses, though they do not get enough learning opportunities in information and communication technology (ICT) and RE. The taught curriculum is greatly enhanced by the wider learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities, which students and parents greatly appreciate. The school has been cautious in broadening the range of 11-19 courses, some of which would better meet the needs and interests of some students. The school has excellent and supportive care systems and the innovative behaviour improvement strategy is successful in modifying behaviour and enabling almost all students to maintain their learning and gain qualifications. The school clearly identifies the different learning needs of its students and is developing improved academic monitoring and target setting that is beginning to help students make better progress.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and enables students to make good progress. Teaching is effective in all subjects and reflects the high level of staff commitment and consistent practice. Almost all staff demonstrate good class and behaviour management that enables learning to take place. Relationships with students are often very good and, though teachers continue to develop more varied materials they have a good understanding of the learning needs of different students, including the gifted and talented and those for whom English is an additional language. Students' learning is also helped by the good specialist knowledge and effective lesson planning of most staff. Good assessment practice has yet to be developed across a number of subject areas.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good and is well supported by the good and developing leadership team. School governance has considerable strengths though is deemed to be unsatisfactory while significant breaches of statutory requirements remain.

The leadership of the long serving headteacher has been highly effective and central to the development of what is now a good school with the potential to be very good. This leadership has provided clear direction and, with the help of senior and middle managers has established good management systems and created a highly committed workforce of teachers and other staff dedicated to further school improvement. The governors are supportive and have a very good understanding of their role, though they have yet to address the statutory breaches for RE and the daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are not actively involved in all of the school activities but are very positive about the its work and appreciate the good progress made by their children. The school has gained considerably in popularity and a number of parents in the parents' meeting were surprised and greatly encouraged by the high quality of school provision. Students in the main school and sixth form are equally positive about the school, particularly the help and support they receive. They had few if any concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the developing assessment and target setting procedures are fully implemented in all curriculum areas, particularly those aspects that help students improve.

- Review and broaden the 11-19 curriculum to better meet the needs of all students who would make better progress with different learning and assessment strategies.
- Strengthen and more consciously co-ordinate the school literacy strategy, so important for those students whose weaker reading and writing skills act as a barrier for higher attainment.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that there is sufficient time to properly cover the programme of study for RE.
- Continue to make efforts to provide for a daily active of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT KINGSMEAD SCHOOL

The sixth form has 166 students. It is smaller than most other sixth forms but has increased in size since the last inspection. Approximately 50 per cent of students from Year 11 progress into the sixth form. A small proportion of students join the school at the beginning of Year 12. There are forty-four students with special educational needs. Eighty-six students are of minority ethnic origin. Forty-seven students do not have English as their first language. At the end of Year 13, 71 per cent of students continue their education at university. Provision in the sixth form is enhanced by a partnership with local schools.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is both effective and cost-effective. Students attained results that were below the national average in 2003 but their achievement was satisfactory in relation to their standards on entry. There is a clear trend to academic improvement. The school offers a range of 19 courses leading to AS-level, 21 leading to A-level, five vocational courses and two GCSE courses. It provides a very positive environment for the personal and social development of students, and works very hard to build an environment that is conducive to learning. Teaching in the sixth form is good and students are offered very high levels of support. The school is ambitious for its students and is continually developing the programme of educational opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The sixth form is very well led and very effectively managed.
- Good teaching that is characterised by high levels of expertise and commitment.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the sixth form: they value the structured approach that underpins sixth form life and benefit from very good relationships with their teachers.
- Very good levels of individual support ensure that students are fully integrated in the sixth form community and learn to maximise their potential.
- Students receive excellent levels of guidance in preparation for university entry.
- A very good range of enrichment activities and community partnerships are designed to promote a culture of high expectations.
- The current range of courses does not meet the needs of all students.
- Requirements for RE are not met.
- As the sixth form increases in size, study accommodation is becoming limited.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in terms of improving standards, though RE requirements are still not met.

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	English: Satisfactory. Most students begin the Advanced level courses from a modest base but achieve well because of the consistently good quality teaching and learning and intensive support.
Mathematics	Good. Many students start the A-level course with lower than average

	standards but achieve well because of the good, well-planned teaching they receive.
Science	Chemistry: Satisfactory. Teachers with good subject knowledge show commitment to teaching students who want to learn.
Information and communication technology	Good. Standards are satisfactory and students achieve well through good teaching. Students carry out realistic projects that link well with local organisations.
Humanities	Geography: Good. Teachers possess strong subject knowledge and are responsive to students. Sociology: Very good. Students achieve well because of imaginative and challenging teaching. The department is very well led and managed.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Graphics: Good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and convey skills and knowledge to students in an effective way. Although few higher ability students take the course, they often produce high quality coursework.
Visual and performing arts and media	Performance Studies: Very good. Students achieve well, especially in performance on this broad expressive arts course. Teaching is very good, and characterised by enthusiasm and subject knowledge. Media Studies: Very good. Students achieve very well with standards above national average because of very good teaching. Art and Design: Good. Teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement. The courses benefit from good leadership and effective management. Students have very positive views of the subject.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical education was sampled.
Business	Good. Students achieve well in both economics and business studies. Students respond well to good and demanding teaching.

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'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Sixth form managers provide a very good quality of support and guidance in Years 12 and 13. Information about sixth form courses is very good. An ambitious induction programme promotes a culture of high expectations. Students benefit from a very good extra-curricular programme, which gives emphasis to the arts, music and sports. The quality of advice offered in preparation for university entry is excellent, and students are very well informed about careers opportunities. There are very good reporting and review procedures.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The new head of sixth form is a dedicated professional. She leads a committed team of sixth form managers. Communications with teachers and students are very good. Day-to-day administration is most effective.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

One hundred and twelve students responded to the questionnaire. Discussion between inspectors and a significant number of sixth form students, both formal and informal, indicates that students are very positive about the sixth form, the quality of teaching and the level of all-round support they receive. The strengths they have identified are justified.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Students make good progress in most of their subjects and achieve well given their modest standards on entry. In some curriculum areas the students exceed national averages at GCSE level.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in most subject areas
- Those taking the optional GCSE courses, particularly in the media and performing arts, often do particularly well in the examinations.
- The clearer identification of gifted and talented students is helping them make better progress.
- Standards in RE are lower than they should be because of limited curriculum time.
- Students' weaker reading and writing skills slow efforts to further improve test and examination results.

Commentary

1. Students come to the school with clearly below average attainment in their primary school tests. Even so, students settle in quickly to the positive and supportive learning environment and make good progress across their different subjects. They are often stronger in their speaking and listening skills and use these effectively in drama activities as well as in other subjects such as citizenship that involve discussing ideas and values. Students are quickly inducted into the school's high expectations about behaviour and personal application and this is reflected in the care shown in presenting work. However, much of the written work shows weaknesses in basic skills in spelling and punctuation. This, together with less developed reading skills, slows progress in subjects where sound literacy is important, such as geography, science and ICT.
2. Progress in mathematics and science is good despite, in the case of mathematics, students entering with well below average data handling skills. These improve considerably over Years 7-9, as do students' number skills, which are used competently in most other subjects. In science, some students struggle with the technical language but develop their investigatory skills well.
3. In other subjects in Years 7-9, students steadily acquire a greater knowledge and understanding of most subjects areas, with particularly good progress in music where provision is very strong in practical music-making and the use of technology to support learning. Students similarly do well in drama, French, art and design and history, where the teaching is strong. Progress is barely satisfactory in some subjects where there is limited curriculum time, or in some aspects of design and technology where students struggle to improve skills having had very limited prior experience. The development of students' ICT skills is just about satisfactory, though some subjects make insufficient use of computers to enhance learning.
4. The table below compares the end of Year 9 test results for 2003 with those of the previous year (in brackets). It shows the progress the school has made in improving standards in the three core subjects, though these are below the average for all schools nationally. What the table is unable to show is how well the students performed against their primary school test scores. In this respect the students did particularly well in science and mathematics and

made satisfactory progress in English. Standards seen in the inspection show a continuing improvement.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.4 (30.6)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.9 (31.9)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.1 (31.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 228 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The table below shows that overall standards continue to improve. The proportion of students gaining five grades A*-C remained about the same but more significantly the total proportion of students who completed their education and gained qualifications continued to improve. Almost all students left school with some qualifications and that proportion was higher than the national average. This looks to be a direct effect of the strategy of keeping young people in the education system through a very strong support system, alternatives to exclusion and improvements in attendance rates.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	36 (37)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (89)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (94)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	31.3 (30.4)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 218 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Positive though these trends are, they still underestimate the progress the school is making in raising standards. The students taking GCSE in 2003 were less strong in terms of their prior attainment and, when comparisons are made with schools with similar students, the Kingsmead students achieved well.
- Standards seen in the inspection broadly reflect the improving standards. The three core subjects of English, mathematics and science continue to make steady progress. In English, that rate of progress improves so that students achieve well by the end of Year 11 compared with their weaker literacy skills on entry to the school. Even so, students' less strong reading and writing continue to inhibit the overall improvement in standards. Students achieve well in mathematics and although standards are still below the national average they have sufficient numeracy skills to work effectively in other subject areas. Students achieve satisfactorily in science, though progress is not as good as that seen in earlier years.
- In the non-core subjects, including those chosen as options, students often achieve very well, with many reaching standards higher than the national average. These include business studies and business and computer studies courses where students have strong ICT skills, evident in their work on data analysis and presentation. Few students take modern foreign

languages such as French, German and Turkish but those that do gain above average results. Students perform particularly well in media studies, music and drama, often working at levels well above the national average. Most of the more successful GCSE courses are characterised by good and often very good teaching to well-motivated students who have specifically chosen their courses of study.

9. In almost all lessons, students behaved well and showed a positive attitude to learning. The effectiveness of the school in cultivating a positive and caring learning environment has been a key feature in the steady rise in academic standards. The school has been particularly successful in managing the behaviour of the potentially disaffected students. It has a variety of support measures including the behaviour improvement programme and the learning mentor scheme.
10. Students with special educational needs make good progress as a result of that effective support and, in one case, a student with behavioural difficulties was able to talk proudly about the work he had produced on 'The past, present and future' with the help of his learning mentor. SEN students, as with others, have their progress carefully monitored and regularly reviewed.
11. The school has a considerable proportion of students for whom English is their second or additional language, though only about twenty, including some refugees, are in their early stages of English. Those students are given specialist support, though not in all classes; nonetheless, they make good progress. There are small differences in attainment between different ethnic groups, though these are rarely related to language difficulties and numbers are too few to make generalisations.
12. The school clearly identifies students considered to be gifted and talented in the different subject areas and teachers monitor and support their progress. Not all subjects have developed a range of more challenging resources but the additional support and enhancements provided throughout the school enable most of those students to make good progress.

The sixth form

13. The overall results at A-level in 2002 and 2003 were significantly better than those of the previous four years and, as the table below shows, 84 per cent of students gained passes, with a quarter of students achieving high grades. Females have outperformed males every year for the last six years, These results are below national averages but represent satisfactory achievement, given that Kingsmead students tend to come from more modest socio-economic backgrounds and have below average GCSE results when they enter the sixth form. Many of the students go on to university and other higher education.

Standards in GCE A/AS-level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	84.1 (66.1)	90.5 (91.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	24.4 (15.8)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per student	198 (157)	253 (254)

There were 56 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

14. In lessons observed and in the samples of work scrutinized, overall achievement was at least satisfactory. Students' work shows a good response to teaching. In the majority of lessons observed, the standards reached by students were below national averages. However, in nearly nine out of ten lessons seen students made good or very good gains in learning.

15. There are 44 students with special educational needs in the sixth form. In addition, 47 students do not have English as a first language. Overall, these students make the same rate of progress as their peers.

16. Students' standards in literacy and communication skills are below national expectations. Standards in numeracy and ICT are in line with national expectations. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the independent use of ICT is good. Sixth form students make effective use of the Internet for research and independent learning.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Punctuality is satisfactory. Attendance has improved significantly and is now close to the national average but was unsatisfactory in the last reporting year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is below the national median, but is improving and unauthorised absence is above the national median. Most students arrive promptly and lessons start on time.
- Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. Exclusions are very low.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, though the school does not meet statutory requirements for daily collective worship.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the sixth form: they value the structured approach that underpins sixth form life and benefit from very good relationships with their teachers.

Commentary

17. The measures in force to promote good attendance, including daily parental contact, monitoring projects and use of student drama in assemblies, are very good and most parents ensure that their children attend regularly. As a result, attendance in the main school continues to improve and last term was bordering on satisfactory, though unauthorised absence is still too high, especially in Years 10 and 11. However, attendance remains unsatisfactory in the sixth form, with disappointingly high levels of unauthorised absence last term. Punctuality overall has improved since the last inspection. The procedures for recording lateness are good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3%	School data	2.2%
National data	7.2%	National data	1.1%

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

18. The friendly and purposeful atmosphere encourages in most students an enthusiasm to learn and to take part in the extra-curricular activities provided. The school's ethos and high expectations of students ensure that behaviour in the classroom and round the school is predominantly good or very good. Thanks to the strong measures to promote good behaviour, notably the inclusion centre, the behaviour improvement programme and the learning mentor unit, exclusions continue to reduce: from a high of 107 fixed-period and 12 permanent exclusions in 2000/2001 to 18 and zero last year. No ethnic group was excluded disproportionately.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	691	12	0
White – any other White background	311	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	28	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	7	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	18	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	105	2	0

19. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying, racism or other harassment, and students of all ages are wholly confident that the school deals immediately with any such untoward occurrences. The school is very successful in ensuring that all races and creeds work and mix well together. This leads to high quality relationships all round. Students' self-esteem is generally high. Those selected for interview with the inspection team were articulate and confident and were very supportive of the school and its positive effect on their lives. Answers to the student questionnaire were equally positive.
20. The staff handbook still does not contain an overarching policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, though the quality of provision is often very good. Spiritual provision has improved from poor at the last inspection to just about satisfactory. Assemblies are usually well planned, though they have little spiritual content and there is rarely any attempt to provide a daily act of collective worship. However, spiritual elements are built into some subject plans, notably history and some of the outside visits. The school is good at developing students' self-awareness, especially through very well targeted support from pastoral staff and the learning mentors. The school continues to provide very strong moral teaching and is highly successful at nurturing students' social development, which results in a happy, positive atmosphere. Adults make excellent role models. Students are clear about the difference between right and wrong and about the importance of respecting other people's feelings, values and beliefs in such a multi-cultural environment. Cultural, including multi-cultural, development was unsatisfactory at the last inspection, but is now very strong; it includes some fine murals and a huge and varied range of highly beneficial activities, both on- and off-site.

EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

The Behaviour Improvement Programme

This EIC funded project has brought about substantial improvements in attendance, behaviour and exclusion rates and involves a number of different strategies.

An experienced head of year, working innovatively with the on-site Educational Welfare Officer, has rapidly raised attendance to near national average levels. A deputy head through weekly liaison meetings about behaviour has created a shared commitment and high staff morale. Teamwork is very strong and the problem-solving approach of a skilled 'Inclusion Team' consisting of three front line behaviour specialists, year heads, learning mentors, EAL and SEN staff has had a major impact. Negative behaviour is addressed and dealt with swiftly. External exclusions have plummeted. Internal exclusion has become a greatly respected sanction. Seriously unacceptable behaviour means that students are escorted for several days to an 'Alternative Punishment Placement' at another secondary school (a reciprocal arrangement that is very successful).

A security officer patrols the corridors and open spaces to deter lesson truancy and potential intruders. The senior leadership team members act as "sleeping policemen" where there may be challenging groups or where inexperienced colleagues would benefit from a supportive presence. Most importantly, heads of year can now concentrate far more on academic progression, while teachers have come to recognise, and expect, far swifter support and intervention when students exceed the clear behaviour code. Students appreciate the calm learning environment that was evident throughout the inspection.

Sixth form

21. Students' attitudes to the school are very positive. 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. Students identified closely with the school and spoke very highly of the support they receive in the sixth form.
22. Although students are ambitious to succeed, many lack the diligence and personal study habits to do justice to their own abilities when they enter the sixth form. The school recognises the need to inculcate a strong work ethic and provides a very firm structure in the sixth form. In addition to providing an obligatory key skills course in Year 12, the school monitors the progress of each student very closely. Students are encouraged to work conscientiously, both at school and at home, and to assume responsibility for their own learning.
23. The very good levels of support offered by teachers help students to broaden their intellectual horizons and to enhance their personal learning skills. Very secure relationships lead to high levels of loyalty, openness and commitment. Students appreciate their school and value their own involvement in the process of sixth form education. There is a well above average number of students who are the first representatives of their families to enter a sixth form; and to aim for higher education.
24. The sixth form is a very well-organised area with a positive ethos and a worldly outlook. Much is done to extend the boundaries of knowledge and understanding through local and metropolitan links with schools, industry and higher education organisations.
25. The personal development of students is very good. Students may choose to assume responsibilities and to contribute to activities in the school at large. An opportunity exists to voice an opinion and to initiate ideas through the sixth form council. In addition to organising whole-school events, sixth formers are involved in a range of extra-curricular activities, including the mentoring of younger students. Students relate well to one another and work very co-operatively to organise events and activities. The sixth form is a friendly and forward-looking place, which generates optimism.

26. A good range of activities is open to students, especially in the domains of the arts and sports. Many sixth formers contribute to sports teams, drama productions, the school choir, concerts and other school events. Each year, sixth formers participate in a range of educational visits including regular theatre visits. Individual sixth form students currently represent Enfield, Middlesex, Hertfordshire and the UK in sports and music. Sixth form students provide good role models to other students by contributing enthusiastically to the life of the school.
27. Overall, the school prepares students effectively for entry to tertiary education. In 2003, 71 per cent of students gained a university place.
28. The school is working very hard to improve levels of attendance, which are below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. The school is particularly successful in creating a calm and very supportive learning environment in which the students, with their many different needs, can develop and flourish. The teachers and other staff know the students very well and increasingly use this to support learning and further improve achievement. The school has been a little cautious in developing the curriculum, though it does teach the current courses well, so that a high proportion of students are successful. The range of additional learning opportunities and other extra-curricular activities is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching in the school has continued to improve since the last inspection and is now good overall particularly so in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers as a whole are very committed and are consistent in their expectations of students' behaviour and level of application.
- Well-planned lessons by largely specialist teachers ensure that most students make good progress.
- Teachers and support staff know the students well and are largely successful in meeting their different needs.
- Good learning is made possible by the positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the students.
- While assessment practice is rarely unsatisfactory, some subjects have not developed the best practice being promoted across the school.
- ICT is underused to further enhance students' learning.

Commentary

29. A key feature of teaching is its consistency. In contrast to the last report, when one in ten lessons was considered unsatisfactory or poor, the lessons seen in the inspection were almost always sufficiently well planned and purposeful to ensure effective learning. In Years 7-11, two-thirds of teaching were good or better while in the sixth form, six out of every seven lessons were at least good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 190 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(1%)	31(16%)	98(52%)	57(30%)	1(0.5%)	1(0.5%)	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.

30. The teaching and non-teaching staff as a whole are consistent in the way they establish clear expectations about students' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They establish in students a largely positive attitude to learning and the effect of all this is to ensure that students come to lessons ready to co-operate and willing to learn. These staff expectations, combined with appropriate lesson planning, ensure that satisfactory learning takes place and students achieve at least as they should. Much of this was typified in a Year 11 careers-based lesson preparing personal statements. In what was a potentially challenging group, with students with particular learning and behavioural needs, the teacher's good knowledge of the class and skilled behaviour management enabled her to sustain a good learning pace in spite of problems with the computer network.
31. In practice, most lessons are good or better because teaching is well informed, not just about the subject content but also about students' learning styles, evident in music teaching, and examination technique, demonstrated in business studies teaching. This usually results in well-planned lessons with clear learning outcomes and varied activities that engage students and develop their knowledge and skills effectively. There is little teaching that is unsatisfactory; where it occurred in the inspection it was the result of temporary staff's lack of experience or a failure to ensure that insufficient learning took place in the lesson. Some teaching is not so effective because the learning schemes are not as challenging and interesting as they might be and even in many of the good lessons there is not enough emphasis on working at improving reading and writing skills given that these are comparatively weak for many students. ICT is well used in business studies to enhance learning and is developing in design and technology but more limited elsewhere.
32. In most lessons, teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of students. For example, in physical education teachers are well aware of students' physical needs and endeavour to ensure that they can participate fully. Teachers and learning support staff work closely to support students' needs and where this takes place, students with special educational needs or are at an early stage of learning English make good progress. This is more common in the core subjects such as English. Where additional support is not available, the weaker teachers do not always prepare alternative and more appropriate learning activities. Higher-attaining students, including those considered to be gifted and talented, are well challenged in the good lessons. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson the gifted and talented students followed extension activities once they had completed the core work,
33. There is some very good and, on occasion, excellent teaching in a number of subject areas including drama, music, media studies and modern foreign languages. In an excellent Year 7 drama lesson the high level of student achievement was made possible by a talented teacher who enthused the students through the carefully structured and varied activities that actively engaged them, considerably developed their techniques, enabled collaboration and developed oral skills.
34. The much more rigorous use of test and assessment data, together with the school's clear focus on improving assessment practice, is now having very positive effects. The work of the recently appointed assessment co-ordinator, as well as the much stronger role of the heads of year and tutors in the monitoring and target setting process, is beginning to make a

significant impact on students' progress. The use of marking and assessment in the different subject areas is patchier. They are best used in art and design, history and modern foreign languages, where they help students better understand how they can improve their work. This aspect is less well developed in other subjects including geography, RE, science and English. However, marking and assessment are rarely less than satisfactory and increasingly students have a better understanding of their progress towards National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. There is still some way to go before all subject teachers use assessment data to review their teaching and learning schemes. A very positive feature is the use of target setting managed by the year tutors, though the rather general targets would benefit from being complemented by more subject-based ones.

Sixth form

35. The overall standard of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. In over 80 per cent of the lessons observed, teaching and learning were good or better.
36. Teachers plan very well and set clear objectives for their students. They use their own very good subject expertise most effectively. Tasks are appropriate and provide very good opportunities for students to develop their independent learning and critical thinking skills.
37. Very good classroom relationships with groups of students underpin the best teaching seen in the sixth form. Students make good gains in knowledge and understanding because lessons provide them with the structure to assimilate and make sense of new information.
38. Teachers' high expectations of what students should achieve inspire students to increase their efforts. Homework is set regularly and well planned to extend and consolidate classroom learning. In most subject areas, assessment is used effectively to ensure that students are clear about the standard of their work and what they must do in order to improve their performance.
39. Teachers know their students very well and are eager for them to succeed. Where opportunities arise, they are generous in investing personal time to continue academic discussions outside lessons.
40. Based on the student questionnaire and inspectors' discussions with students, it is clear that students consider that teaching is both challenging and demanding. They particularly value the expertise of their teachers and their readiness to offer substantial individual help and advice.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum for students aged 11-14. The 11-19 curriculum, though appropriate and considerably enhanced by a wide range of learning support and enrichment, has missed opportunities to better meet the needs of some students. Weaknesses exist in the provision made for RE and ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of targeted learning support for all students enables them to make good progress.
- The media and performing arts subjects are popular because of the very good provision.
- There is an impressive range of extra-curricular activities that embrace the multi-cultural nature of the school.
- Provision for ICT and RE has weaknesses, particularly in RE, which does not meet legal requirements in the main school and sixth form.
- The 11-19 curriculum does not meet all students' needs and interests.

Commentary

41. In the main school the curriculum provided is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. A very good curriculum is provided in history with a broad and interesting range of topics. Business education provides a good range of courses that meet the needs of the students. Very good curricula are provided in physical education, media studies, art and design and music and these prove to be very popular and largely successful courses.
42. The school provides a very good range of enrichment opportunities for the students. These ensure that the curriculum engages and interests them. The provision made for students who have been identified as having special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language is good in most subjects but some shortcomings exist in modern languages and design and technology. The personal, social and health education elements of the PSHRE curriculum are good and include a suitable range of topics.
43. In most respects the curriculum prepares students well for the next stage in their education or employment. A suitable careers education and guidance programme is in place and several curriculum development initiatives focus on entry to university or further education.
44. Curriculum development and innovation are very good. Many initiatives have been undertaken which focus on meeting the needs of the students. Particularly noteworthy are those that have focused on improving behaviour and encouraging students to have higher expectations. These have contributed significantly to the standards students achieve. The school has received considerable recognition for its innovative work. For example, it has achieved Artsmark Silver for its work in the arts. The school provides excellent support for learning outside the school day; in addition to an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, opportunities are provided during holidays and at other times for students to improve the standard of their work in several subjects. Educational visits, both in the UK and abroad, relate well to the curriculum. Participation in sport, the arts and other activities is very good.
45. The school allocates insufficient time to religious education and therefore does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Though ICT is taught as a separate subject in Years 7 and 8, it is taught as part of geography in Year 9; this unusual arrangement is not entirely appropriate as some elements of the programme of study receive insufficient emphasis. Similarly, though students following business education courses in Years 10-13 have good access to ICT, others do not. Shortcomings exist in the 11-19 curriculum. Most courses are academic in nature, though most students achieve at least appropriately. Clearly a number of courses such as drama, media studies, business and performance studies provide more applied and practical experiences and capture the students' enthusiasm. However, the school has been cautious in broadening those 'applied' and vocational courses to meet the needs of all students. Participation in modern foreign languages is low in Years 10-13. Insufficient time is given to introducing the second modern foreign language in Year 9 with the result that below average numbers of students choose to study languages at GCSE or in the sixth form.
46. The school has been successful in largely sustaining a good teaching and non-teaching workforce that enables the curriculum to be developed effectively. It has also benefited from significant improvements in resources and accommodation in recent years.
47. Students with special educational needs are well known by staff. The In School Support Centre provides a very well resourced area where students are encouraged to be reflective about their work and behaviour. Staff from the support centre constantly monitor students to ensure they are achieving the best they can in the various subjects of the curriculum.

Sixth form

48. The curricular provision for the more able sixth form students is good. The selection of 19 AS and 21 A2 courses is well matched to the aspirations and needs of current students. Those students seeking vocational qualifications are less well provided for, and this may go some way to explaining why no more than 50 per cent of students moved into Year 12 from within the school in 2003. The school offers three AVCE and two GNVQ courses. In addition, two GCSE subjects are available in the sixth form. The new collegiate arrangements have extended the choice of subjects, and the diversity of syllabi, offered at AS-level and A-level.
49. Curricular provision is particularly good in business education, where students may select from a choice of economics at A-level or business AVCE or GNVQ.
50. All students in Year 12 follow a course in personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE), which adds breadth to their sixth form experience.
51. Good provision is made for the development of key skills. Students have the opportunity to refine their communication and use of number skills through their subject courses. The use of ICT is variable and is unsatisfactory in some subjects. However, students' independent work demonstrates that they are competent, autonomous users of ICT.
52. The school is ready to innovate in response to student demand, as illustrated by current planning for curriculum development. New vocational courses are to be introduced to complement existing provision.
53. Provision for moral, spiritual, social and cultural development through different subject areas, the tutorial programme, the PSHRE course and the full range of enrichment opportunities, including visiting speakers, is good.
54. A strength of the curriculum is the very good range of extra-curricular activities offered. The school places importance on participation in extra-curricular activities and works hard to extend and develop the quality of enrichment opportunities provided.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its students very well and ensures their health and safety. It provides very high levels of support, advice and guidance, which are firmly based on the monitoring of progress. The school consults students and acts on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Proper child protection measures are in place and the school has close and particularly effective relations with outside agencies.
- The school is kept very clean and good health and safety procedures are generally in place.
- Staff provide outstanding support, advice and guidance, based on very high quality tracking and reporting systems, whose information is regularly shared with parents.
- The school includes all students equally in its care provision and supports students from many diverse backgrounds very effectively.
- Sixth form students have excellent careers and higher education guidance.
- Students willingly accept the many opportunities offered to take on extra responsibility.
- The school consults students extensively and acts on their suggestions.

Commentary

55. Child protection practices are up to date and in line with those laid down by the local education authority. New staff are trained soon after arrival and the governing body is properly involved. Liaison with outside agencies is particularly close and effective. Students and staff work in a

clean environment, which is predominantly healthy, safe and secure. Good systems are in place for maintaining and reviewing health and safety practices and staff involved have been trained. All risks have been properly assessed and are reviewed annually; the nominated governor takes part in the termly inspection. Medical arrangements are good. Fire drills are carried out each term and access to the Internet is strictly controlled. Most equipment is regularly tested and a new internal programme to redress the lack of electrical equipment testing is now in place. There are also some concerns about machinery guards in the technology department. The school is currently taking action on one or two minor health and safety deficiencies noted during the inspection.

56. Students are very highly valued, whatever their background, and both they and their parents recognise that teachers treat them fairly and help under-performers and those who have difficulty in conforming. The induction arrangements for new students are very good. Students know they have excellent access to support and guidance. The school has made considerable strides since the last inspection in monitoring progress, which was then generally good. This support is now excellent; it focuses on close monitoring in at least three key areas: the academic tracking system; the weekly monitoring of subject targets set after academic review days, and of planners; heads of year formally assessing some lessons.
57. Staff all know their charges exceptionally well and there is always at least one member, often several, with whom students feel they can develop a thoroughly trusting relationship. The heads of year and others work hard to ensure that students develop socially in a positive and supportive context. The school actively promotes healthy eating and provides good quality restaurant facilities.

Sixth form

58. A wide range of opportunities is available for students to take responsibility. They willingly do so and it is noticeable how seriously sixth formers attend to their duties and provide support to others. The school has been consulting students for several years through the School and Year Councils and acts on their advice. All concerned see this consultation as worthwhile.
59. The school provides very good support and guidance for its students. The good relationships within the sixth form are a significant factor in the support the students receive. The advice given by teachers and tutors is based on substantial personal knowledge of each student. Students are kept well informed of their progress and find that their teachers, tutors and other sixth form managers are very accessible.
60. The school provides good information about the courses available in the sixth form. Students find the printed information covering sixth form subjects and courses clear, accurate and helpful.
61. The information and guidance received about higher education is excellent. An initiative within this is the provision of two annual workshops to guide students in applying for university entry and in seeking financial support. In addition, students take part in a range of higher education activities including visits to a local higher education and employment fair. Good links exist with several universities, with one local university being more generous in its entry requirements to encourage more of the school's students to continue to degree level. Individual students are supported through the school access fund to attend university open days. The school has a very well stocked library of higher education prospectuses. The quality of careers guidance is also very good. Individual students are able to gain work experience as part of their vocational course or, when appropriate, to support their career progress. The school maintains good levels of email contact with past students who are currently at university.
62. The school has good links with other schools, especially those in the collegiate group, and contributes actively to a significant number of wider partnerships. Links with local business and institutions of learning are very good.

63. Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are good. There are good procedures in place for monitoring their attendance and punctuality.
64. The level of individual support and guidance provided to students is a key strength of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the local community and other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress and about the school's activities.
- The large majority of parental responses to the questionnaire were positive about both the main school and the sixth form.
- The contribution of parents to promote students' learning is good.
- Links with the local community are extensive, varied and of great value to students.
- Links with other schools are very effective.

Commentary

65. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative and meet statutory requirements. There is a good half-termly newsletter, supported by high quality information about the curriculum. The school's Internet website is attractive and well thought-out. The termly and annual reports on students meet statutory requirements and give parents a lot of information on performance and attainment levels. The annual report, however, comprises only a tutor's summation of the year's work, not any detail of what students know, can do and understand in each subject. Nevertheless, almost all parents are happy with the progress information sent out. Strong features of the reporting system to parents are the academic review days, together with fast contact by the head of year with parents when a student's progress is either very good or causing concern. Parents agree that the school is good at consulting them on specific matters, including the latest revisions to the reporting system, and at taking their views into account. Parents' evenings are well organised and parents are generally happy that the school deals very effectively with concerns and complaints.
66. Parents contribute very well to their children's learning at school and at home and many keep a close eye on progress through the homework diary. Parents turn out in force to the school's social events, but at present no parent volunteers work in school and the friends' association is defunct.
67. Links with the community are very strong. The school is keen to expand its professional dialogue with the local education authority, though it uses it and other local academic organisations effectively as critical friends and for technical support.
68. Students in both the main school and the sixth form gain substantially from the school's huge range of cultural, artistic and sporting connections, including many activities involving the cultures of ethnic minorities and an on-line link with a school in Ghana. There are some good links with a major football club and with local industry; however, in spite of the school's efforts, it receives no industrial sponsorship and there are not enough local places for all students to receive work experience training. A minority of Year 10 students have the chance of doing a STAR taster course at a local college, but the school recognises that it needs to improve the range of contact with local colleges of further education to ensure that those colleges fully meet the needs of Kingsmead students. Students' sense of service to others is greatly

enhanced by sponsoring charities in this country and overseas and by giving of their own time to support the local community, such as working with autistic children.

69. Transfer arrangements for students moving from over 40 primary schools are as effective as can be expected, but inevitably it is difficult to maintain close links with such a large number. However, some close contacts, such as drama links and help with physical education training, have been developed with some of the nearer primaries. The school works closely with one neighbouring secondary school on pastoral care matters, particularly on arrangements to avoid exclusion, and is in touch with most of the others. The mechanisms for student transfer are very strong, particularly in the sixth form, where advice on the next stage of education and help with university entry do much to build students' confidence and to further their chances of acceptance by their first choice university.

Sixth form

70. Parents expressed very positive views about the education their children receive in the sixth form. Communications are good, as the school operates an open door policy. Meetings are held regularly and parents receive a good level of information about sixth form events, including a termly sixth form newsletter.
71. Students are very positive about the sixth form. They feel that they are very well taught and that the courses provided are stimulating. They appreciate the importance and impact of the excellent relationships within the sixth form. They are also very pleased with the level of individual help and encouragement they receive from their teachers. Overall, students value highly their experience in the sixth form.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the large and developing senior leadership team is establishing good management systems. The governors provide very good support, though governance is unsatisfactory because the school does not currently meet all its legal requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher has been central to the successful development of the school.
- The senior leadership team provides an effective mix of talent and experience and is establishing good management systems.
- The management of the pastoral system is particularly strong and contributes to the excellent care and support systems.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- The governors have a clear view of their role and provide very good support.
- Although there is emerging good practice, the school has been slower in establishing effective assessment systems at subject level.
- The governors have not ensured that the school sufficiently address the weaknesses in RE and the daily act of worship identified in the last inspection.

Commentary

72. The headteacher has been in post for nearly 15 years and his highly effective leadership has steadily transformed Kingsmead into a popular and increasingly successful school. As a talented teacher he has led from the front in creating a positive and inclusive school ethos that has done much to establish a very good foundation to raise educational standards. He is much appreciated by his colleagues for his clear leadership and his ability to balance his concerns for their welfare, reflected in recent workforce reforms, with a strong commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning and overall standards. Outside the school the

headteacher has used his involvement in local advisory and other groups to identify good practice and gain access to different initiatives that have been very important for the continuing development of the school. Many of these initiatives have helped the school make progress, though the school has shown greater caution in making more radical changes to the curriculum in both the main school and the sixth form.

73. In recent years, the headteacher has successfully grasped the opportunity to broaden his senior leadership team and it now contains an effective mix of well- established staff who have contributed well to the development of the school, together with a number of talented newer staff who have been able to introduce new ideas. For example, the school has established much better systems for collecting and analysing data on assessment and students' progress that have enabled it to much more closely monitor and improve students' performance. These systems are quite new and still developing and consequently their implementation by the subject leaders in some areas of the curriculum is still patchy.
74. The school has developed what is now an excellent care and support system and all those involved in the leadership of pastoral care have made a major contribution to the students' very good attitudes and behaviour, much improved attendance and very low exclusion rates.
75. Temporary arrangements are ensuring that the Learning Support Department is very well led during the absence of the Head of Department. The acting Head of Department has identified appropriate priorities for improvement and manages the resources of the department well.
76. A feature of the school has been the effective management of a number of different initiatives. These developments attract additional funding and by their piecemeal nature can make the School Improvement Plan look less coherent and focused. These initiatives relate to different aspects of the school and include the behaviour improvement programme (BIP), learning mentors, gifted and talented programmes, the inclusion unit and EAL support as well as the school involvement in Advanced Skills Teachers and different teacher training and staff development programmes. It is a measure of the effective management and co-ordination of these and other activities that they are all combining together well to accelerate the school's improving standards.
77. An area of management that has been considerably strengthened is that of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning as well as students' progress and results. Interestingly the school sharply distinguishes its performance management procedures from its monitoring and evaluation processes. The former make use of team leaders who are unconnected with to the management structure while the latter make use of the usual line manager accountability. Both systems are well used and clearly documented. It is a measure of the effectiveness of these systems and the high level of staff commitment to the school that teaching quality is consistently good, staff turnover for reasons other than career progression is modest and disciplinary procedures are rare.
78. The school employs a full-time bursar; the financial systems are satisfactory and the school follows best value procedures. The school accounts are audited every three years and the modest action points have been met. The school attracts considerable funding over and above its delegated budget and sixth form funding. This looks to be well used in terms of the effectiveness of provision. Sixth form funding just about covers the staffing and related sixth form expenditure so the sixth form does not represent a drain on main school provision. The table below shows a considerable amount carried forward, though most of this was for contracted building work that took place within four months of the end of the financial year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,296,097	Balance from previous year	£211,906
Total expenditure	3,303,904	Balance carried forward to the next	£204,099
Expenditure per student	3,220		

79. The governing body gives very good support as critical friends challenging the school's work. Governors meet regularly, either in full governors' meetings or as sub-committees, and there is a high level of accountability during these meetings. The school's own monitoring and findings are shared with the governors by departments making presentations about their work. The governors draw on a wide range of expertise; for instance, the staffing, financial and planning sub-committee benefits from having specialist and experienced members to advise the school.
80. Governors have a clear vision for the future development of the school and are very keen to ensure that it makes progress and develops services that will benefit the school and the wider community.
81. Governors are closely involved in the decision making for and preparation of the School Improvement Plan. Almost without exception, the governing body is very supportive.
82. Nevertheless, it does not have satisfactory arrangements to ensure that there is a daily act of collective of worship, or that the time allocation for religious education is met and that the subject is provided in Year 13. Governance is therefore unsatisfactory overall.

Sixth form

83. The senior leadership of the school provides a clear educational vision for the development of the sixth form, which is reflected in the commitment to raise standards and the drive to maximise educational opportunities.
84. The quality of leadership in the sixth form is very good. The sixth form management team, made up of the deputy headteacher, head of sixth, the deputy head of sixth and the sixth form tutors, ensure that daily administrative arrangements, systems and procedures work very well.
85. The sixth form is an 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 genuine interest in their students. Sixth form managers operate an open door policy and work hard to enhance the personal and social development of the students.
86. In the questionnaire, an overwhelming number of students said they would recommend the sixth form. Those students joining the school in Year 12 are provided with very good support. Induction arrangements are excellent; a residential programme aims to set high expectations and levels of challenge.
87. The school's strategies for monitoring and evaluating sixth form performance are good. A structured tutorial programme and extensive pastoral support are enhanced by the provision of an Aim Higher Co-ordinator and the sixth form mentor.

88. Overall, planning for change and improvement and evaluation of outcomes are effective in ensuring the development of the sixth form.
89. Funding is used in a cost-effective way to give students a good quality of teaching and educational experience.

Resources

90. Staffing arrangements are very good. Overall, the number of teachers is in good proportion to the number of sixth form students. The expertise and experience of teachers are very well suited to the demands of sixth form teaching. Teachers are deployed effectively to provide a balanced curriculum.
91. Students have some open plan common room space in the centre of the sixth form area. Study facilities are limited to the library, which in the light of growing numbers entering Year 12 is barely satisfactory. There are outline plans to create a new sixth form unit, which should greatly enhance current provision. Students have access to computers and the Internet for independent study. Overall, the sixth form is adequately resourced with learning materials.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- Students make very good progress by the time they reach the end of Year 11.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Assessment data are not yet used rigorously enough to drive up standards.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- Overall standards are rising but remain below national averages.
- The quality of writing is impeding students from gaining higher levels of attainment.

Commentary

92. Results in National Curriculum tests for students at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in 2003. The proportion of students attaining the higher levels increased in comparison with the 2002 figure but remained below the national average. In the GCSE examinations in English Language there was a slight increase in the proportion of students achieving Grades A* - C but the difference between the school's results and the national average widened. In English Literature, results in 2003 were very similar to those of 2002 but again the difference in comparison with national averages was greater.
93. Overall standards seen during the inspection were below those found nationally and reflect the test and examination results. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with national averages. Students are keen to answer questions and speak confidently. They listen carefully to instructions and to each other. Both boys and girls respond well in a range of oral contexts. By the end of Year 11 average-attaining students are able to introduce analogies into what they are saying in order to explain their ideas more clearly. Standards in reading are below average for most students. Students of average ability and below work hard to read aloud with basic accuracy but are limited in the amount of expression they can immediately bring to the reading. By the end of Year 11 students have a good understanding of the key features of literary genres and have enough skills to deal with more complex texts but their written responses do not show a sharp enough focus on language. Standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The majority of students of all ages and abilities take care with their presentation and their handwriting but weaknesses in the basic skills of spelling and punctuation persist. By the end of Year 9 higher-attaining students write more confidently in a range of styles and for a range of audiences. They are able to write critically about the work of the poet Benjamin Zephaniah and provide convincing answers to searching questions about the novel 'Animal Farm'. By Year 11 higher-attaining students incorporate a clear analysis of features of style and apt quotations when writing about 'The Road to Wigan Pier'.
94. Students make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 9. Their starting point on entry is below the national average, particularly in relation to their standards in reading and writing. Students with special educational needs make good progress across Years 7 to 9 as a result of teachers' awareness of their needs and the wide-ranging extra support they receive. There is evidence that the introduction of express groups for higher-attaining students in Year 9 is leading to more rapid progress by these students. Students make very good progress from

Year 9 to Year 11 and the express groups are having a positive effect on the achievements of all students by allowing for smaller teaching groups for average and lower-attaining students while providing a higher level of challenge for higher-attaining students.

95. Teaching overall is good. Teachers have clear aims for each lesson, which they explain to students. Lessons are well planned and structured so that students can make steady progress throughout the various stages of the lesson. Students respond well to their teachers' high expectations of behaviour by working conscientiously and showing interest. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed to provide support for students with learning difficulties or students for whom English is an additional language. In the better lessons, teachers clearly identify different tasks for lower and higher-attaining students and students are given more opportunities to make choices and be independent. In the best lessons, teachers use more probing questions to develop students' analytical skills. In some lessons, insufficient time is allowed for the final part of the lesson to allow students to reflect and evaluate their learning. There is a clear marking and assessment policy but this is not always consistently applied.
96. The recently appointed head of department is providing good leadership for this large department. She has high aspirations for the department and is giving a clear direction to staff. Her management is also good. Broad priorities for improvement are identified and linked to staff development and to the improvement priorities of the school. Processes for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department are satisfactory but not yet linked closely enough to specific targets for improvement in teaching and learning, the curriculum and for individual students. The head of department recognises the need to make more effective use of data.
97. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection report. In particular, there have been significant improvements to the English accommodation and to the library, which is now very well co-ordinated and organised. The new marking policy is leading to more discriminating marking as it incorporates progress, targets and rewards. Standards of writing continue to vary widely, with inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar inhibiting higher attainment by students.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

98. The National Literacy Strategy is incorporated into work in English and drama but is not fully implemented across the school. Teachers are generally aware of the need to emphasize key words for their subjects and these are sometimes displayed in classrooms. Specific objectives for literacy are rarely incorporated into the overall aims for the lessons. Some good practice is supporting the development of students' literacy skills, for example, in physical education, where speaking, listening and writing skills are developed through effective assessment practice. In one Year 9 design and technology lesson students were provided with a list of suitable descriptive words when evaluating different breads and the teacher provided good definitions of words which students were unsure of. Training for all staff has been provided but its application is inconsistent and its impact on raising standards of literacy is therefore limited. Not all departments use the library consistently well to support the development of students' reading skills.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good** with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average but improving in Years 7 to 9; they are above average in Years 10 and 11.
- Good teaching means that almost all students achieve well.
- Very good assessment systems mean that all students are always clear about expectations.

- Very good management is ensuring that teachers constantly aim to improve their performance.
- The number of students studying a modern foreign language in Years 10 to 13 is very low.
- Students are not developing ICT skills effectively.

Commentary

99. GCSE results in French, German and Turkish were above average in 2003, though the number of students entered for the examinations was well below national averages. However, students performed better in all three languages than in other subjects. Results have shown a strong rising trend since the last inspection.
100. In work seen during the inspection standards are below average in Years 7-9 but above average in Years 10 and 11. Standards in writing are close to average in Years 7-9. All students can produce extended written responses. In a Year 7 class, for example, all students, including those with special educational needs, were able to write three or four accurate sentences and to express opinions about spare time activities. Standards of writing are above average in Year 11. High-attaining and average students use a variety of tenses accurately and produce extended writing of good quality. There has been an improvement in oral skills since the last inspection. Many students speak with confidence and good pronunciation. Some have had little opportunity for oral work because of the lack of specialist teaching in the autumn term. In a minority of lessons oral practice is not thorough enough. Students do not develop effective ICT skills.
101. Students in all years achieve well. There is very good achievement by average and low-attaining students in Year 9 and by many students in Year 11. However, there is some underachievement by high-attaining students in Year 8, by a small number of native speakers in Year 11 and by those students in Years 7 to 9 who have had little effective teaching in the autumn term owing to staffing problems. Students with special educational needs and the majority of those students for whom English is an additional language achieve well because teachers know them well and work hard to meet their needs.
102. Teaching and learning are good overall with examples of very good teaching. Learning is never less than satisfactory for all students because they are always well motivated owing to the good relationships that exist in all classrooms. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives, have a good variety of activities and are well resourced. In many lessons starter activities are used effectively to revise previous learning. Students develop good listening skills because teachers use French and German extensively in lessons. Students are always clear about how well they are doing because teachers assess their progress very effectively and give them regular feedback of very good quality. In the best lessons they use targets very effectively to set high expectations, to which students respond very well, and always review learning at the end. In a minority of lessons expectations, particularly for high-attaining students, are not high enough.
103. Leadership is good. Management is very good with particularly good systems for evaluating the department's performance. Documentation is of very good quality. Not enough is being done by the school to encourage students to study a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11. Students do have enough time to study their second language. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very hard working team of enthusiastic teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and consequently teach well.
- The teachers' clear expectations and good relationships have helped develop positive attitudes of well-behaved students that enable effective learning to take place.
- Data are being used well to indicate appropriate learning styles for different groups of students, though this is still in its early stages.
- Good systems of monitoring and target setting do not always translate into effective ongoing assessment and feedback that helps students improve.

Commentary

104. Standards are below national averages but rising slowly. National test results for students in Year 7 indicate that they are much closer to the national average than in previous years. The 2003 national test results for Year 9 were below the national average for all schools. When compared with results in schools in a similar context and having students of similar prior attainment these results were very high; this indicates very good value added. GCSE results were also well below the national average but when students' prior attainment is considered the results were considerably better than expected. During the inspection there were no apparent differences between the standards of students from different backgrounds, boys and girls or those who have special educational needs.
105. Standards seen during the inspection confirm that students are making good progress because many are working at or above the national average levels of attainment. Standards seen in Year 9 have improved. Many students are working at expected levels, with the higher-attaining students achieving well in topics such as lengths of arcs of circles and areas of sectors that are at the highest level for students aged 14. Standards of work seen in Year 11 indicate that a few students are at the highest levels of attainment but there are many who are still close to the national average.
106. Achievement is good. Students enter the school with well below average standards and although they are still below by the age of 14 they do make better progress than would be expected. Students with special educational needs make appropriate achievement in line with their peers. For example, students enter the school with weak data handling skills. By the end of Year 9, higher-attaining students confidently analyse information, draw relevant conclusions, make predictions and present their results in a variety of different forms. All students develop their number skills and are confident in mental arithmetic.
107. Teaching is good and is the core factor in securing improvement. A majority of lessons seen were good or very good; even those judged satisfactory had good features. Teachers base their good lesson planning on a comprehensive scheme of work that includes timings for topics and references to the National Curriculum. Using well-chosen examples, teachers lead brisk question and answer sessions that include all students. Students could be more actively involved in some lessons that are largely teacher directed. After completing the core work for a lesson, gifted and talented students work on carefully chosen supplementary material. Students respond well to good teaching and this is another contribution to securing the good progress made. They answer questions with enthusiasm, are polite and work very hard. They are confident in their teachers and readily challenge answers to confirm their own understanding. One student politely challenged the units of a question, giving a correct reason for his answer; the teacher responded by admitting the error and praised the student for his observation.

108. Leadership and management of the department are good. The recently appointed head of department has successfully built upon a cohesive team of mutually supportive teachers. All teachers have a common desire to improve standards. Monitoring of teaching has increased the sharing of good practice, developing rising standards. Teachers use data very well, not only to monitor performance and set targets but also to analyse different groups of students to indicate the best teaching and learning strategies to use. Good use of resources supports learning but there are too few textbooks for use in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

109. Students' mathematical skills are sufficient for them to have access to the whole curriculum. Starters to mathematics lessons reinforce number and mental arithmetic skills as part of the National Numeracy Strategy. The mathematics department has undertaken an audit of skills across the curriculum and has produced a comprehensive booklet to guide other subject areas in their correct use of mathematical skills. However, there is no apparent overall co-ordinator of numeracy across the curriculum. There are good levels of skills involving graphs, charts and diagrams in science, and history uses and analyses time lines to good effect. Three-dimensional work in art supports development of ideas on perspective, ratio and proportion.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very positive team of well qualified and caring teachers with good classroom management skills.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- There are significantly rising standards in Years 7-9.
- Very able, effective, skilled and caring technical support staff.
- Literacy and numeracy strategies are insufficiently developed across the department.
- There are not enough differentiated approaches for weaker students.

Commentary

110. Results at the end of Year 9 are below the national average but there has been a rising trend over the last few years and standards are now close to the national average. When compared to that of similar schools, students' achievement is very good. By the end of Year 11, A*-C GCSE scores in double award science are below those gained nationally. Single award students achieve just above the national average. The proportion of students gaining A*-G grades in science is above the national figure. Most SEN and ethnic minority students perform similarly to other groups of students. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory.
111. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national expectation, though higher-attaining students have a stronger knowledge and understanding that are above average. Students in Years 8 and 9 show good investigatory skills but some have less secure spelling and grammar and understanding of technical terms. Students use ICT effectively for project work, evident in Internet research and presentation.
112. The achievement of students over Years 7-9 is very good. Students come to the school with science standards clearly below national expectation and make particularly good progress to perform significantly better in end of Year 9 tests compared with students in similar schools. Students with special educational needs make similar progress. Progress is less marked at GCSE level, though students make satisfactory progress and science continues to be the

stronger of the core subjects in terms of outcomes. Further gains by lower-attaining students are limited by their weaknesses in reading and writing and they do not always cope well with the learning materials. The very positive attitude of students to their work and the way they co-operate with each other and their teachers have a positive effect on learning and achievement. In all lessons observed attitudes and behaviour were always good.

113. Teaching overall is satisfactory but is good in Years 7-9, where teaching strategies are more effective in enabling students to make progress. Teachers have a very good command of the subject. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and use effective strategies that enable students to learn effectively including much out of lesson support such as revision lessons, booster classes and revision guides. Where teaching shows strengths, teaching materials are well planned and explanations given to students are clear. Student management and relationships with students are almost always good. Teachers show an awareness of pace of working and materials fit the time allocated. Lessons conclude with a review of learning. Less effective teaching lacks structure and variety and this slows learning. Given some students' weaker literacy, there is insufficient emphasis by some staff on key technical words while the excessive use of ill-matched text books, which students find less interesting and difficult to use, slows learning.
114. Overall leadership of the science department is good in the way the subject has progressed since the last inspection. The data-base has improved and is used for monitoring progress. Schemes of work are in place and there is a rolling programme of development. ICT provision has improved and is used extensively by teachers and students. Marking and teaching have been monitored and this monitoring is beginning to improve practice. The supportive and well qualified technical support team are full members of the department. The Advanced Skills Teacher and other staff are more actively developing good practice though literacy and numeracy strategies are in the early stages.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 7 and 8 helps students make satisfactory progress.
- Students have very good attitudes to their work and behave well.
- Standards are below average; there are too few planned lessons in Years 9 to 11 to ensure higher standards in different aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
- The number of computers available has significantly increased to be above average, but students' progress is held back by slow network connections.

Commentary

115. Year 9 assessments made in 2003 accurately showed students' National Curriculum levels to be well below average. Students have a weekly ICT lesson as part of geography in Year 9 and this is successful, but there are few planned lessons in other subjects. Skills in measurement and control are undeveloped, although lessons are being planned. Current students in Years 7 and 8 show an improving trend and are nearer average expectations. In Years 10 and 11, about a half of students take business and communication studies (BCS), a popular and successful course where results are above average, and students gain good competence in a variety of computer applications including desktop publishing, databases and spreadsheets. Current Year 11 students are expected to do equally well. The other students in Years 10 and 11 have satisfactory basic ICT skills, but in their other subjects do not practise the full range of ICT skills they will need in the future. By the end of Year 11, students' standards are below average overall, reflecting standards in most other subjects. There are good plans to begin ICT lessons for all in Years 9 to 11 next September.

116. Students use the computer network competently, carry out a fair amount of Internet research, and use a range of presentation software such as PowerPoint reasonably well. As all students are given the same tasks a few do not move on fast enough, although gifted and talented students readily help others. By the end of Year 11, achievement of students, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. It is good for students taking business and communication studies, over half of those in Years 10 and 11.
117. Teaching and learning are good overall, and teachers are well qualified, encouraging and supportive. Students with special educational needs learn well as they usually have additional support. Teachers use the new Key Stage 3 strategy materials effectively, and lessons are well planned, interesting and well paced, giving opportunities for all to succeed. Teachers mark work regularly and help students improve through demonstration and colourful guides to new routines such as creating web pages.
118. ICT is well led and managed. Since the last inspection, when ICT was weak, the school has improved provision by increasing the number of timetabled lessons and computers (now above the national average). Software installed and technical support is now good, although the network requires further upgrading to speed up connections.. Both specialist staff work well together to plan and manage courses and monitor ICT in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

119. The use of ICT by different subjects has yet to be fully developed but is improving and students themselves make appropriate use of ICT, notably in business studies, media studies, geography, history, design and technology and science. Increasingly, students use their home computers to do homework and GCSE coursework. They use the Internet safely in school for research but because broadband is not yet available, connections are slow, and this affects progress. Homework clubs are run after school. Teachers use their lap-tops and projection equipment well, and are beginning to effectively manage data on progress electronically, although further support and training are required.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- The good teaching helps students achieve well.
- Fieldwork enhances what is learnt in the classroom.
- Resources are used effectively and provide a range of activities.
- Further development of ICT is needed to support learning and research.
- Students' work is not always tailored to meet the needs of some abilities.

Commentary

120. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 were below national averages. Students' achievement relative to national standards at the end of Year 9 shows some good improvement. Students are making some progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills; this was particularly evident in a Year 11 lesson on employment structures. Girls work at a slightly higher level than the boys and the latter would benefit from a review of the suitability of the work they are given.

121. At the end of Year 9 students achieve appropriate standards, though they are not always made to work as well as they could. In the GCSE course, students make better progress and achievement is good because of good teaching and a greater commitment on the part of students. Students with special educational needs and those with additional language needs are also achieving appropriately in spite of a lack of additional classroom support.
122. The quality of teaching in geography overall is good. A strong feature of the teaching is the challenging start to each lesson followed by the use of a wide range of resources, many specially prepared that engage student interest and enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills. This is helped by skilful questioning in many lessons, which addresses any lack of understanding by students and the good teacher-student relationships are reflected in the positive student attitudes and behaviour. Marking of students' work is regular though it lacks the detail that would help students further improve their understanding.
123. The leadership of geography is good. The head of department has a clear vision about how the subject should be developed. The strong teamwork is raising standards and fieldwork is helping to extend what is learnt in the classroom. The levels of resources have improved but textbooks are not necessarily well matched to the course levels. Progress since the last report has been satisfactory, with most outstanding issues successfully resolved.

History

The overall provision in history is **good** with very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very committed and demonstrate impressive levels of subject knowledge.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students' ability to achieve and provide lessons that are well planned, structured and paced.
- The department is very well led and managed; organisation is exemplary.
- Students work hard and demonstrate interest, though there are weaknesses in their capacity for independent learning.

Commentary

124. In 2003, GCSE results were below the national average, with 50 per cent of students attaining grades A*-C. However, in terms of relative performance history was one of the strongest subjects in the school. Girls performed better than boys. There has been good improvement at GCSE over the past four years, especially at the highest grades. In 2003, 9.5 per cent of students attained A* grades, which was well above average.
125. In Year 9, students use a wide range of sources and higher-attaining students produce well-structured extended writing. Students show a developing understanding of key aspects of history studied in class and good levels of empathy. However, overall standards are below average because many students lack the analytical ability to interpret evidence in depth or to make effective links. The majority of students have good listening and satisfactory oral skills, but overall writing skills are less assured. In Year 11, higher attaining students are able to compare and contrast sources effectively and reach balanced conclusions. The most able have a good understanding of causation and motivation and can explain how and why the past is interpreted in different ways. Lower-attaining students lack conceptual understanding and the ability to sustain arguments in writing. By the end of Year 11 an above average proportion of students remain dependent on their teachers for their learning.

126. Students arrive at the school with below average levels of literacy and few skills in history. They are achieving well at both key stages because of the highly focused teaching of basic skills, which is linked to the provision of teaching materials that cater for individual needs, including those of higher attainers. Students with SEN and English as an additional language are making the same rates of progress as their peers.
127. Teaching is a key strength of the department. Teachers are very confident in their possession of subject knowledge and exposition is clear and precise. Well-planned, paced and structured lessons enable students to make good gains in historical knowledge and understanding. Good emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and critical thinking skills. Good quality resources are used to stimulate interest. Secure relationships contribute to very good levels of classroom management. Students have positive attitudes towards learning in class and work co-operatively. However, some inconsistencies are apparent in their approach to independent work. Students enjoy their history lessons, as reflected in the rising take-up rate at GCSE. Good use is made of national data to set targets and to compare the performance of different groups of students. There is a clear marking and assessment policy and teachers give good levels of oral and written feedback to students. However, there are omissions in terms of correcting errors in literacy.
128. The head of department provides highly effective leadership and management. Clear policies and procedures underpin a firm commitment to raise standards. Levels of co-operation are good as teachers work very hard and strive to maximise learning opportunities. New teachers benefit from the well-ordered character of the department. Lessons successfully incorporate a diversity of learning styles, strategies and activities that promote high expectations of achievement. Good schemes of work are in place and departmental materials show exemplary levels of organisation. Record keeping, tracking and monitoring policies are clearly defined. The department aims to provide good opportunities for the development of ICT skills. A very good range of historical visits serves to develop interest in history.
129. Since the last inspection there has been good progress in respect of students' attainment and achievement. There have also been significant advances in departmental management.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not meet the legal requirement to provide religious education for all students.
- Insufficient time is allocated to religious education to allow students to reach average standards.
- The good attitudes and behaviour of students contribute to their learning.
- The subject makes a significant contribution to students' literacy and especially to their oral communication.
- The department is well managed.

Commentary

130. Standards are below average because not enough time is allowed in the curriculum for religious education. Students at all levels are not able to progress in their knowledge and understanding of world faiths. In Years 7-9 students are unable to compare and contrast the three different religions they study because religious education is taught for only one term in each year. In Years 10 and 11 students look at moral issues but do not understand the religious dimension to the topics they study. Insufficient progress is made in the two key areas of learning about religion and learning from religion. As a result of this poor provision, even the highest-achieving students are not able to produce work at the expected standard. Few assessments are made of students' progress and there are no data for formal comparison.

131. The school is aware that provision for religious education does not meet legal requirements and intends to introduce a short GCSE course for all students in Years 10 and 11 from September.
132. Within the short time in which they study religious education students' achievement is satisfactory. In Years 7-9 students gain an understanding of some of the key elements of Christian, Muslim and Hindu teaching. Year 10 and 11 students discuss and debate a range of moral issues and develop some understanding of moral dilemmas. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue also make satisfactory progress. Students are interested in their work and behave well. They are often articulate in discussion and listen to each other, and to the teachers, with respect. The main barriers which restrict achievement are the lack of time allowed for the subject and the lack of any specialist teacher.
133. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons carefully, ensuring that maximum use is made of the limited time available. Relationships with students are good and classes are well managed. Many teachers encourage good literacy development by insistence on specialist vocabulary and by providing opportunities for oral communication in discussion and debate. Some teachers use a variety of creative and effective strategies. Learning is limited when there is too great a reliance on worksheets and where teachers' knowledge is insecure. New assessment procedures are being developed but the present arrangements are unsatisfactory. Most students have no idea how well they are doing in relation to national standards. Homework is rarely set and assessments at the end of Year 9 are not accurate because too little work has been done and too many non-specialist teachers are involved.
134. There is a lack of a specialist to provide subject leadership but the management of the current provision is otherwise good. The head of department provides enthusiastic and effective support for the 12 non-specialists involved in teaching religious education and ensures consistency. Good practice is shared. The department is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses and there is good planning for the future.
135. Since the last inspection there has been some progress in the use of ICT and in assessment, but as the legal requirements have still not been met, improvement is unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment at GCSE and at the end of Year 9 are well below the national average.
- Teaching staff are dedicated, well qualified, and hard working and they are managed effectively.
- Some aspects of work in Years 7-9 involve work that is too easy for students.
- Many students in years 11-13 produce examination course work which is of high quality.
- Not enough emphasis is given to the use of design and make assignments, and to the investigation of existing products.
- The departments are generally well resourced, but there are deficiencies in food technology.

Commentary

136. Examination results for the 2003 GCSE examinations were well below national standards, with less than a quarter of those entered gaining grades A*-C. The results in 2003 showed a decline when compared with those for 2002. Girls tend to achieve higher standards than

boys, but there were no significant differences in standards achieved by students with special educational needs, or those from minority ethnic groups. Standards at the end of Year 9, as shown by the teacher assessments, are well below average.

137. Standards of work seen during the inspection were in line with national expectations in Years 10 and 11, and in all the specialist areas significant numbers of students have worked hard to produce good quality course work. Practical work is generally of higher quality than planning and designing. Few higher ability students take examination courses in design and technology and this contributes to the low standards. In Years 7-9, the standard of work seen, in both designing and making, is below national standards, although standards in food and textiles are higher than in resistant materials and graphics. In Year 7, work in resistant materials lacks care and accuracy, and overall, students have not generally transferred their skills and knowledge in graphics to other areas of the subject. In all years there are no significant differences in the quality of work produced by boys and girls, or in that produced by students with special educational needs, or those from minority ethnic groups. However, a few students are at an early stage of learning English, and, because of a lack of support, these students make limited progress.
138. Achievement is good for the majority of students in Years 10-11 in all material areas where many students have clearly worked hard to produce work of a good standard, and this represents satisfactory progress. In Years 7-9 achievement is satisfactory for the majority of students, but higher ability students are not challenged sufficiently by the nature of the work set. Students come into the school with below average standards, owing to a lack of previous experience. At the end of Year 9, standards are well below average and progress in Years 7-9 is therefore unsatisfactory, although some individual students do achieve well. Low achievement is linked to the difficulties which the school has had in recruiting well-qualified and committed staff in the recent past, but also to the lack of challenge for students of higher ability.
139. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and much teaching is good, especially in Years 10-11. Where teaching is good, staff use a range of different styles of teaching and take steps to ensure that students understand the subject matter by effective use of questions. Good teaching was seen in a Year 9 food technology lesson where students did a sensory analysis of different types of breads. A good range of learning activities was employed, with well-designed printed sheets used to guide students in their work. Good use is made in food and textiles of carefully structured support sheets to guide students' work, and these enhance learning. In two lessons, one with Year 10 students and one with Year 9 students, there was insufficient support for students who were at an early stage of learning English and this inhibited the learning of these students. Although the scheme of work includes planning for work to suit students of different ability, teaching rarely takes into account the needs of different students well enough. In Years 7-9, students of higher ability, including the most able, are not sufficiently challenged.
140. Overall, leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. Two separate departments, materials and graphics, and food and textiles, contribute to design and technology. This arrangement is generally effective. Both departments have suffered from difficulties in recent years in recruiting and retaining staff, and these difficulties have had a significant negative effect on standards and development in the subject, although both heads of department have worked hard to maintain progress. The existing scheme of work covers all major areas of the programme of study for the subject, but insufficient emphasis is given to the use of design and make assignments, and to the investigation of existing products. A high level of detail is given in the scheme of work for food and textiles and this provides appropriate support for staff new to the school. Planning for the use of ICT in Years 7-9 is good, but implementation is patchy at present owing to the newness of the equipment. Similar tasks are done in food and graphics at different times in Years 7-9, but few apparent links are made. In these years students do not appear to transfer graphic skills to other areas. The single one-hour lessons in Years 10-11 inhibit the type work which can be done in food technology and do

not allow students to learn from the work of their peers, or to develop effective evaluation skills. Recent refurbishment of the resistant materials and graphics areas has provided very good facilities. Currently, the food and textiles rooms are shabby, although refurbishment is planned in the near future.

141. Overall, improvement since last the inspection is satisfactory. There is a better balance of practical work, but currently there is too much emphasis on making, when compared to designing. The quality of teaching and learning is much improved, as are the attitudes of the students. Coverage of the programme of study is now much better, and there is appropriate use of ICT.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Media studies was sampled as one of the popular GCSE option subjects; the teaching seen was very good and students were making good progress. A fuller sampling of **drama** was also carried out and a more detailed summary is given below.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well and reach standards in line with what is nationally expected.
- Assessment practice is very good.
- Teaching is good and enables students develop a wider understanding of artists and art movements in different cultures.
- ICT is little used either creatively or as a means of communication.

Commentary

142. GCSE results, having risen steadily to above average in 2002, declined in 2003 to below average. This was attributable to a few candidates failing to complete their coursework. Though girls' performance is better than boys', the gap is narrower than it is nationally.
143. Overall standards are in line with the national average. By Year 9, standards are in line with the national average; students have a secure knowledge and understanding of several artists and art movements and their work shows sound observational skills. Standards are average in Years 10 and 11. Students have a secure knowledge and understanding of Japanese and African art and use the style of artists such as Utamaro confidently.
144. Achievement is good. Students join Year 7 with below average standards; they make good progress in their practical and observational skills. Their knowledge and understanding are mostly good, though further scope exists for the more able students to undertake more independent research. Students with special educational needs or who are at the early stages of learning English achieve well owing to the close support teaching provides.
145. Teaching and learning are good. The main strengths are thorough lesson planning and very effective behaviour management. The quiet businesslike atmosphere in most lessons ensures good concentration. The practical aspects of most lessons are well organised and enable students to make rapid progress. Regular reminders of objectives help refocus students. Literacy is strongly emphasised; students learn the correct terms and apply them correctly. Teaching sometimes provides insufficient opportunities for students to develop their own ideas. The best lessons end with a plenary, in which students recap what they have learned, are reminded of the homework and informed as to the content of the next lesson.

146. The department benefits from good leadership and effective management. Suitable planning, policies and schemes of work are in place. Resources, accommodation and staffing are good. Teachers have attended relevant continuing professional development. The curriculum content is good and has some very positive features such as the focus on non-Western art. The current emphasis is on individual artists, movements or countries rather than themes covering a broader sweep of art history. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of extra-curricular activities, including artists in residence and holiday courses. ICT is not used well enough either creatively or as a means of presentation. Assessment arrangements are very good; students know their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve.
147. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Students' skills have improved. The quality of teaching is much better, sufficient emphasis is now placed on developing students' knowledge and understanding and students have more positive attitudes to the subject.

Drama

148. Standards of work seen in the limited observation were very good, showing a high level of achievement by students of all abilities. GCSE results were well above average in 2003. Students work very well together and show a good understanding of a range of aspects of drama. Students are able to evaluate both their own performance and that of others.
149. The quality of teaching is very good overall and sometimes excellent. This is because lessons are carefully structured to ensure that students of all abilities make very good progress, teachers have high expectations of students and teachers provide very good demonstrations of the standard of work expected. Teachers ensure that students are clear about what they are learning and provide continuous reinforcement of the key learning points as lessons progress. Drama lessons also make a significant contribution to students' literacy development by introducing and explaining difficult new words as well as promoting very high standards of speaking and listening. The relationships between teachers and students are very good.
150. The head of department provides very good leadership for a group of highly committed and talented staff who work well together to provide a very good range of opportunities for drama outside lessons, through drama clubs, regular school productions and links with Hampstead Theatre.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching reflects high levels of technical expertise and subject knowledge.
- Students are highly motivated by a curriculum in which appropriate resources enable flexible working and the acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge.
- The school makes a significant investment in instrumental and vocal provision for students to enhance the development of performing skills.
- Approaches to short-term planning are not consistent across the department, and do not take sufficient account of 'Assessment for Learning', although much progress has been made in student tracking.
- Current differentiation in planning provision for gifted and talented pupils does not always enable students to achieve the highest grades.
- Currently, the head of department does not have sufficient time to liaise with and monitor the work of visiting teachers.

Commentary

151. GCSE Standards in 2003 were broadly in line with national standards. This is an improvement on 2002, and reflects the impact of improvements to the curriculum.
152. Standards seen in the inspection were overall in line with the national average, with specific examples of work in both key stages in which standards were higher, including one instrumental lesson. Students show the ability to draw on prior learning. Students maintain notebooks well and absorb vocabulary appropriate to the topic. For gifted and talented pupils, standards could be higher if learning tasks were more individually tailored. The use of keyboards with sequencing programmes and the Cubasis software on networked computers results in pupils in all years having a good understanding of processes of developing, analysing and evaluating compositions.
153. Achievement in music is good. Levels of achievement of students on entry to the school are below expectation, reflecting the low percentage of pupils with significant instrumental or vocal experience. Pupils in Year 7-9 make good progress and demonstrate good levels of achievement by the end of the key stage. This reflects the effort of the school to engage pupils in instrumental and vocal development, and the application of music technology to support learning. Pupils in Years 10-11 work energetically, responding well to creative tasks. In all year groups, students with SEN achieve well. Overall, music technology enables students to work in styles and idioms which are relevant to their cultural and instrumental preferences. Improved achievement is directly related to better concentration and improved motivation to do well. Music attracts a higher percentage entry of the school's cohort than the national average.
154. Teaching and learning in music are very good. Teachers have well-developed and complementary skills. The pace and focus of teaching are rooted in a good understanding of how students learn. Units are broadly based, and devised to give an appropriate depth and breadth of musical experience, focusing on the acquisition of skills in performing, composing and listening. The curriculum has undergone radical review in the past two years. As yet, short-term planning is not consistent across the department and does not take sufficient account of assessment for learning.
155. The department is well led, with responsibilities divided between two teachers. Student tracking and self-evaluation are developing well, linked to good understanding of teachers' expectations and the National Curriculum levels. The school makes considerable investment in provision of instrumental and vocal teaching, including support for gifted and talented students in music. However, the head of department does not have sufficient time or opportunity to monitor the work of the range of visiting teachers. The department is well resourced, and accommodation is of good quality. A programme of wider curricular opportunities is available at lunch-time and after school, and students are encouraged to participate in these performance groups or to access departmental resources outside the school day.
156. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in Years 10-11. Music technology, applied to all year groups, has resulted in an improvement of students' attitudes and better concentration. The quality of teaching is now very good overall, and provision for instrumental learning has been extended.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes and high participation rates of the students combined with the good teacher-student relationships set up a pleasant environment in which good learning takes place.
- All groups of students are well catered for.
- The wide range of activities available within lessons and as extra-curricular activities enhances the curricular experience of students.
- Data are not yet used to identify and target areas of improvement and the current assessment scheme has weaknesses.

Commentary

157. In 2003 students taking the GCSE course had results below the national average; however, students did better in physical education than in their other subjects and results are rising.
158. Standards in Year 9, as judged from lessons observed, are average when compared with national standards. Teacher Assessments in 2003 were lower than this, partially owing to a harsh application of the criteria. Students take part in a wide variety of activities and, although girls and boys have strengths in different areas overall, there is no significant difference. Students can and do give advice to their peers on ways of improving their work but rarely spontaneously. Standards in the core course at the end of Year 11 are above average compared to the standards expected at this level, although there are no national data to compare standards with. Standards of the current GCSE physical education group show theoretical work to be below average, with weak literacy skills impacting on students' work but practical skills in line with or above the national average. GCSE dance is a new subject for the school, with the first group due to take the examination in 2004. Standards of practical work in GCSE dance show the whole range from above average to those with skills below average.
159. Students enter the school with physical skills below expectations and by the end of Year 9 show work that is in line with the national expectation. This improvement represents good achievement. By the end of Year 11 students have physical skills that show a greater degree of tactical awareness and those following the newly introduced Junior Sports Leader Award course are developing the roles of coaches and umpires. Achievement is good. In the GCSE examinations most students attain predicted grades and results that are slightly better than in their other subjects, showing good achievement. All groups of students make similar progress.
160. The teaching of physical education is good. There is no significant difference between the teaching in Years 7-9 and in that of Years 10-11. The very good relationships between staff and students and amongst students themselves combined with the very good attitudes and high participation rates provide a positive environment in which good learning can take place and in which the students feel confident in trying out new ideas. All groups of students are included and the work provided gives a good challenge to them all. In lessons students work well in pairs and in groups, supporting each other in their work. The speaking and listening skills of students are developed in lessons and careful attention is paid to the accuracy of spelling in the GCSE theory work. Since the last inspection teaching has improved, with far more peer evaluation and student planning activities being encouraged, although in some lessons there is still scope for more. The wide breadth of activities provided and the very good extra-curricular activities available give good support to the learning.
161. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear vision for improvement; the staff are good role models and work as an effective team. The work with the

primary schools is already showing benefits in the confidence of students entering the school and their standards of work. The department does not yet analyse data to identify and focus on areas for improvement. The current assessment scheme is causing an artificial lowering of overall teacher assessments and students are not always aware of what is needed to raise their work to the next level. ICT is a developing area. Improvement since the last inspection is good, there have been a number of new developments and all issues identified in the last report have improved.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

The provision for business studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very positive.
- The breadth of curricular opportunities is very good.
- Students respond very positively to the opportunities to work independently.
- There is a very good pace to learning in all lessons.
- Teachers provide very good role models for all students.
- A very good use of ICT is made to support both teaching and learning.

Commentary

162. In 2002 standards in GCSE business studies were below the national average. However, results in 2003 show a significant improvement and were in line with national averages. Results for Business and Computer Systems in 2002 were in line with national averages for 2002 but in 2003 there was an improvement and results were above the national average. Boys perform better than girls. Results for GCSE economics in 2002 and 2003 were below the national averages.
163. Students in Years 10 and 11 are achieving well and most are making good progress. Most students are achieving results at GCSE which are higher than those predicted based upon their assessments at the end of Year 9. In lessons most students are achieving well because they are well motivated to succeed, have very positive attitudes and are well taught. Students' coursework assignments are produced to a high standard. They generally have a good knowledge and understanding of business concepts and use technical terms appropriately. In an economics lesson students demonstrated a good understanding of the factors affecting the supply of labour. Business ICT skills are very well developed. Students are able to construct spreadsheets and use data to construct graphical presentations for analysis. Students with special educational needs are making good progress, which is in line with other students. Similarly, students with English as an additional language make good progress. Higher-attaining students are achieving well and often exceed the targets set for them based on their prior attainment.
164. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and are skilled in teaching students examination techniques to ensure success. Teachers use the time in lessons very effectively and this, coupled with the very good pace of lessons, has a very positive impact on students' learning. The management of behaviour is very good, which results in teachers being able to teach and students being able to learn. Teachers set the task and students work diligently without the need for constant supervision. Students are able to work well independently and are very capable and confident in their use of ICT. Students' interest and commitment to learning are such that they respond very positively to working independently. The use of ICT to support both teaching and learning is very good. Teachers

and students are very competent in using ICT and a remarkable feature of all lessons is the ability of students to switch from one task to another almost seamlessly, eliminating any disruption to learning. Homework is regularly set and completed. The work is well marked and students are given very good guidance on how to improve their work.

165. The leadership and management provided by the acting head of department are good. Despite the absence of the head of department, the commitment of all members of the department to provide the best quality of education for all business studies students has been outstanding. It is a measure of the respect that members of the department have for the head of department that there is a strong desire by all members of the department to ensure that the very high standards that the head of department has set are maintained, despite her absence. Accommodation and resources, especially the resources for ICT, are very good. The range of business studies courses in Years 10 and 11 is very good and well chosen to meet the needs of individual students. There is a good range of educational visits, which make a positive contribution to the extra-curricular provision of the school. Examination results have improved since the last inspection, as has the quality of teaching and learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

166. The school provides PSHE within its modular programme, which also currently includes RE. Aspects of PSHE are also developed within tutor group time and assemblies and across other subjects. This provision meets the requirements for sex, personal relationships and drugs education as well as providing a means of delivering careers education and guidance. The impact of this provision is good. Citizenship has more recently been developed within the above curriculum framework.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is good.
- Curricular requirements have been addressed robustly.
- Many other subjects contribute methodically to provision.
- Timetabling arrangements do not guarantee that teachers have subject expertise.
- Whole-class discussions too often revolve around a small minority of students.

Commentary

167. Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Throughout the school students have a developing understanding of key elements of the course, such as democracy and rights and responsibilities. In their folders, students in Year 7 have produced sound work on "Being a good citizen". The more able are fully extended and produce imaginative writing in stories such as "The boy who liked to bully". Some students in Year 8 produce, for example, detailed descriptions of a Youth Court and others are preparing a letter to Enfield Council to nominate facilities that should be available without charge. In a good Year 9 lesson, all students – whatever their ability – were able to compose considered statements about UNICEF based on precise information. The teacher had prepared individual envelopes with challenging activities matched to their abilities. There is ample evidence of improvement in decision-making skills in Year 7-9. However, activities to promote enquiry and participation have yet to be fully embedded.
168. Students in Year 10 and 11 generally show a mature approach to their work, although some are happy to remain passive, allowing others to dominate whole-class discussions. This hinders progress, since discussion is a key element of provision. In small groups they are more forthcoming and share views much more readily. In Year 10 a wide-ranging debate

enabled many students to examine their own preconceptions about 'homelessness' when required to examine possible causes without resort to stereotyping. Students in Year 11 talk confidently about topics such as 'ethnic diversity' and 'tax evasion'. Achievement is underpinned by a broad range of activities that involve speaking and listening. Mock elections and organised debates are typical features throughout the course. In written work, some worksheets do not promote personal interpretation. This inhibits progress.

169. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers often produce their own resources. In a successful Year 11 lesson, the teacher had prepared an imaginative series of images to stimulate an informed debate about crime figures. All teachers work hard to support individuals in group work and writing tasks. However, too many lessons get off to a slow start. When engaging the whole class in discussion, superficial answers are accepted too readily. Exchanges are tentative and students are not required to substantiate their opinion. Response in lessons is generally positive, but when tasks are undemanding – such as colouring in a flag in a Year 7 class – a significant number soon lose interest and mess about. Marking of work is of variable quality – the best is very perceptive – but comments frequently concentrate on presentation rather than content.
170. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of department has built successfully on the solid framework she inherited. The curriculum is being developed constantly to cover all aspects of this emerging subject. Teamwork is a fundamental feature and a structure for sharing good practice has been established. Self assessment in Year 9 is being piloted and provides a sound model for future developments. The local MP has visited the school to talk to students and has taken some to Westminster. The School and Year Councils provide a useful forum for the exchange of views. A two-day project for students in Year 8 provided a valuable series of workshops on 'Crime and Safety Awareness' with the support of the local charity "Prison – Me? No Way". There is a clear commitment to enrich provision further. This will ensure that the school continues to build on the substantial progress made in the subject since the previous inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

171. In the inspection, ten 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.

172. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003

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	12	100%	92%	50%	42%	47	36.68
ARABIC	1	100%	96%	0	71%	17	41.7
BIOLOGY	13	85%	82%	23%	34%	28	31.42
CHEMISTRY	14	100%	86%	29%	40%	36	34.80
D & T FOOD TECHNOLOGY	5	40%	92%	0	40%	12	33.51

D & T GRAPHIC PRODUCT	10	60%	89%	10%	32%	23	33.51
ECONOMICS	9	89%	87%	33%	42%	32	32.31
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	14	57%	95%	0	35%	14	37.09
ENGLISH LITERATURE	13	62%	95%	0	35%	17	37.09
FILM STUDIES	2	100%	95%	100%	38%	60	40.00
FRENCH	6	100%	91%	25%	46%	55	37.19
GEOGRAPHY	15	80%	91%	27%	41%	36	36.97
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS	3	67%	90%	33%	44%	27	35.42
HISTORY	9	43%	93%	43%	41%	33	37.79
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	21	67%	78%	9%	19%	21	25.06
APPLIED MATHEMATICS	12	83%	80%	22%	42%	21	32.56
MEDIA STUDIES	16	100%	95%	69%	38%	51	37.27
PERFORMANCE STUDIES	9	100%	95%	56%	36%	44	38.10
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	10	60%	88%	0	27%	17	32.39
PHYSICS	6	100%	84%	50%	40%	38	34.17
PSYCHOLOGY	5	100%	82%	20%	31%	24	31.59
SOCIOLOGY	20	65%	85%	16%	34%	24	33.02
MUSIC	2	100%	92%	100%	40%	50	36.48
MODERN GREEK	4	75%	96%	50%	71%	35	41.70
TURKISH	1	100%	96%	100%	71%	60	41.70
BUSINESS STUDIES ADVANCED	24	92%	89.1%	42%	31.7%	38	35.4

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 & DESIGN (FINE ART)	13	85%	97%	39%	51%	75	86.39
BIOLOGY	6	100%	93%	34%	42%	67	78.88
CHEMISTRY	4	100%	95%	50%	53%	85	86.58

D&T FOOD TECHNOLOGY	2	100%	97%	0	43%	40	77.98
D&T PRODUCT DESIGN	1	100%	96%	0	37%	80	77.98
ECONOMICS	9	100%	97%	11%	55%	69	78.70
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	3	100%	97%	0	45%	60	84.53
ENGLISH LITERATURE	11	91%	97%	27%	45%	58	84.53
GEOGRAPHY	7	72%	98%	0	50%	48	86.14
HISTORY	6	100%	98%	50%	50%	87	86.23
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	13	100%	91%	23%	25%	68	65.22
MATHEMATICS	7	29%	95%	14%	59%	23	90.50
MEDIA STUDIES	5	100%	88%	0	48%	84	80.29
MUSIC	2	100%	97%	0	45%	60	82.58
PERFORMANCE STUDIES	7	100%	97%	58%	41%	97	NA
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	3	33%	95%	0	31%	20	74.33
PHYSICS	6	100%	94%	0	48%	53	82.91
PSYCHOLOGY	6	83%	94%	34%	39%	63	79.06
SOCIOLOGY	8	100%	96%	0	43%	68	81.99
TURKISH	1	100%	97%	100%	73%	100	92.00

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
LEISURE AND TOURISM	7	100%	NA	0	NA	0	NA
BUSINESS INTERMEDIATE	10	100%	NA	20%	NA	0	NA

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership and management of English in the sixth form is good and is helping to drive up standards.

- A committed team under the Advanced Skills Teacher, carefully plans the organisation of the courses, which means that students are clear about expectations.
- The thoroughness of marking and very good support are helping students to understand how they can improve their work.
- Students value their teachers' support and teaching, which they believe is making a big difference to their personal development.
- The induction work is too brief to help students make a smooth transition to the advanced courses and there are insufficient library books to support wider reading.

Commentary

173. Standards in the GCE A-level and AS-level courses in English and English literature improved significantly in 2003. Most students on either course gained a grade with one-third obtaining a higher grade in A2-level English literature. Whereas in previous years standards fell far short of the national average, there is now a rising trend in performance. Retention rates are lower than expected and most students do not continue their studies into Year 13. The provision is under review in order to match courses closely to students' ability. The department also provides the GCSE retake.
174. Standards seen were below average but are improving. Currently, Year 12 has more students within the higher ability range than in previous years. These students are attaining well in critical appraisal of literary and non-literary texts. Overall, achievement is satisfactory but there are pockets of underachievement among higher-attaining Year 13 students, who make less progress than expected. This is partly explained by the narrow base from which all students begin. Despite students not having an early start in the rich literary tradition, many achieve better than expected because of the good quality teaching, their motivation and diligence to their studies and the detailed marking of their work. The lower standards in recent years have been due to large numbers of students struggling to meet the academic rigour of the courses. Some have had attendance and personal difficulties outside the control of the department. There is now stability in staffing and the new course is well established.
175. There is little difference in the achievement of male and female students. Students reach satisfactory standards in using talk to explore their work, but there are too many passive learners and insufficient debate. Year 12 students begin to develop a critical voice through research and wider reading and in using linguistic and literary terminology confidently when applying the taught skills. In contrast, Year 13 students do not maintain an analytical approach when discussing the linguistic or literary features of a range of texts. Most of Year 12 students reach satisfactory standards in critical writing. Their writing is controlled and well structured. By Year 13, although students adopt a more evaluative approach, they do not sustain personal response and analysis. Minor flaws in writing also affect the quality of their work.
176. The teaching in English is good overall. Teachers know their subject well and use their knowledge of students' needs to plan a range of activities to increase their learning. The skills of critical analysis are well taught through group work and feedback. The well-structured approach to questioning, close reading and application ensures that students make progress. There is, however, a tendency to give students too much information. Students learn with commitment and diligence, paying particular attention to questioning and clear exposition. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and students are made aware of their progress through seminars, personal research and detailed and evaluative comments on their work.
177. The leadership and management of the department are good and the committed team is fully challenged to raise standards. The department benefits from the experience of an knowledgeable AST, who is organising the well planned course materials. The department is very inclusive and sensitively supports determined students with a low GCSE grade to successfully complete and gain a respectable A2-level grade. A good range of enrichment activities broadens students' grasp of the courses. Students place a very high value on their teachers' support as a contributory factor to their personal growth. There are, however, not

enough academic books to support wider reading. Furthermore, the induction programme is too brief to give them an insight into the demands of the courses.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

178. Students in the sixth form cope with the written work but the high literacy content of most subjects often hampers their progress. Standards of writing are below average and match results. The school provides communication skills as an additional course and qualification to support their learning. There is also a repeat course for students wishing to improve their GCSE grade in English. In science and mathematics, students have sufficient literacy skills to do advanced level work. Subjects such as English and history provide good support through structured worksheets and writing frames. In business studies, marking picks up grammatical errors but this is not done consistently in all subjects to help students improve their work, particularly those with special needs or those at the earlier stage of learning English. Students develop their reading skills through using ICT for research and project work in subjects such as art, English and business education. Overall, students achieve well in speaking and listening, argument and discussion. For instance, in business studies, they use good critical analysis when evaluating each other's work, and in art they make hypothetical and perceptive comments on the work of artists they are studying.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, well-planned teaching builds upon students' prior knowledge, although standards upon entry are lower than normal.
- Well-chosen modules are relevant to students and based upon the strengths of teachers.
- A good range of courses is available and there is informal support for students who do not study mathematics but require help with mathematics in other subjects.
- Students are hardworking, have very positive attitudes and achieve well, although not all gain high grades.

Commentary

179. Given the small numbers of students who study A-level mathematics, examination results cannot be compared with national figures. Individual achievements, although not always at the highest grades, are good. The school entry requirements for the A-level course are lower than would normally be expected. The result of this is that several students leave the course at an early stage because they find the work too difficult. Some students successfully re-sit their GCSE mathematics to gain a grade C. There is also a key skills programme for students who are following a vocational course in the sixth form.
180. Inspection evidence indicates that all students are working at an appropriate level for their course. Students following the A-level course show good perseverance and effort, and most gain grades that reflect their positive attitude. Students who have attained a grade B at Intermediate level generally find the A-level course beyond them. However, there are a few students starting from this level who can work confidently with the algebra, mechanics and statistics required for this course.
181. Teaching is good. Year 13 module examinations were taking place during the inspection and observation of Year 13 lessons was not therefore possible. However, the levels of achievement and scrutiny of the work show that teachers teach well and explain topics to students clearly. They ask open style questions that encourage students to discuss their work and to develop reasons for answers. Overall, the aspirations of students are high and personal targets are very challenging. The main weakness of the small numbers is the lack of challenging discussion between students.
182. Leadership and management of sixth form mathematics are good. Appropriate decisions concerning deployment of teachers ensure that students get the very best teaching of different topics. The department has successfully embraced all the recent changes in the A-level courses. There are sufficient resources to support learning and the use of computers is adequate.

Mathematics across the curriculum

183. Standards of students' mathematics are sufficient for them to have full access to their chosen sixth form courses. Although there is no formal course for students who require additional knowledge to support their choices, informal support is offered to any students who require extra help. The key skills course reinforces number work for students who are following GNVQ courses.

SCIENCE

Chemistry

Provision for chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well informed and supportive teachers help students develop their understanding.
- Learning is supported by good accommodation and a range of appropriate resources.
- Teachers make effective use of ICT in their lessons.
- Given students' weaker writing skills, there is insufficient attention to developing note taking in lessons and elsewhere.
- Oral assessment is not sufficiently reinforced with written guidance on how students can further improve.

Commentary

184. Results have been well below the national average in past years but have improved recently and are now below those nationally. Students come to the course with below average GCSE results for AS-level entry, though they make satisfactory progress.
185. Students in Year 13 have a good understanding of functional organic groups and can interpret spectrographic data. Folders include good, but brief, notes on equilibria. Experimental work shows data collection and analysis, but conclusions are sometimes missing. Many tests have been completed, but marking using written feedback is not evident. Marked examination board tests show good answers resulting from effective learning. Students make little use of extended writing to express understanding and to organise and consolidate ideas. Folders of weaker candidates would not be useful for revision purposes.
186. Year 12 students showed developing understanding of alkanes. They were able to recall their general formulae but needed help to construct a balanced equation of their combustion; this reflects the lower than average ability range of the group, who generally enter the course with C grade GCSEs. The ability levels impact on standards, which are currently averaging D/E grade. Folders of Year 12 students show appropriate worksheets and information sheets but there is very little descriptive work in folders, which contain chiefly worked examples and work sheets. Some notes are of poor quality. Coursework is well marked, showing corrections and comments on how to improve. Several pupils have full marks for practical aspects but analysis and evaluation are weak.
187. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers have a good understanding of chemistry and convey ideas well to students so helping them develop understanding. Teachers are committed to the students and this is reflected in the additional revision classes and readiness to support students' learning. The best practice makes good use of ICT and effective use of three dimensional models that enable students to better grasp the shapes of organic molecules. The less strong practice makes less effort to interest and involve students in their learning. Even so, students have a positive attitude and concentrate well. Year 12 students are still developing confidence, though those in Year 13 demonstrate greater initiative and a desire to succeed.
188. A database allows monitoring of departmental effectiveness, the progress of individual students and target setting. Students know their targets and current grades. The department policy of oral feedback on homework exercises is useful for giving rapid feedback on work. However, written feedback that students can refer to later is less evident, as is recording of progress in class work over time.

189. ICT has been well integrated into teaching, but less so for student learning, especially for data-logging. Students enjoy their work. They appreciate the extra time teachers give to run revision lessons and find them helpful. Homework develops independent learning and students have good texts. They have access to ICT through departmental, library or ITC suites and can make use of software for individual study. There is a good range of software on the school network and students are given CD ROMs for personal study.
190. Departmental management is satisfactory. The department has appropriate schemes of work and sufficient resources including those for ICT.
191. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The number of students studying A-level chemistry is small, but numbers are rising. A-level standards are beginning to rise and current work in Year 13 reflects that.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps students achieve well.
- Students have very good access to computer equipment and software.
- GCE, AVCE and key skills courses are very well managed.

Commentary

192. Standards are broadly average in A2 examinations by the end of Year 13, although they are above average in AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education). The AS-level results for the 18 students entered in 2003 were above national expectations for the proportion passing, although those gaining top A/B grades were in line with the national average and students' performance in other school subjects. All 13 of the A2 students passed, with three gaining top grades, in line with the national average. In the AVCE examination in 2002 eight of the 21 students entered gained top grades which is above average.
193. Students from all backgrounds achieved well from below average GCSE standards, where none had an ICT qualification. About a half of AVCE students made very good progress. The retention rate on ICT courses is very high because courses meet the needs of a wide variety of students, though there are currently none with special educational needs, nor any who are gifted and talented.
194. Students show very good attitudes though Year 12. AS-level students depend on their teacher more than usual because of their below average skills.
195. In lessons and work seen, current students in AS-level were below average but achieving satisfactorily overall. Year 13 GCE A level and AVCE students are working in line with course expectations and A2 students have made a good start to database project work involving good links with real end users, enabling students to solve problems in real situations.
196. Teaching and learning were good overall in the sample of five lessons seen on all courses. Teachers' very good subject expertise helped students consolidate learning of difficult new concepts such as normalisation. Students of all ethnic groups worked well together. Marking was detailed and constructive so students knew how to improve work. Relationships were well developed and teachers monitored students' progress well. Homework was well integrated with class work, so that students could learn new theory which, as preparation for AS and A2 examinations, was frequently tested in class.

197. Leadership and management are very good. The subject was not reported on in detail during the last inspection so improvement cannot be fully evaluated. However, sixth form provision in ICT has been successfully launched and provides a good basis for further development.

ICT across the curriculum

198. Students progressing into the sixth form from Year 11 have below average competence in computer skills because there are no timetabled lessons in ICT for a half of the Year 11 students. However, in most sixth form subjects students are making good progress in developing competence in a range of applications to extend work done in lessons, for example, by researching on the Internet and presenting coursework. Good examples of graphs were seen in several subjects such as mathematics and science. Students who would like support in Year 12 join key skills classes. ICT is used very well in business education, media studies and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

History was also sampled and the two very good lessons seen were clearly contributing to the students' very good progress.

Geography

Overall provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is leading to improved achievement.
- Students are encouraged to plan their own study programmes and to be critical of their work.
- Students are encouraged to become independent learners and to try to think originally.
- Students require resources that are beyond those held in school.

Commentary

199. In 2003, students' attainment was below national averages at A-level. Results show steady improvement, but there are still a number of students who receive unclassified grades. At AS-level results are similarly below national averages.

200. Inspection evidence shows that students are working at A-level below national expectations by the end of Year 13. The open access to the subject, while extending the knowledge of students, does have an effect on results as some students have weak literacy skills. Students are developing a good understanding of cause and effect in both physical and human geography. They demonstrate a willingness to analyse, interpret and evaluate well, and to produce an original piece of work. This was seen in a Year 13 lesson, where students, both in pairs and independently, were asked to produce a planning proposal for Haugesund in Norway, which had to pass the test of suitability and sustainability.

201. Achievement by the end of Year 13 is about satisfactory, but the diverse nature of the group makes it difficult for some students to achieve fully.

202. The quality of teaching is good. A strong feature is the wide range of resources used and the skilful questioning, which helps students to clarify and develop their thinking. The specialist teachers have secure subject knowledge. This, together with good planning and a good range of activities, is beginning to have an impact on results. Work is marked regularly and the good evaluative comments help students to make progress.

203. The leadership of geography is good. The head of department knows the direction the subject must take. He undertakes regular reviews and is developing strategies to improve the results. Fieldwork is helping to enhance what is learnt in the classroom, as is the use of computers for research. There is scope for the department to extend and broaden students' experience of geographical enquiry by making use of external resources.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative, challenging teaching results in good achievement.
- Excellently designed homework contributes to strong research skills.
- Inclusive leadership and teamwork has fashioned steadily rising standards.
- The subject is popular and students are keen.
- An elastic entry policy means that some students are destined to fail.

Commentary

204. Students' prior attainment is well below average. The GCSE results of some of those admitted to the AS-level course in Year 12 do not provide sufficient grounding for success. The remainder – that is, most students – make good progress and achieve well, particularly in Year 13, though AS and A-level results remain below average. The standard of work seen during the inspection was somewhat better, reflecting an improving trend, though still below average overall. The most talented students in Year 12 achieve less well. Research and enquiry skills are particularly well developed.

205. Teaching and learning are very good overall; and some lessons observed were outstanding. Common strengths include pace, challenge and rigour; linked threads between modules; and thorough, imaginative planning. An innovative range of resources is also very well used to consolidate understanding. Homework tasks are excellently designed and particularly effective in developing the skills of primary sociological research. The differentiation of tasks in Year 12 is weaker, not always providing sufficient challenge for the most talented. Assessment is used well: work is marked accurately with copious feedback on how to improve.

206. The teachers have good subject knowledge and work well as a team. Most students also collaborate well, for example in pair work, and work hard when tackling independent research and enquiry. They like the subject, speak highly of their teachers and have a good understanding of sociological concepts and terminology. Their teachers are committed and industrious, providing many additional lessons after school and in holidays as well as activities out of school such as visits to conferences and to meet examiners.

207. Results have improved steadily over the last five years and the subject is now one of the most popular in the sixth form. This good, consistent improvement is a tribute to the very good leadership and management of the subject. The head of department analyses and uses performance data well and has a very good appreciation of the department's strengths and weaknesses. Her leadership epitomises the inclusive ethos but with a sharp-edged focus on continuous betterment. The department's handbook and development plan are exemplary, typifying the emphasis on team building, though the team does not meet frequently enough to share outstanding practice, and guidance to those in Year 12 who are likely to fail is not firm enough.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

In addition to the focus subject below, the school also offers a food technology course at AS and A-level in the sixth form. One lesson was sampled. Standards in examinations are satisfactory, as was the standard of work in the sampled lesson, but few higher ability students follow the course. Teaching and learning in the lesson were good.

Provision for design and technology (graphics) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching staff are knowledgeable and well qualified, and work hard to develop students' skills and knowledge of the subject.
- Some students produce high quality coursework and make good use of ICT in their designing and making.
- Resources for graphics are good and these are used effectively by students.
- Few higher ability students take the subject in the sixth form, which results in generally low examination results.

Commentary

208. Standards in the AS and A-level examinations in 2003 were in line with national expectations, although grades attained were at the lower end of the scale. Standards were similar for all students entered. Standards of work seen during the inspection were also in line with national expectation. Several students have produced course work of a good standard and have used a range of graphical techniques in their work. In Year 13, all students are working on design briefs set by other people and therefore have to consider the needs of the client.
209. Achievement of students overall is good in both Years 12 and 13. High quality work was evident in all years, with good and relevant applications of ICT. Some students have made particularly creative use of graphics produced with the aid of a computer to enhance their work, but there are also high standards of hand produced graphics work, and particularly effective use of freehand sketching. Achievement of all students is similar, with no significant differences between boys and girls, or different groups. Few higher ability students take the course, and this is reflected in grades achieved.
210. Teaching and learning in graphics are good overall. A good range of teaching styles is evident and staff are skilled at demonstrating graphic techniques to the students. In one Year 12 lesson, effective use was made of group evaluation at the end of a lesson where students were developing rendering skills using felt markers. This enabled the students to see and learn from the work of other students in the group. Teaching is often characterised by good humour, which encourages students to be creative in a supportive environment. All students speak positively about the course and enjoy the work. Good use is made of the ICT facilities in the department and this aids the production of high quality coursework. Teachers regularly assess the coursework and the progress which students make. Helpful comments are a feature of this assessment and this enables students to improve their work.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

Overall, provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement.
- The courses benefit from good leadership and effective management.
- Students have very positive views of the courses.

Commentary

211. AS-level results were above the national average in 2003, having been below in 2002. A2 results were well above average in 2003, having been slightly below in 2002. With few GNVQ candidates, comparisons with national norms are unreliable.
212. Standards are in line with the national average overall. Students' AVCE work is observant and well composed and their three-dimensional work is supported by substantial research and development. It shows meaningful links to artists' work. Year 12 AS-level students are achieving average standards. Their life drawings are competent and they make suitable links with artists' work. Year 13 students are achieving above average standards. Their work shows a good knowledge and understanding of artists, such as Hopper and de Chirico, and they use media confidently. Their contextual studies work is very comprehensive. All students have considered the work of the same artists in their problem-solving unit rather than pursuing their own lines of enquiry.
213. Achievement is good overall. Some students join the AVCE course with modest prior attainment; they make good progress and achieve well. AS-level students make substantial gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding; and both AS and A2 students produce an impressive quantity of work. Challenging tasks, for example working in the style of artists such as Matisse, are vigorously tackled and good results are achieved.
214. Teaching is good and leads to good learning. The main strength of the teaching is the close support and guidance provided for each student. Good practical help ensures that students learn how to approach tasks. Regular feedback ensures that students have the confidence to proceed. Concentration is intense in most lessons. Teaching ensures that students persevere. For example in a Year 12 life-drawing lesson, many students were disappointed with their first attempt. However, the teacher gave a demonstration in which she provided useful tips such as "look at the model more than the drawing" and "pay attention to the negative shapes". Students heeded the advice and their work improved. Teaching is knowledgeable and probing. In a lesson on the work of Edward Hopper, students were led to make perceptive observations such as "All the figures seem to be looking at something that is happening outside the picture" and "Hopper's paintings have a silent atmosphere which is similar to de Chirico's surrealist paintings."
215. The courses benefit from good overall leadership and effective management. Teaching is efficiently co-ordinated. The courses meet students' needs well. Suitable enrichment opportunities are provided through visits to places such as art galleries and museums. Students are effectively introduced to careers in art and design. Assessment, staffing and accommodation are good.
216. Students have very positive views of the courses. They feel they receive sufficient advice and guidance and that the courses are meeting their expectations. They would all recommend the courses to others.

217. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good; progress and teaching are now good.

Media studies

Provision in media studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good; students learn quickly, particularly in Year 12.
- Leadership and management are very good with a clear focus on examination requirements.
- Recent results at AS-level were very good and most students are continuing to A-level.

Commentary

218. In the 2003 examinations, all students passed A-level and over two-thirds attained the top two grades at AS-level. Male and female students did equally well. The trend in results is rising and the number of students taking the subject has recently increased.

219. Standards seen during the inspection were above average. Although most students have studied media at GCSE and start the course with some practical and critical awareness of the subject, there is considerable variation in ability. In Year 12, students quickly learn the new terminology and how to adopt a critical approach and, for most, this results in very good achievement. All students have knowledge of more than one medium. Most develop high level technical skills and talk and write about their work with knowledge and enthusiasm. Their production work in video is occasionally outstanding. The very good 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. In their discussions and written analyses of text and visual material, students show an increasing awareness of cultural context. Higher-attaining students achieve very well in Year 13. They have a sharp and critical edge to their writing as they develop an understanding of the more complex ideas associated with media. Lower and average-attaining students are more reliant on teachers' help to apply media theory and they find the amount of wider reading challenging. However, relationships are good and students speak highly of the support they receive. The emphasis is on collaboration, where students feel supported by others, and this clearly maintains very good progress.

220. Teaching is very good and has many strengths. Teachers plan well and organise tasks to take into account the range of ability in a class. They encourage students to work to their strengths by choosing topics of particular interest for their independent studies. Teachers know the students well, evident in their caring personal guidance. Marking is thorough. By drafting and redrafting work, students achieve high quality finished essays.

221. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The course is efficiently managed, students' progress well monitored and results carefully analysed. Very good technical support enables students and teachers to use equipment with confidence.

222. 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.

Performance studies

Provision in performance studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm.
- Students are motivated, work productively and achieve very well in performance.
- The accommodation is excellent.
- Students' literacy weaknesses depress their standards in reading widely and constructing essays.

Commentary

223. Examination results were average in 2003 and ranged from grade A to E. Results vary from year to year but numbers are too small to make valid national comparisons. More female than male students take the subject and their results are generally higher. Performing Studies recruits well in Year 12 but numbers are often smaller in Year 13. Students find it difficult to demonstrate high standards in all three aspects of the subject – drama, dance and music. Students who continue over the two years demonstrate good achievement, particularly those who start the course with lower than average GCSE attainment.
224. Standards seen during the inspection were in general average, but above average in performance and practical work. A particular strength is the confidence students display in devising group performances. Their secure knowledge of drama techniques, practised well when they were younger in the school, enables them to convey subtle and abstract ideas effectively. Practical dance skills vary. In a lesson observed based on dance forms before 1980, students showed strengths in different aspects of movement. Musical requirements are closely linked to performance and drama and standards reached by students vary. Students quickly develop a trust in each other when negotiating ideas and this develops team building skills and very good relationships. The higher-attaining students have good conceptual understanding and this is reflected in the good quality of their preparation and written work. They help to raise the standards reached by others because collaboration is strongly encouraged by the teachers. Students develop a keen sense of audience. They seek and respect guidance from their teachers. The combination of teachers' high expectations and good mutual support is a major factor in the students' success. Lower-attaining students achieve well because teachers structure work in detail in both practical and written work. However, in spite of considerable efforts by teachers to promote wider reading and good planning and drafting of essays, students retain weaknesses in literacy that lower their standards.
225. All teaching seen was very good. Teachers' enthusiasm is contagious and inspires students in and beyond the classroom. Lesson objectives are challenging and very clear so that students know what they are aiming for. Tasks are set in manageable steps and this helps students consolidate and extend their learning. The immediate, constructive feedback from teachers leads to good advances in students' 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. Performances given by students in venues beyond the school generate good links with the community. There are many opportunities to visit the professional theatre. Accommodation in the drama studios is excellent with flexible space. Good technical support enables performances to be video recorded.
226. Leadership and management are very good. There is very effective collaboration between teachers in the three subjects. The department provides very good support for trainee teachers and has a shared determination to improve standards. A well-drafted handbook is helpful for the students, particularly in its guidance on improving literacy.

BUSINESS

The focus was on the Advanced level courses for business studies and economics. The GNVQ intermediate course for business studies was sampled. In the one lesson seen standards were below the national average and teaching was satisfactory.

Overall, provision for business is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good – much of it is very good.
- In relation to students' prior attainment examination results are very good.
- Students' attitudes are very positive towards their courses.
- The detailed assessment of students' work identifies clearly how they can improve their work.

Commentary

227. In 2003 all students on the AS-level business studies and economics courses passed and students at A-level and AVCE were similarly successful. In the AVCE examinations eight out of the eleven students gained grades A or B. The quality of students' coursework is high. In the sixth form achievement is good. The majority of students gained results in business studies subject examinations which exceeded the targets set for them based on their prior attainment at GCSE. Students have a very good grasp of the technical language which business uses and they can use statistics with ease and interpret graphs in a ready manner. Students can relate their business knowledge and understanding to present day businesses that are often in the news. Students achieve well in lessons because teachers have high expectations and demand high standards of work.
228. Overall, teaching and learning are good, and much is very good. The department is very skilled in teaching students examination techniques to ensure success. In particular, there are very good unit booklets to support learning. Skilful questioning techniques ensure that students' knowledge and understanding, and application of business studies concepts, are fully tested. Students are confident and articulate in responding to challenging tasks; for example, in a Year 12 economics lesson students provided a very good understanding of price theory, using all the correct technical terms. The pace of learning is good and students respond very positively to the teaching and work hard in lessons.
229. The leadership and management provided by the acting head of department are good. Accommodation and resources, especially the resources for ICT, are very good. The range of business studies courses in the sixth form is very good and well chosen to meet the needs of individual students. Examination results have improved since the last inspection, as has the quality of teaching and learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	3	3
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	3
Overall standards achieved		3
Students' achievement	4	3
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	5	5
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	4	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	1	1
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	5	5
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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