

INSPECTION REPORT

THE JOHN ROAN SCHOOL

Blackheath

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 100192

Headteacher: Mr C Dent

Lead inspector: Mr R Hancock

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 January 2004

Inspection number: 259196

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	11–18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1147
School address:	Maze Hill Blackheath London
Postcode:	SE3 7UD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Moore
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The John Roan school is an educational foundation dating back to the 17th century. Now, surrounded by very affluent housing, the school occupies two sites in the borough of Greenwich, the main building overlooking parkland. This mixed school for students in the 11 to 18 range is about the same size as other secondary schools. There are 1147 students on the roll and there are considerably more boys than girls. There are 165 students in the sixth form, mostly female. The students come from a very wide variety of backgrounds, many from other parts of Greenwich which are some of the most deprived areas in south London. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average. Many students, about 40 per cent of the total roll, are from minority ethnic backgrounds and some 29 languages are spoken at the school. About 60 students are learning English as an additional language although only four are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of students with special educational needs is roughly in line with the national average but the numbers of students with a statement of need is above average. Most of these students have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Attainment on entry is below average. The school has Beacon status and is involved in a number of developments such as the Excellence in Cities initiative. The school won a Schools Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9748	C Hayes	Lay inspector	
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30553	R Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics (11-16) and Mathematics (post-16)
33211	G Abel	Team inspector	Science
30597	R Howells	Team inspector	Biology (post-16)
2183	P Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Business (post-16)
4426	T Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
15372	P Walker	Team inspector	History (11-16) and History (post-16)
10392	D Ratcliff	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
31821	B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education
18912	C Large	Team inspector	Religious education
8552	W Hart	Team inspector	Design and technology
31683	S Beaven	Team inspector	Music
1510	S Browning	Team inspector	Art and design
16227	J Phillips	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory education for its students although standards are below national averages. The achievement of students in the main school is satisfactory given their levels of attainment when they enter the school. Students in the sixth form under-achieved in 2002 but their performance was much better in 2003. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and is good in the sixth form. The attitudes of most students are positive and the overall standard of their behaviour, although very mixed, is satisfactory. In the classroom, behaviour is often good. The school is well led and managed. The governing body provides satisfactory support. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are not high enough and achievement is not as good as it needs to be.
- The school is well led and has a strong plan for raising standards.
- The school provides very good in-service training for its teachers.
- Lessons are well organised but are not often inspiring and exciting: teaching is not focusing enough on the needs of individual learners.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in learning.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory but improving. Punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- Provision in science in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory.
- Students are well supported and relationships are harmonious but students are not sufficiently independent in their learning.
- Financial management is very good.
- The school does not have an effective system for monitoring the overall progress of students.
- Aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory and there are shortages of resources in some subjects.

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in April 1998. Most, but not all, of the key issues identified by that report have been addressed. Standards are a little higher and the quality of teaching and learning has improved slightly. The relatively new headteacher is providing very good leadership and the school has a strong plan for raising attainment and improving the overall quality of education it provides. There are already signs of good progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Nationally validated data for 2003 test and examination results was not available at the time of the inspection.

Standards are below average throughout the school. The achievement of students is satisfactory in the main school. It is unsatisfactory in the sixth form although examination results improved in 2003 and the standard of current work shows that students' achievement is getting better. The trend of improvement in results in national tests at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national trend but the trend of improvement in GCSE examination results is above the national trend. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average at the ends of Year 9 and Year

11; they are not high enough. GCSE examination results have been good in drama but are not high enough in all other subjects. The achievement of students with special educational needs is mostly good but those for whom English is an additional language could achieve more if their needs were better addressed. Higher-attaining students do not always achieve as well as they should.

The school makes satisfactory provision for the development of students' personal qualities. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory.** Students' attitudes are positive but behaviour is very mixed. Often good in classrooms and when students are moving between sites, it sometimes deteriorates in corridors and on stairways, where students can become rowdy and undisciplined. It is satisfactory overall. Attendance is unsatisfactory but improving. Students are often not punctual to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7-11. It is good in the sixth form because it strikes a balance between the need to impart knowledge and the need to develop students' ability to study independently. Teachers organise lessons well, have good subject knowledge and relate well to their students. Nevertheless, some lessons are lacklustre and do not encourage students to learn. In about one in ten lessons the quality is unsatisfactory and even poor.

The curriculum is satisfactory but not enough time is spent on teaching it. Provision for vocational courses is inadequate although an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. Care, guidance and support are good. There are also good links with parents and the wider community and very good links with other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management in the school is good. The headteacher is providing very good leadership and consequently the school has a strong sense of direction and morale is high. The governing body provides sound support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents like the school, feel well informed and believe their children are well taught and looked after but also think they could achieve more. Students like the friendliness in the school but are critical of its lack of facilities and drab appearance.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards throughout the school.
- Make further improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11.
- Introduce an effective system for analysing and interpreting assessment data so that students' progress can be carefully monitored.
- Enhance science provision in Years 7 to 11.
- Create a better atmosphere for learning in classrooms and ensure that all subjects are well resourced.
- Develop students' independence.
- Develop the use of ICT in all learning.
- Improve punctuality.
- Broaden the sixth form curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Consider the need to hold a daily act of collective worship.
- Ensure that religious education is taught to all students in the sixth form.

SIXTH FORM SUMMARY

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form offers a **satisfactory education**, especially for those students wishing to follow specialised AS and A-level courses. In 2002 A-level results were well below average but results improved in 2003. Standards of current work show that in relation to their starting points students' achievement is improving. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The sixth form is well led and managed but because it has still to demonstrate fully that it offers its students a very good education and, in the meantime, is subsidised by the main school, it is not cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The head of sixth form is providing a strong sense of direction.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- High standards are achieved in mathematics.
- The choice of courses is narrowly academic causing too many pupils to under-achieve.
- Careers advice is good.
- The monitoring of students' progress is still at an early stage of development.

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	Provision in English literature is satisfactory . Standards are below average, the quality of teaching and learning is good and the subject is managed satisfactorily. A new French course has been set up in Year 12 but has only four students. There are no examination results to report.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . A-level standards are high. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the subject is well led and managed.
Science	Provision in biology is good . Standards are rising at AS and A-Level, the quality of teaching and learning is good and the course is well managed.
Information and communication technology	Provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory . In 2003 examination results were broadly average and achievement was satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leadership and management are both satisfactory.
Humanities	Provision in history is good . Standards are close to the national average and the quality of teaching and learning is good. The subject is well led and managed. No lessons were sampled in geography. No students are currently studying the subject at AS Level but in Year 13 students make good use of information. Standards are average and achievement, given variable standards on entry, is good. Marking is detailed and constructive.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in music is good . The subject is well taught, and students, although small in number, achieve well. The department is well led and managed.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is satisfactory . Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and both leadership and management are also satisfactory.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is good . Overall standards on the AS and A-level course are average in Year 13 and below average in Year 12. There is a wide variation in ability in both groups but achievement is good overall. Teaching and learning are good and the subject is well led and managed.
Business studies	Provision in business studies is satisfactory . Standards are average, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the course is well managed.

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

Tutors carry out basic monitoring tasks to help ensure that students' progress is appropriate over time but the school lacks detailed analysis based on individual students' prior attainment and so the extent of their progress cannot be accurately assessed. Tutors are also on hand to help individual students who are encountering personal problems. Good use is made of support from the Connexions agency, particularly in respect of careers advice and further training opportunities. Most subject teachers provide good and regular guidance in relation to students' progress in their subject. Overall, guidance, advice and support are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The head of sixth form has been in post for only one term but in that time has had a beneficial impact on the sixth form by working with students, teachers, parents and governors to improve all aspects of its provision. Of a particularly high order is the quality of the curriculum review, resulting in plans to offer a very wide range of accredited courses tailored to the needs and aspirations of the students that the school intends to attract. At present, the provision is limited and is not appropriate for the wide range of students recruited. The head of sixth sets high standards of personal conduct and is working effectively to ensure that the sixth form is part of the wider school community. He is very clear as to the way forward on all matters relating to the sixth form of the future. The current ethos of the sixth form is very positive. Religious education is not taught to all students, which is a statutory requirement.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students' views on the sixth form are very mixed. Most are happy with what the sixth form offers, especially in terms of the quality of its teaching, but some are critical of what they see as weaknesses in careers guidance, the lack of facilities and a limited enrichment programme. The inspection team found that careers provision is in fact good, that facilities are improving but students need better access to ICT equipment and that the social aspects of students' development suffer because they do not have a dedicated common room for their use. The enrichment programme is also limited.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Because the school had technical difficulties in submitting its data to the Department of Education and Skills, a 2003 Panda report was not available at the time of the inspection. Consequently, the inspection team based its main findings on the data found in the school's 2002 Panda report, the latest year for which comparative data was available. Wherever possible the inspection findings also make reference to the school's test and examination results in 2003.

In 2002 the results of National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 were well below average. In the same year overall GCSE examination results were below average and A-level results were well below average. Given the attainment of students on entry, which is below average, their overall achievement was satisfactory from Year 7 through to Year 11. Achievement in the sixth form was unsatisfactory, largely because students were recruited on courses which were too difficult for them. A-level results in 2003 were much better. In Years 7 to 11 students with special educational needs achieve well but students for whom English is an additional language are sometimes not achieving well enough. Higher-attaining students are not achieving enough in some subjects. The standard of current work shows improving standards overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 11, standards are below average and need to be higher.
- Students for whom English is an additional language are not achieving enough in Years 7 to 11.
- Standards in the sixth form are not high enough.
- A-level results in 2003 were much improved.
- Students' achievement in drama is especially good.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. In 2002, the last year for which comparative data is available, GCSE examination results were below the national average and had been so for a long period of time. The proportion of students achieving five or more grades at A* - C was 37 per cent, the difference between the school's performance and the national average being very similar to when the school was last inspected in 1998. It was only in drama that students' results exceeded the national average although they were also very close to the national average in German. In some subjects, such as art and design and technology, results were well below average. Results were below average in English, mathematics and science. When students' prior attainment is taken into account, the progress they made from Year 9 was about average.
2. The percentage of students achieving five or more grades at A* - G was also below the national average. The proportion of students who left the school without qualifications – of some concern at the time of the last inspection – was reduced, but was still too high. Overall performance was better than it was in 1998 and boys' performance in particular improved but other gains have been relatively small and students' overall standards are not high enough. GCSE examination results in 2003 do not indicate that the school has made significant further gains in students' overall standards but the trend of improvement is, nonetheless, positive and above the national trend.
3. Students' performance in the 2002 GCSE examinations when compared with the performance of students in similar schools presents a mixed picture. When results are compared with those of similar schools they are well above average but when the achievement is compared with that of students who achieved similar results in tests at the end of Year 9 their performance is average. Although the overall standard of current work in Year 11 is below

average and students' achievement is satisfactory, the overall finding is that standards are not high enough and the achievement of students needs to be greater.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	37.1 (34.8)	49.9 (48.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	85.5 (91.6)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94 (92)	95 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.8 (35.9)	39.8 (39]

There were 181 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in English and science have been getting better over time and in 2002 the difference between the school's overall results and the national picture was the smallest in the school's history. However, test results in mathematics, although showing some improvement, have not been so good, boys' performance being of some concern. There are indications that the overall improvement in the core subjects as a whole has not been maintained because, in 2003, the average points score was further behind the national average than it was in 2002, although results improved in mathematics at Levels 5 and 6. Although the trend of improvement is broadly in line with the national trend, the results are well below the national average and are not high enough. The school recognises that improvement is needed in all subjects at all key stages, the degree varying from subject to subject, and has responded appropriately by stressing the significance of target setting and by introducing a robust quality assurance policy as the main thrust of its school improvement plan.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.5 (29.1)	33.3 (33)
mathematics	31.2 (30.8)	34.7 (34.4)
science	31.5 (30.6)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 186 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Provision for students for whom English is an additional language is unsatisfactory because students are not achieving enough. About a third of the school population is from an ethnic minority background and a significant proportion of these students have some difficulties understanding and using language. They are often underachieving because their language needs are not being adequately addressed. Consequently, they sometimes do not have the knowledge and skills to take part fully in class activities set by the teachers, often because they do not have the prior learning to understand the tasks set.
- The achievement of students with learning difficulties is good because they make good progress in acquiring key literacy and numeracy skills through appropriate specialist teaching during one-to-one or small-group sessions. Those with a statement of special educational need are usually effectively supported in mainstream lessons and achieve standards in keeping with their ability. In Years 10 and 11, some students with emotional and behavioural difficulties fall behind with their work and do not have sufficient support to achieve the expected standards. In some lessons higher-attaining students do not achieve enough.

Sixth form

7. In 2002, results at A-level were well below average. In 2003, the picture improved markedly. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average and, in the past, significant numbers of the school's students have enrolled on A-level courses which have been too demanding for them. Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory. Despite this unsatisfactory situation, a number of students achieve well, especially in mathematics. The school is conscious that attainment in the sixth form needs to be greater and to this end has revised the curriculum it will offer in 2004 to help ensure that students are enrolled on courses at levels which suit their abilities and aptitudes.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	79.5	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	15.7	39.4
Average point score per pupil	54.2	78.6

There were 93 pupils in the year group.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory but attendance is improving. Students' attitudes and behaviour in the classroom are satisfactory overall but are unsatisfactory in corridors and around the school. Most students are confident but some lack self-esteem. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The action the school is taking to promote good attendance and punctuality is very good but the monitoring of attendance in the sixth form is not rigorous enough.
- Most students are interested in school life and the range of activities provided.
- Relationships are good throughout the school, particularly between students of different ethnic groups.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour around the school and in some lessons are unsatisfactory.
- Punctuality at the Maze Hill site, where there is no attendance officer, is unsatisfactory.
- Some students have low expectations and poor self-esteem.
- The school's promotion of spiritual awareness is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

8. Students' attendance is unsatisfactory because the current level is just below the national average. However, due to the very good procedures the school has in place to promote good attendance, it is improving year on year. During the autumn term, attendance rose by nearly one per cent and is now well above the average for the borough. The monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality is very good. The recent appointment of an experienced attendance officer has been instrumental in bringing about the improvements. Her vigilance has improved punctuality, but there is no formal procedure in place to record lateness at the Maze Hill site, where it is unsatisfactory. However, lateness from Maze Hill is finally picked up by the electronic recording system so students do not escape sanction and they have to make up the time. Absences are followed up by first morning contact and the attendance officer is well supported by the form tutors, the heads of year, the deputy headteacher, the borough's attendance advisory officer and the community policeman.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.2
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.5
National data	1.2

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

9. Students' behaviour and attitudes in the classroom are, overall, satisfactory. Around the school, in corridors and on stairways in particular, and in some lessons, it is unsatisfactory. Students' behaviour when they move between the two sites is on the whole good although some students do not hurry. A minority of students are over-boisterous in the corridors and inconsiderate of others. This is particularly the case between lessons when they move from classroom to classroom. Students behave well on the playground. Where behaviour is unsatisfactory in the classroom, it sometimes interferes with the learning of others. The senior management team supports the teachers well in helping to maintain discipline. At break and at lunchtimes, staff are supported by sixth form students, who effectively carry out an 'ambassadorial' role in the playground and around the school, as well as by prefects. The presence in the classroom of emotionally and behaviourally disturbed students who do not have a statement of special need and are unsupported has an adverse effect on classroom behaviour. However, there are occasions when some students misbehave in lessons and in corridors outside classrooms. This indicates a substantial minority of students not exercising self-discipline or caring about the learning of others.
10. The number of fixed-term exclusions is very high – even higher than at the time of the last inspection and this is a weakness but the school is working closely with the local education authority to improve the situation. The overall number is 287 with 145 students having one or more episodes. One in five of the students excluded are girls. The schools' policy for exclusion is clear and there are proper procedures for reintegration after returning. The school has plans to build accommodation for internally excluding students to reduce the number of off-site exclusions and to ensure that the students keep up with their schoolwork. The number of permanent exclusions is low.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
519	144	2
2	2	
53	8	1
46	27	1
4	1	
16		
43	14	
37	1	
11		
34	11	
14		
43	10	

Black or Black British – African	35	4	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	62	18	
Chinese	27	2	
Any other ethnic group	28	7	
No ethnic group recorded	170	38	

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

11. Bullying is rare and incidents are dealt with properly. Students in Year 8 and sixth-form peer mentors work together to prevent racial harassment and intimidation and to report incidents. Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and the school is free from any form of racism. It promotes good relationships, including good racial harmony. Relationships across the school, between students and between students and adults, are good.
12. Most students are interested in school life and take part in the range of activities provided. Some of these take place after school and are promoted and organised by the adult mentors. Students are enterprising and are willing to take responsibility. For example, some students from Year 8 have been trained as peer mentors. They support students in Year 7 and help them to settle down in the school when they arrive from primary school. The peer mentors recently received an award for the mentor workshops and the school gained a certificate of distinction for its out-of-school-hours learning and commitment to the enrichment of young people's education. In addition to the year councils, there is now a whole-school council. The latter has been set up since the last inspection, when the lack of a council was a key issue. However, in spite of the willingness of many students to take on responsibility, some students lack confidence and have low self-esteem.
13. In the Learning Support Unit, most pupils thrive on achievement and develop a positive attitude to reading, writing and spelling through gaining success. The very good relationships established in the unit enable pupils to become confident in their work and their self-esteem improves. Many pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties respond positively to the counselling and support provided through the Inclusion Centre and this is reflected in improved attendance and reduced fixed-term exclusions. However, the number with such difficulties exceeds the present capacity of the Inclusion Centre and there continues to be a significant amount of disruptive behaviour in some lessons.
14. Students are learning about the responsibilities of living in a community, supported through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship curriculum and the school's enrichment programme, including a programme of visits – some of which are residential – the work of the school council and the opportunity to become prefects. Particular examples of school involvement in community activities include servicing the refreshment stations at the London Marathon and visits to the local almshouses.
15. The school is committed to promoting the spiritual awareness of its students. However, there are significant factors which limit this aspect of development and make it, overall, unsatisfactory. Teachers do not identify opportunities for spiritual development within their schemes of work and there is little evidence in most lessons of opportunities being given spontaneously. Some subjects, such as music, religious education and art, create an environment where students can be reflective, inspired and creative, and where they can respond, with feeling, to aspects of human experience. A good example of a spiritual experience was in a Year 8 assembly, when students of all abilities and ethnic groups gave a presentation to the whole year group on the subject of friendship, reading their own poetry to express their feelings.
16. Other factors which restrict spiritual growth in the curriculum occur when some teachers, faced with difficult and unpredictable behaviour, restrict the creative and practical experiences of students. Current limitations in classrooms of the display and celebration of students' work

and the drabness of the buildings, despite some improvements, further diminish the ethos of the school. Assemblies promote the self-esteem of students and there is a sense of community in the year groups. However, opportunities for personal reflection in assemblies are sometimes missed and the school does not meet requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

17. Moral development is satisfactory overall. Staff set a good example and treat students with care and respect. Students respond well as a result. Students know and understand school rules and most observe them and respond to routines. In some lessons, students show good understanding of ethical issues and the school effectively promotes local initiatives that reward self-sacrifice and care for others. This is a good feature. Generally, the student body is harmonious, and there is widespread racial and cultural difference. Provision for the cultural development of students is satisfactory. Opportunities for students to appreciate their own cultures and study the cultures of other times and places occur in many lessons and in the programme for personal, social and health education.

Sixth form

18. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good but attendance and punctuality are, overall, unsatisfactory.
19. Students are willing to be enterprising and to take responsibility. Students' attitudes and behaviour around the school and in the classroom are good. Their attitudes and demeanour around the school are mature and responsible and set a good example for other students. They are interested in life at the school and are prepared to play their part in it. For example, while there are no sixth-form prefects, they help to supervise the playground at break times, taking what the school calls an 'ambassadorial' role. A number of students undergo external training as peer mentors. Sixth-former mentors attend Year 7 registration periods to support the students. For example, in one registration a sixth former helped two students with their reading. The mentors are enthusiastic about their role and believe that the younger students and the school appreciate the work they do. Some sixth form students are planning to re-establish the defunct sixth form council, which shows good initiative.
20. Overall, the monitoring of attendance at registration is unsatisfactory. While attendance at registration is recorded on the electronic system, it is erratic, because many students do not feel the need to be present if they do not have a lesson until later on in the day and the school's policy on this is not working. While teachers keep an accurate record of students' attendance at lessons, a more robust system at registration is important for health and safety reasons. If students' attendance at lessons falls below the contracted level of 90 per cent they are not allowed to sit their examinations, so tutors or the head of sixth form remind students of this if their attendance starts to fall off and, if necessary, they contact the parents. A check on lesson attendance is also made for students who wish to claim attendance allowance. For these reasons the monitoring of students' attendance at individual lessons is good. The measures for improving attendance are beginning to take effect.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum and teaching and learning are satisfactory in the main school. In the sixth form the curriculum is unsatisfactory but is in the process of being improved and the quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's support for all its students is good, links with parents are good and there are also good links with the wider community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of lessons are well organised.
- Most teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects, especially in the sixth form.
- Sixth form teaching is of good quality.
- Relationships are mostly good.
- Lessons do not always meet the needs of individual students.
- Not enough use is made of effective assessment practices to raise standards.
- Too many lessons are lack-lustre.

Commentary

21. The overall quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory in the lessons seen. In just half of lessons it was good or even better. Occasionally, it was very good or excellent. In about one lesson in ten it was unsatisfactory or even poor. The teaching has improved since the last inspection but not markedly so. There was little difference in quality between the teaching in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
22. The staff have been working hard recently to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This has led to better planning, which has helped to ensure better use of time. Many effective lessons now start with an activity to capture the interest of students, describe the objectives of the lesson and develop into a main task activity to promote learning. They end with a session which summarises what students have been expected to learn. Lessons which followed this model were, on the whole, the most successful ones.
23. The very best lessons draw on the knowledge, skills and interests of students, challenging them to achieve further and to grapple with difficult concepts such as the symbolism of bread and wine in Holy Communion in a Year 7 lesson in religious education. In such lessons, teachers recognise and reward students' endeavours and build effectively on their previous work. Explanations are clear and instructions are expected to be followed precisely. Learning proceeds with pace and energy and students work to capacity. Students are expected to take on appropriate responsibilities, such as reading aloud key passages of text in English lessons, volunteering answers in mathematics, and operating CD players in music. In some of the most effective lessons students review their learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 149 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2 %)	18 (12 %)	57 (38 %)	55 (37 %)	12 (8 %)	4 (3 %)	0 (0 %)

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

24. Students with special educational needs are usually taught well because teachers analyse weaknesses and then focus on the students' greatest needs. When they receive individual support they are taught well and they learn effectively. However, in some lessons, especially where classes are larger, if they are not well supported their progress is much slower. This is especially so in some lessons in science, and often in low ability groups in other subjects. On the whole, students for whom English is an additional language are taught well but this is not always the case and in some lessons little was provided to help them overcome language difficulties which hinder their learning. Neither higher-attaining students, nor those who are gifted and talented, are challenged often enough. These weaker aspects of teaching have been correctly identified as areas for attention in the school improvement plan.

25. In the weakest lessons, students are bored and often resort to misbehaviour which has an adverse affect on the learning of all students. Some teachers, particularly if they are inexperienced, find it difficult to handle such misbehaviour and little learning takes place.
26. On the whole, students are not given enough opportunities to learn for themselves and are too dependent on their teachers. They do not get enough opportunities to carry out investigative work, particularly in science. Although students enjoy practical work, there are too few occasions when they get opportunities to do it. Too often there is little in the learning which interests them or excites their curiosity. Not enough use is made of visual aids to help bring subjects alive and the great potential for electronic whiteboards to enliven learning is not fully exploited. Students have too few opportunities to carry out research. There is little support for students' learning as there are no reference books to hand – even dictionaries, atlases and other basic reference guides were rarely seen – in classrooms, which are often stark and sterile. Insufficient use is made of ICT to help students learn.
27. In general, despite some good features, the quality of teaching and learning lacks consistency and in several departments, including those of English, mathematics and science, varies from excellent to poor. Such inconsistency, if allowed to continue, will not help the school to raise the overall attainment of all students.

Sixth form

28. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons teachers show good knowledge of their subject, ensure that students are aware of the objectives of lessons, provide clear explanations, and give full opportunities for students to undertake challenging work, both on their own and with others. Relationships are very good and students enjoy finding out more about the topics they are studying. They are given good scope to undertake their own research and to present their own findings. In some lessons, teaching and learning are not so successful. In these teachers talk for too long and do not give enough opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Assessment

29. The use of assessment is satisfactory. It is used to respond to individual needs and has good features, especially in music where it is used to inform planning. Termly reports to parents, based on half-termly assessment, provide a good basis for review days at the beginning of term. The analysis of key targets across all subjects helps students and parents to focus on priorities. However, students do not understand how they can improve their work in some subjects, such as design and technology, because of teachers' lack of precision in written comments. There is also a lack of consistency among science teachers when marking the work of students in Years 7 to 9. Termly reporting for students in the Learning Support Unit lacks attention to detail.
30. Since September 2003, the assessment policy has been implemented more universally but the assessment and record keeping policy has not been updated since 1998. School records are inadequately analysed to provide year-on-year comparison or data on individual students or groups. The school does not have a system for collating performance data to enable students' progress to be closely monitored; this is a weakness.

Sixth form

31. Assessment is satisfactory in most subjects. Teachers provide good feedback and most students have a good idea of what they have to do to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school but is unsatisfactory in the sixth form because it is too narrow and focuses largely on courses leading to an A-level qualification which are not appropriate for a significant number of students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The choice of sixth form courses is too narrow for the range of students.
- Extra-curricular activities enrich students' experiences.
- Insufficient time is devoted to learning in the classroom.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in learning.
- The curriculum has still to be adapted to the needs of all students.
- The school does not hold a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

32. Overall, the breadth of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. All subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Students also have the opportunity to study a second language from Year 8 onwards. Drama is taught to all students and is helping them to learn how to work with one another and to develop self-confidence. There is a PSHE programme which covers important aspects of students' personal development. There are some very good classes out of hours to help students prepare thoroughly for National Curriculum tests, and to do homework. The library provides good support for recreational reading. There is some lack of breadth in science, where there are too few opportunities for students to carry out independent practical investigations. Nearly all subjects find it difficult to teach ICT because they do not have ready access to facilities and this aspect of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in most subjects.
33. In Years 10 and 11, provision is satisfactory overall with strengths in a number of subjects but with an imbalance between academic and vocational opportunities as well as inadequate provision for citizenship and PSHE. The curriculum broadly meets all National Curriculum subject requirements but at present there are not enough vocational and work-related opportunities to meet the needs of all students.
34. Curriculum provision to meet the needs of students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, with good recent provision of alternative educational courses for students with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11. After one year, a suitable modular course enables students in Year 11 to achieve accreditation at Bronze Award level and those at present in Year 10 are likely to gain even higher accreditation. For disaffected pupils in Years 10 and 11, suitable opportunities are provided so that they may continue to be included in education. This includes off-site, work related courses. This is a good example of the way in which the curriculum is helping to prepare students for further employment.
35. Good features include the wide range of extra-curricular activities in sport and music and extended study. Weaker characteristics are that the time allocated to teaching and learning is less than the normally recommended time. The school recognizes this and is in the process of making appropriate changes. There is little emphasis on the spiritual aspects of learning in the curriculum and the school is not complying with the statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum is not yet flexible enough to cater for the full range of

students' needs but the school's recent curriculum review is thorough and far-reaching in looking at the curriculum for students from 14 to 19 and is taking good account of most of the current weaknesses.

Sixth form

36. Curriculum provision for students currently in the sixth form is unsatisfactory. The school recognises that it does not meet the needs and abilities of all its students. The choice of courses is extensive but they are predominantly academic, leading to A and AS-level qualifications. There are insufficient opportunities for students to follow vocational courses and a wider range of levels of qualification. A major review has taken place and its recommendations are being implemented for the coming academic year. These include an impressive variety of offerings which include both academic and vocational courses at the higher levels as well as providing opportunities for students to extend their achievements through certificates and diplomas at the first level of qualification. Experiences in the sixth form are intended to be further enhanced by personal development courses and enrichment programmes and opportunities. A good development is the provision enabling students with statements of special educational need to continue their education with an NVQ course in ICT.
37. The school also recognises that students need better support and guidance about the choices they make when entering the sixth form. Drop-out rates have been high and achievement unsatisfactory, often because students have been ill-matched to courses. There is now a better planned programme of advice and consultation in place for the current Year 11 students. This includes awareness of the opportunities available through what is known as the G - Plus programme, the local post-16 network of seven schools and colleges. It is an improving picture.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for students' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good. Students are educated in a supportive and caring environment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good pastoral support involves tutors, the heads of year and the deputy headteacher.
- The procedures to ensure that students work in a healthy and safe environment are good but some of the toilets need to be improved.
- First aid arrangements at both sites are very good.
- The induction arrangements for primary school students are good.
- The arrangements for the effective transition of emotionally and behaviourally disturbed students from primary schools, is a strength.
- There is insufficient support for students with behavioural difficulties in some classes.

Commentary

38. The school has an appropriate child protection policy in place and a properly designated officer. Proper arrangements are in place for students in care. Staff are aware of the procedures and child protection issues have been a focus for staff training. With strong support from the borough's health and safety department, the school now has good procedures in place. Risk assessments have recently been carried out in all the relevant departments, as well as for school visits. The school carries out regular inspections and results are reported to the premises committee of the governing body. The state of the boys' toilets at the Westcombe Park site is unsatisfactory and urgent improvements are needed. Arrangements for dealing with first aid and sickness are very good and a very caring and experienced team of qualified

first-aiders are readily available at both sites. Overall, the procedures to ensure that students work in a healthy and safe environment are good.

39. The pastoral provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good because of the strong team of form tutors, heads of year and deputy headteacher, who know the students very well, ensuring that each student has a good and trusting relationship with more than one adult at the school. The team gets to know the students very well partly because the tutors and heads of year stay with the same cohorts through their time at the school. Well-attended academic and pastoral review days are held each term and targets are set for each student. Parents unable to attend the meetings are contacted and offered alternative dates. Good liaison between faculties and the pastoral team is a feature of the school's provision. Induction arrangements for primary students are good. Year 7 students from the main feeder primary schools said that teachers visited them at their primary schools from the John Roan School and all attended an induction day at the school. They also appreciate the help they received from the peer mentors.
40. An important part of the student support systems is the emotional and behavioural support provided by the behavioural improvement teams based in the Inclusion Centre. This is a part of a borough-wide strategy and provides very good support, from the last two terms in Year 6, and helps the students' transition to secondary school. The learning mentors are an important part of this service. Parents of EBD (emotionally and behaviourally disturbed) students choose the school because they see it as providing very good support for their children. An unsatisfactory consequence of this is that, if the EBD student does not have a statement, the school does not have the money to provide individual support in the classroom. This has a negative impact on behaviour in the classroom and across the school because there are 19 of these students.
41. Students are now involved in school decisions and they make the school aware of their views. The year councils raise matters of concern and the school considers them and, where appropriate, acts on these views. The school itself is also proactive in consulting students. For example, the school has drafted a new anti-bullying policy and has sought the students' views on it before the governing body finally approves the policy, a good feature.
42. Students in Years 9, 10 and 11 receive good guidance on further study and career opportunities. Career lessons are usually delivered through the PSHE curriculum. The school receives good support from the Connexions service. All students receive work experience at the end of Year 10 or the beginning of Year 11. The borough supports the school through the Greenwich Education Business Partnership. The careers curriculum is being expanded next year to include students in Years 7 and 8, in line with statutory requirements.
43. Good arrangements are in place for sharing information on students' special educational needs before transfer from primary schools. Good use of standardised tests enables staff to screen students' attainment in basic literacy on entry to school and to monitor annually the progress of students registered as having special educational needs. The school's involvement in the local education authority's Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and through the Behaviour Education Support Team (BEST) has been effective in ensuring that all involved agencies work well together in support of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All students on the special educational needs register have individual education plans which specify appropriately their learning and/or behavioural targets.
44. The school's Learning Support Unit provides well for those students with statements of special educational need or requiring additional provision for meeting significant difficulties in learning literacy and/or numeracy skills. They are taught individually and in small groups during timetabled sessions when they are withdrawn from other lessons. Additionally, they are effectively supported in their work in mainstream lessons by experienced teaching assistants. A few students with more specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, benefit from weekly sessions of specialist teaching from visiting support teachers. A significant number of students with severe emotional difficulties such as trauma or personal crisis have good support from

mentors who are skilled and experienced in counselling. Additionally, those students who suffer from severe trauma or depression are supported by weekly sessions with a skilled visiting inclusion worker who promotes solution-focused work with students, staff and families.

45. The school strives to implement its inclusion policy of all students being catered for in mainstream lessons. A small classroom on the lower school site is used as an inclusion centre for students registered as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. It supports those students with more severe or stated needs through providing a full-time teaching base for a few who cannot cope with mainstream lessons, part-time teaching for others, a base to use as a 'safe haven' at break times and a breakfast club facility. Lessons in the base are conducted for a maximum of eight students at one time, providing them with a suitable level of educational and personal support. However, there is a significant gap in provision between the support provided for the few students in the inclusion base and the support and procedures available to adequately meet the needs of a significant number of students with substantial emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream lessons. There are insufficient support staff, alternative accommodation or procedures to prevent significant disruption to some lessons and its negative effect on the quality of learning for other students.

Sixth form

46. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory overall but is weaker in mathematics than in other subjects. The director and a team of tutors provide advice and guidance. Any problems arising are discussed with the students and, if necessary, parents become involved. Tutors keep an accurate record of attendance at lessons to ensure they maintain the necessary attendance level to enable them to sit their examinations. Each student is required to sign a contract with the school. Support and guidance on career opportunities are partly provided through the Connexions service and overall provision is good.
47. As with the rest of the school, students' views are sought on school policy and developments. At the moment the sixth form council is relatively inactive, but some students are showing considerable enterprise in trying to revive it. On issues such as the draft new anti-bullying policy, students are consulted individually on the same basis as the rest of the students.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, schools and colleges and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good involvement of parents in the process of monitoring attendance.
- The good links with parents through the school's academic and personal support of students.
- The good quality of information provided by the school, particularly on students' progress.
- The school's very good links with the community and other agencies.

Commentary

48. Links with parents are good because parents are kept informed about the school's activities and, particularly, about the work and progress of their sons and daughters. There are termly academic and pastoral evenings which attract over 70 per cent of parents and the school goes out of its way to contact those parents unable to attend. Parents' views of the school are mainly positive, although there were some areas of concerns, such as the behaviour of some students. The pastoral system and the good communications impress many parents. Examination of a selection of students' planners in Years 7 and 9 confirmed that most parents had signed them. The relationship with the attendance officer is very good and parents appreciate the fact that they are contacted on the first morning if their child is absent to remind

them to send in a note explaining the absence. Parents find the attendance officer very supportive if a student is having a problem with attendance.

49. The information provided for parents by the school is good. The prospectus is attractive and well presented. The school provides very informative newsletters which keep parents up to date with events. The headteacher sends out regular letters to parents informing them of events and other matters. The school has also sought parents' views on the new anti-bullying policy. Students' annual reports are brief but contain all the relevant information on their academic progress and the effort they are making. Information about students' National Curriculum levels is sent out separately. Parents also receive progress reports during the year.
50. The school has good links with the local community and other agencies. Especially effective initiatives include the NVQ programme involving close liaison with the local education authority and another school, and a commercially sponsored youth scheme. The school also makes use of work experience placements. There are close links with primary schools' homework clubs. The school is also working closely with a cluster of primary schools to reduce the levels of risk of exclusion and truancy by early intervention. Among the many other good links are those made by letting school facilities to local community groups. The community policeman, based at the school, is very supportive.
51. The school has good links with other schools, colleges and training providers. The head of sixth form has been appointed co-ordinator of an ambitious work-related learning programme, which is in the process of being set up in conjunction with colleges in the area. Consultation has taken place and an audit is being carried out on which courses are already available. By September, the school aims to be in a position to satisfy statutory requirements and be able to offer non-academic alternatives to potentially disaffected students in Years 10 and 11, in addition to the academic subjects. This is in addition to the GNVQ subjects already available in the sixth form. The school expects that the new proposals will help to reduce the number of students leaving without any qualifications. These are good initiatives.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

In the school as a whole, leadership and management are good, the headteacher providing very good leadership. The school improvement plan is detailed, thorough and substantial. The governing body provides satisfactory support. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership from the headteacher is giving the school a clear sense of direction.
- Most departments, and the sixth form, are managed well but there are some shortages of resources.
- Financial management is very good.
- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- Staff development is effective.
- Performance data is not yet used effectively to monitor the progress of students throughout the school.
- Developments in literacy and numeracy are not co-ordinated.

Commentary

52. The headteacher provides very good leadership, giving the school a clear, strong sense of direction. In post for just a year at the time of the inspection, he has accurately and thoroughly analysed the needs of the school, formulated a convincing improvement plan and put together a strong senior leadership team to implement it. There are already indications that some of the improvements are beginning to take effect. Evidence of extensive consultation indicates that

the headteacher has worked effectively to ensure that he has the support of other teachers, parents and the governing body.

53. The school is managed well. There is a good range of policies to help all members of the school community to share common practices. The quality assurance initiative identifies strengths and weaknesses in the work of departments and addresses their needs effectively. The departments themselves are managed well. An area which has improved considerably since the school was last inspected is that of professional development. The needs of staff, including those who are newly qualified, are carefully identified through the school's well-developed performance management system and very good use is made of diverse training providers to meet them. Good staff training in the management of students' challenging behaviour has been instigated and most teachers show a good awareness of effective approaches in their teaching. The school does not have strong policies for developing literacy and numeracy throughout the school.
54. The governing body has great affection for the school and is keen for it to succeed. It supports the initiatives undertaken by the headteacher and has gained a broad knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses from presentations made by staff and regular reports of progress from the headteacher. It ensures that the school complies with statutory requirements, except for the need to hold a daily act of collective worship. However, neither the governors themselves nor the work they do to support the school is well known to staff and students. The governing body is only now encouraging its members to take responsibility for specific areas of the curriculum in order to befriend and support teachers. No initiatives have been taken by governors to help students develop their concept of citizenship by learning more about how they make decisions. Their governing body's overall support for the school is satisfactory.
55. The school has a range of performance data relating to students' achievement in all year groups but this is not complete nor, in some cases, is it readily to hand. At present, there is no system for collating data on a systematic basis from year to year which can be carefully analysed so that the school can identify trends and patterns in all key aspects of students' performance. Furthermore, the school is not in a position to analyse current performance, which means that it is not able to monitor students' progress closely. Good assessment data is not sufficiently used to evaluate the effectiveness of provision and determine the strengths and weaknesses of the different elements of provision to meet students' special educational needs. These are defects because serious gaps in records and the lack of systems to provide an overview of performance mean that students' overall progress cannot be accurately monitored, a very particular weakness given the school's need to raise attainment.
56. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for provision to meet special educational needs has a clear vision of, and provides very good leadership for, the inclusion of all students in the life and work of the school. The updated policy for such inclusion is the result of a comprehensive appraisal of local needs and a multidisciplinary approach to finding ways to meet the full range of students' special needs. The development is co-ordinated as part of the local education authority's behaviour improvement programme and involvement with other schools in the Behaviour Education Support Team. The substantial expansion of provision, involving the development of the new inclusion centre and support systems for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) including mentoring, staff training and establishing support networks, has been well managed and co-ordinated. However, there are insufficient staff to support the inclusion of students with EBD in the mainstream classes and insufficient accommodation on the upper-school site to provide adequate alternatives.
57. There are insufficient resources in some subjects. In some, existing resources are not exploited. Specialist resources for teaching students with special educational needs are mainly good for literacy and numeracy but there are insufficient up-to-date computers to enable students to benefit fully from appropriate, available software. Present provision of ICT to meet special needs is unsatisfactory. The school manages the difficulties of its split site well but time is inevitably lost travelling from building to building. This problem is compounded by the

fact that the school is not following the recommended time allocation for teaching the curriculum, although this problem is being addressed. On the whole, staff are well matched to the needs of the school. Staff working in support of students with special educational needs are generally suitably qualified and experienced in meeting special educational needs. The Learning Support Unit and the Inclusion Centre are effectively managed by the teachers in charge, with good learning and behavioural targets set and programmes of work that are well matched to the students' needs.

58. Financial management is very good. The preparation of the budget is consultative and organised. Accounting procedures are detailed and thorough. Departments are allocated funding fairly and on the basis of a good set of criteria. They have further scope for acquiring additional resources to address weaknesses through the school's quality assurance system. A good feature of financial management is the strategic forecasting of future salary costs, one of the useful exercises undertaken by the school to help ensure that it is not taken unawares by unexpectedly large increases in expenditure in the near future. The cost of educating students at the school is comparable to the cost of educating students in schools in similar contexts. Improvements since the school was last inspected have been satisfactory. The outcomes are mostly satisfactory but there are distinct areas where the school needs to improve further. Overall, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,524,355	Balance from previous year	80,774
Total expenditure	4,413,581	Balance carried forward to the next	221,673
Expenditure per pupil	3,932		

Sixth form

59. The sixth form is on the threshold of a strong future. The director has a clear view of its needs and has a credible plan to address its current weaknesses. A deputy headteacher, he also teaches in the sixth form and commands the respect of students and teachers.
60. At present the curriculum is unsatisfactory because its courses do not cater for the wide range of students who enter the sixth form. A new curriculum has been prepared which is far more comprehensive and which has the prospect of catering for a much wider range of ability and a greater range of career interest. A new library and librarian are also good additional features. Classrooms are pleasant but the common room is not large enough. There are insufficient computers.
61. Basic monitoring of individual students' progress is undertaken by most subject teachers but the monitoring by form tutors is not as detailed as it needs to be. This means that some students do not receive early enough indication of the lack of progress in their work and how this might be addressed. The school is not tracking the progress that individual students make in their subjects as a whole so is unable to show how well they have achieved. This means that it is not able to keep a tight grip on the value for money that the sixth form provides. Given that the sixth form is subsidised by the main school to the extent of one teacher, and that in the last year for which comparative data is available, 2002, standards were well below average, the sixth form is not cost-effective.
62. The school is counteracting the low retention rates by planning a curriculum which is more relevant to the students' needs. Most students enjoy life in the sixth form and management has ensured that they are now far more involved with the main school than was the case at the time of the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Provision is satisfactory overall.

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 **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are not high enough in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations.
- Enthusiastic teachers work hard to improve standards, but are not distinguishing between the records of different learners.
- Students' learning is supported by well planned lessons.
- Students' work is marked carefully, indicating ways to improve.
- A significant proportion of students, particularly boys, are not achieving as well as they could.
- Poor behaviour of students in some classes hinders the learning of others.

Commentary

63. The standards achieved in National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations in 2002 were below average. Boys are not achieving as well as girls. A significant proportion of students enter the school with standards below those expected for their age and, as a result of well planned teaching and additional 'booster' lessons, many students reach the expected levels by the end of Year 9 but too many fall below the standards expected. Although teachers work hard to raise the quality of students' achievements and all written work is marked carefully, the results obtained in GCSE examinations are still below those expected nationally, a major reason for this being the small groups of students who persistently behave badly and disrupt lessons, which hinders their own learning and that of others. Nonetheless, achievement is satisfactory overall and students' performance is in line with that in comparable schools.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are well organised and teachers encourage students to work hard and to do well and most respond positively, learning best when teachers set appropriate activities that are challenging but not too difficult. However, a significant weakness of the teaching is that whole classes are set the same tasks which some students are not able to complete. Finding the work too difficult for them, some students make insufficient effort and work is poorly presented and unfinished. Not enough work is carefully matched to the needs of students, which means that many are unable to experience the sense of achievement which comes from completing tasks well.
65. Most students enjoy their lessons, sharing their opinions and explaining their ideas coherently when invited to do so. However, sometimes teachers talk too much and students do not have enough opportunities to contribute to discussion. They remain passive because they are not fired by the excitement of taking an active part in the lesson. Higher-attaining students show that they can create imaginative and amusing stories and write interesting reports on current events. The quality of the work of lower-attaining students is marred by inaccurate spelling, weaknesses in punctuation and the use of a limited vocabulary. Most lessons start well but do not end effectively because insufficient time is devoted to summarizing and reinforcing the learning that has taken place.
66. The subject leader has a clear vision of the way forward and students' work is assessed regularly but this data is not used effectively enough to track students' progress throughout the school. The problems of the split site are contained by skilful management but inevitably the time spent in travelling reduces the time spent working with students. Students with special

learning needs are well supported, both within the learning unit and during lessons. However, the support of students for whom English is an additional language is less secure. In several lessons, students were confused and unable to complete the tasks set. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because most issues raised have been dealt with effectively.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Standards of literacy are satisfactory but students' competence in speaking, listening, reading and writing varies between departments because literacy skills are not co-ordinated across the school. As a result, students' presentation of oral and written work is limited in some subjects. When higher-attaining students contribute to class discussions, they explain their viewpoints very well and the skills they bring to developing a logical argument are reflected in their written work. However, too many students make persistent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, indicating that improvement is most needed in written expression. Across the curriculum, the best work occurs when students are encouraged to record their knowledge and understanding by using vocabulary relevant to the subjects they are studying. Good examples occur in history, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education but, because the school does not have a literacy co-ordinator, their good practice is not shared. The libraries, recently refurbished, were underused at the time of the last inspection, but this situation has much improved and the librarians have been very successful in encouraging students to read for pleasure and for information.

Modern foreign languages

Provision for modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is often good and is never less than satisfactory.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Standards are improving in lessons in Years 10 and 11 in French and German.
- Students lack the self-confidence for independent learning and to initiate the foreign language unprompted.
- Standards in French are still below average at end of Year 9.
- Teachers' use of resources, particularly of ICT, is too limited.

Commentary

68. Standards in French by the end of Year 9 are still below average whereas standards in German are close to average because of the good progress that students make in Years 8 and 9. Whilst listening skills are satisfactory in both languages, students' speaking, particularly of French, is limited in scope by their unwillingness to go beyond simple utterances or to use the language for their own purposes. In German, there is evidence of students' increasing confidence to extend their oral repertoire and to pronounce correctly. Writing in both languages is generally accurate but rarely goes beyond simple tasks. Recent GCSE examination results in both languages were well below average and show a significant dip over previous years where, for example, results in German were close to national averages. However, lesson observation and scrutiny of students' work in Years 10 and 11 indicate that standards are beginning to improve in listening and reading skills and there is a good emphasis upon correct grammar in written work, whilst higher-attaining students are beginning to use extended language.
69. The achievement of students in French and German in both key stages is satisfactory and in a minority of cases is good when students are willing to apply previously learned material and to reflect on the accuracy of their work. Progress is, however, still constrained in Years 10 and

11, where some students show a lack of urgency or commitment to tackling the requirements of the GCSE examination.

70. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and often good. All teachers establish positive relations with their students and this is reciprocated in the generally good behaviour in classes. In the best lessons, there is a prompt start and teachers plan a wide range of activities which encompass both active and receptive language skills. The target language is used appropriately and in a number of lessons teachers prepare differentiated and challenging tasks to meet the needs of the full ability range. Teachers emphasise accuracy of grammar and time is usually very well used. Students' response in many lessons is good and they collaborate well in group tasks but students rarely initiate the foreign language unprompted. In lessons that were only satisfactory, teachers did not deal sufficiently with high levels of student passivity or lack of concentration. Many students lack confidence in their own learning and are not able to work independently of the teacher or the textbook. In general, teachers do not make adequate use of the range of available resources and there is no planned application of information technology.
71. The department is well managed and there is an emphasis on raising standards through a detailed analysis of students' attainment data and a focus upon ensuring consistency of assessment, teaching and targets for improvement. Leadership is equally effective and the head of department is a good role model for her colleagues. Consequently, the department has the capacity to improve its results and to raise the profile of languages across the school.
72. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. GCSE examination results are still weak but there is evidence both in lessons and in students' written work of improving standards in German by the end of Year 9 and a closer match to national average standards in both languages in Years 10 and 11. Achievement of students in French is satisfactory but there is clear progress in German. The application of ICT in modern languages has still to be fully addressed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is carefully structured and promotes effective learning.
- Standards by the end of Year 9 are not high enough.
- Marking and assessment provide good support for the majority of students.
- Leadership and management ensure that the work of the department reflects the aims of the school.
- Teachers and classroom assistants cater fully for students with special educational needs.
- The pace of working is too slow for some students in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

73. In 2002, results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 were well below average. Whilst students' attainment on entry to the school was no higher than below average, this outcome was nonetheless unsatisfactory because students clearly did not make enough progress and their achievement was not good enough. However, there was significant improvement in 2003 when the proportion of students achieving Level 6 and above rose by one third and more students achieved Level 5 and above than in English or science. Current standards for both boys and girls are in keeping with these latest results. Higher-attaining students in Year 7 in classes of mixed ability and in top set classes in Year 9 are insufficiently challenged.

74. In 2002, although GCSE standards overall were half a grade below national results, achievement was in line with expectations except for boys' results. Less than 40 per cent of students attained grades A* to C compared with nearly half nationally, but this represented good achievement. These results were marginally improved in 2003 and are currently being maintained in Years 10 and 11.
75. The quality of teaching and learning was good overall, unsatisfactory or poor in two of the ten lessons observed but very good or excellent in four. Teachers manage classes well, but some lessons proceed too slowly. They have good relationships with students and engage them in a variety of activities stemming from stimuli often related to young people's interests. Teaching is well structured so that numeracy, investigational approaches, such as acquiring a perception of pi, and accuracy in graphs and statistical diagrams, are emphasised. Assessment and frequent marking with guidance and praise make a good contribution to students' achievement. Inspiring teaching, with well-planned homework and excellent diagnostic marking, are ensuring success and enthusiasm for the highest attainers in Year 10. Similarly, Year 11 students of low capability, many with special educational needs, have systematically developed skills and confidence in mathematics because of excellent support from their teacher and teaching assistant. In the unsatisfactory lessons, behaviour deteriorated rapidly – in one because the approach was uninspiring and in the other because of a lack of challenge to engage easily distracted, but capable, Year 11 students.
76. Teachers all contribute to the good range of after-school support sessions, but take-up is low. There are opportunities for more able students to participate in national and local school challenges. Students' work makes a colourful contribution to stimulating display in the Westcombe Park mathematics suite, a stark contrast to the bare walls of the Maze Hill site. Because of the dearth of computers in mathematics rooms and inadequate access to ICT facilities this aspect of the course is neglected. Teachers are working hard to make up for an inadequate number of texts by developing resources for students' use at home.
77. The head of department provides very good leadership. Priorities to raise standards and achievement are judged well. Strategic planning reflects school goals, focused on motivating students and enabling them to be successful. The dedicated team of mathematics teachers are committed to the students. Management of the department is good overall. Classroom assistants work closely with teachers to provide opportunities for students with English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs. Since the last inspection, monitoring of teaching has improved the overall quality but further improvement is needed. Generally, students of all ages now display positive attitudes and the progress of older students has improved so that it is now satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Students' overall standard when they need to apply their mathematical skills is satisfactory. There is no coherent school policy in this area and no significant evidence of use of mathematics in history, physical education or art. However, mathematical skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects. In science, good use is made of graphs and formulae – for example, for resistance and potential energy calculations. Statistical analysis and interpretation of tabular information are applied effectively in geography. In design and technology, opportunities are structured to include charts to compare food products and estimates and measurements for resistant materials work. In French, measurement, currency and time are reinforced well in the course of lessons. In a PSHE lesson in Year 7, students were able to estimate accurately the annual cost of smoking.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant degree of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Limited practical work and insufficient emphasis on scientific enquiry.
- Management is effective in producing sound policies and procedures.
- Students' progress is accurately tracked, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Not enough use is made of audio-visual resources, of ICT, or of material to stimulate learning.
- Students' work is not displayed to celebrate success.

Commentary

79. The standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are below average. Attainment on entry is also below average. Compared to similar schools, the attainment is above average and is average when compared to prior learning. Achievement is satisfactory. The results in 2003 for the percentage attaining both Level 5 and Level 6 fell short of the expected targets. There was no difference in the attainment of boys and girls by the end of Year 9.
80. Results in the 2002 GCSE examination in terms of the proportion of students achieving A*-C grades, was below the national average. However, students achieved more than students in similar schools and the progress they made was at least average. Results in the GCSE examinations dipped in 2003 to a level similar to those at the time of the last inspection. In 2003, nine per cent of students failed to gain a grade in science. Compared to the national situation, girls were less successful than boys.
81. The achievement and progress of students at both key stages have been satisfactory, based on the 2002 and 2003 results. However, the level of achievement as observed in lessons was not satisfactory. This current state of progress is a reflection of the quality of teaching and the low levels of expectation of too many students. Not enough is asked of all students in all years and of all abilities. Diverse groups progress equally, specifically boys and girls and different ethnic groups. Value added results by the end of Year 11 were near the national average in 2002 but declined in 2003. Grades from the recent trial GCSE examinations do not look promising for results in 2004.
82. The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory. In only just over a half of lessons was it satisfactory or better, although some good and very good teaching was also observed. Too many lessons are didactic in style, supported only by worksheets, some of which were even incorrect. Although a good template is used to plan all lessons, too many were incorrectly paced and finished early leading to restlessness amongst the students. Very limited use is made of practical work and, in particular, scientific enquiry. However, some very good course-work assignments were evident in Years 10 and 11. There was no evidence of work being modified to meet the differing needs of students in mixed-ability classes in Year 7 lessons, and the same worksheets were used for all abilities in other years. The lessons were often un motivating, lacking not only practical work, but also the effective use of videos and ICT in the delivery of the curriculum. An interactive white board is available but remained unused. Learning support assistants worked well with the teachers but were too often employed in controlling students' behaviour.
83. Learning at all levels is constrained by the poor control of some students' behaviour by some teachers. Students' progress and participation in their learning are totally related to the quality of classroom management and the motivational aspect of the work presented to them. Many capable students were encountered who had the capacity to communicate, analyse, evaluate and learn. Most students are capable of better quality written work and presentation than is asked of them.

84. The leadership of the department is good but is not strong enough in influencing curriculum planning. Only double-award modular science is available to students in Years 10 and 11. A GNVQ has been rejected and other courses have not been explored. The management of the department is effective in ensuring that clear and comprehensive policies and procedures are in place. Considerable development has taken place in managing student data and tracking progress to try to effect improvement.
85. All basic stock and equipment are in place, including a set of 10 laptop computers. There is only one VCR available on the Maze Hill site and none on the Westcombe Park site. The accommodation is poor, despite the refurbishment of three laboratories. These are bleak rooms with no displays. Other laboratories need urgent attention and maintenance. There are sufficient good textbooks, particularly in Years 10 and 11, for students to use in class, and revision books are now being used.
86. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Attainment has not improved, especially in Years 10 and 11. The Key Stage 3 strategy is being incorporated, but there have been no developments in Years 10 and 11. The resourcing of lessons has not greatly improved, with little use being made of ICT in teaching, and very limited access by students to ICT to research and enhance their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attainment of students is well below the national average.
- The application of ICT in most other subjects is unsatisfactory.
- The support and guidance given to students in lessons are good.
- Teachers' planning of lessons and use of resources are good.

Commentary

87. On entry to the school standards in the subject have improved significantly over the recent past and are now average. As a result of this, the recent adoption of the National Strategy and increases in curriculum time, standards are improving. In 2002, students in Year 9 had not benefited from these changes and, as a result, the standards were well below the national average. Current standards move closer to the average. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Students with special educational needs are integrated in lessons and make satisfactory progress with extra help from teachers but students with statements of special educational need do not receive sufficient help from learning assistants. Most students with English as an additional language make the same progress as other students.
88. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well. Topics are introduced effectively and there is good use of resources. In the best lessons, teachers involve students by asking questions and they use practical tasks based on real situations. When lessons are less successful, teachers fail to maintain the interest of students. In Year 7, the variety of teaching methods is limited but students learn to use an appropriate range of programmes to satisfactory levels.
89. All students study the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2002, the results of GCSE examinations were well below the national average, with one in four students obtaining A* - C grades on the long course and only one in ten students on the short course. The long GCSE examination course has been discontinued. In 2003, the GCSE examination results improved a little. In 2003, the GNVQ at intermediate level was examined for the first time. The examination results

were above the 2002 national average. Standards in the lessons are well below the national average overall. Achievement is broadly satisfactory.

90. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Students learn to apply computing to a range of realistic situations. Teachers time activities in lessons effectively. Challenge is appropriate. Students have unsatisfactory opportunities to apply ICT in other subjects and their standards in these lessons are well below average. Achievement is broadly satisfactory.
91. The leadership of the subject is shared. The GNVQ courses are led by another head of department. All courses are well managed. The four well-qualified teachers work well together and are keen to raise standards. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been improved and students' progress is improving. Standards remain unchanged. Overall improvement has been satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

92. The use of ICT in subjects is unsatisfactory. This is a significantly under-developed area. Most departments find access to the computing facilities difficult and applications are not co-ordinated. The ratio of students to computers is less favourable than the national average. There is little evidence that ICT is applied in art, citizenship, design and technology, English, history, mathematics, modern languages, music in Years 7 to 9 or science. In most of these areas there are no plans for its use in lessons in the near future. As a result of the interest taken by individual teachers, satisfactory applications occur in geography, religious education, music and physical education in Years 10 and 11. In most subjects, teachers encourage students to use ICT outside normal class time and at home but the proportion of students with computers at home is below the average. ICT is used satisfactorily as a planned part of the curriculum in leisure and tourism and health and social care but ICT is not seen as an essential learning tool in the school.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough.
- Teaching and learning have some good features.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Assessment procedures are good and the information these produce is used well to raise standards.
- Teachers do not set tasks to meet the needs of all students.

Commentary

93. Attainment in history at the end of Year 9 in 2003, based on assessments carried out by teachers, was well below the national average. There was a small overall improvement in the percentage of students attaining at the expected level, but this was not great enough to bring attainment closer to the national expectation. There has been a greater improvement in the percentage of students attaining at the higher level, but this also remains below the national picture. Evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment in the current Year 9 remains well below the national average.

94. Students enter the school with attainment in English which is below the national average and with very varied experience of the study of history. Work completed early in Year 7 indicates that attainment at that stage is well below the national average, especially in the area of historical skills. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory in reaching standards which nonetheless remain well below average. Students make satisfactory progress in the development and use of historical vocabulary, although the general vocabulary of nearly all is very limited and hinders progress significantly. They also make progress in acquiring key skills such as the use of historical source material.
95. The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 in 2003 was well below the national 2002 average, in terms of both A*-C grades and A* and A grades. The percentage of students who received a pass grade was close to what is seen nationally. This represents a significant decline since 2002, when attainment was much closer to average. A realistic prediction for 2004 made by the department, firmly based on regular assessments, suggests a slight improvement in 2004, but too small to raise standards much closer to what is seen nationally. A range of inspection evidence seen during the inspection indicates that these predictions are accurate and attainment remains well below what is seen nationally.
96. Students start their GCSE examination course with attainment which is, overall, well below average and their achievement is satisfactory, but this is not sufficient to raise standards closer to what is seen nationally. They make satisfactory progress in understanding a wide range of historical information, but their weak literacy skills and limited general vocabulary mean that they find it very difficult to meet the considerable demands of this subject. Students make good efforts to spell and punctuate accurately and this aspect of their work is generally satisfactory.
97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some emerging strengths. This represents maintenance of standards reported in the last inspection. Teachers make good use of planning for a range of activities to maintain interest and concentration and use a good variety of resources. They make good use of questioning and discussion to check and enhance understanding and most students respond well to this, showing willingness to participate. Marking of work is regular, helpful and informative. However, despite these very positive features, students' progress is usually only satisfactory overall because teachers do not provide tasks which meet the needs of all students across the range of attainment. Students are frequently not able to embark on the work set for them without additional help from their teacher and students are too dependent on this, which limits the progress they are able to make. Lower-attaining students, those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language sometimes fail to make as much progress as other students for this reason. This has an equally adverse effect on attitudes and behaviour, since students expect to wait for help before they are able to get started and either adopt a very leisurely approach or start to behave in a silly way which distracts others.
98. The quality of leadership and management is good. The recently appointed head of department has established a cohesive team of equally recently appointed teachers, following a period of staffing instability. There is a clear commitment to raising attainment, and priorities for achieving this have been correctly identified. An early start has been made on putting them into practice although it is too early for most to have taken effect. There is a good system for assessment, which is consistently and rigorously applied, and the information this provides is used well to identify potential under-achievement. There are good systems in place to offer students additional support both in lessons and outside them. The need to set work which meets the needs of all students has been recognised in the development plan, but the implementation of this has not been given high enough priority. The schemes of work, which are being updated, do not identify opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills. This is unsatisfactory, but even were plans for such provision in place, the difficulty of access to appropriate facilities would make it difficult to implement them. The need to improve access to ICT facilities was also noted in the last report.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Assessments are well designed.
- Procedures for monitoring, recording and analysing data are not well developed.
- Resources, particularly books and equipment, including ICT, are not used enough to enhance teaching and learning.
- The learning environment is poor.

Commentary

99. Standards are below average in the GCSE examinations and in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. The most recent GCSE examination results confirm a slight but rising trend of improvement. Achievement over time, including for students with special educational needs, is satisfactory; that of higher-attaining students is good. Girls do better than boys but both are well below girls' and boys' standards nationally, especially in the GCSE examinations. Current standards of work show signs of improvement and are closer to national expectations.
100. By the end of Year 11, a significant number of students can bring together their knowledge, understanding and skills to produce good coursework but, with no textbooks for home use, too few students make sufficiently detailed notes to inform their revision, thus compromising their examination standards. Their sensible use of opportunities to work both independently and together is indicative of good personal development.
101. By Year 9, students' written answers and assessment tasks indicate good knowledge of the diversity of people and places and of the impact of human intervention on natural environments. However, the understanding which students express orally is not written down in depth and often forgotten. Achievement is satisfactory, given below average standards on entry. Higher-attaining students and students with special needs make satisfactory progress but the learning of students at an early stage of learning English is hindered by the lack of modified resources to help them overcome language difficulties.
102. Teaching is good overall, a significant improvement since the last inspection and is helping to raise standards. Good subject knowledge stimulates interest. Methodical planning of learning activities and well-designed worksheets consolidate and extend learning but not always for students with specific needs. The lack of books, atlases and equipment, such as overhead projectors, televisions and videos, and limited space negatively impact on the quality and range of learning activities. The lack of ICT within the classroom compounds the limitations of school provision. Neither the subject nor students' work is celebrated because of imposed constraints on display. The strong stance on moral and social issues, particularly responsible behaviour, contributes very well to citizenship education and students' personal development. Movement between the two sites reduces lesson time.
103. The strong team of teachers – including newly qualified teachers – led by the head of department, have a good clear focus on development as seen in detailed schemes of work and well-designed assessments which meet the needs of all students. Although strong on monitoring and supporting teaching, management is deficient in the keeping of departmental records, the monitoring of students' progress and the analysis and use of assessment data for planning. This, together with unsatisfactory resources and accommodation, reduces the impact of the department, despite good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in teaching, but also in leadership and standards.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have brought about major improvements.
- High quality of teaching results in good achievement.
- There are no religious education lessons in the sixth form.
- This subject makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- The assessment of students' progress in Years 7 to 9 is weak.

Commentary

104. Standards in the 2002 GCSE examination were below national averages but in line with school averages. Current standards in Year 11 are close to national averages and are on an improving trend. A particularly good feature is the number of students working at the higher grades. They are able to understand and evaluate moral and social issues and religious responses to them. Students in middle and lower-attaining groups lack the confidence to work independently.
105. The attainment of students when they enter the school is well below average. By the time they reach Year 9, standards are below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Students can identify and describe practices across a number of religions but are not confident in their understanding of the beliefs that underpin them.
106. Achievement across the year groups is good overall and best in Years 10 and 11, where the demands of the GCSE examination encourage them to reflect on their knowledge of issues such as the environment. Most students respond well and express themselves confidently in discussions. In Year 9, most students make good progress and take an interest in the more philosophical approach to the subject, boys engaging particularly well when discussing the beliefs of leaders such as Martin Luther King. Students are open-minded and show no disrespect to other faiths and cultures.
107. The quality of teaching is predominantly good and is sometimes very good. Good features of lessons include the lively pace and the effective strategies that begin and end them. Teachers use a range of different approaches which usually lead to students being engaged and motivated in their work. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of behaviour and students respond well, taking their work seriously. Marking is thorough and helpful. Resources are good overall, particularly with respect to religious artefacts and video material. Currently, students do not have enough opportunities to visit places of worship. There is insufficient opportunity for students to work independently or in pairs and groups. The assessment of students' progress is weak in Years 7 to 9. Assessment tasks are interesting but do not measure standards in relation to the Agreed Syllabus or national guidelines.
108. Students with special educational needs are well supported, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where there are specific resources. Those with English as an additional language are helped by the teachers but have no specific learning support. Some of these students in Years 7 to 9 are withdrawn half of the time from the subject to enable them to receive appropriate language support. Their overall achievement is satisfactory.
109. The quality of leadership and management is very good. In recent years, there have been major improvements in planning and resourcing which have led to an improvement in standards and attitudes. The school is not meeting its statutory requirement to include religious

education in the sixth form, although this is now planned. Since the last inspection, progress has been very good in all respects, largely due to the efforts of the current head of department.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new team of specialist teachers is well led.
- There are good links with local firms to help improve achievement in GCSE manufacturing.
- Good activities are beginning to have a positive effect on attitudes.
- Marking is not sufficiently effective.
- Students are not sufficiently challenged to think for themselves.
- Too little use is made of computers and metal-working tools.

Commentary

110. GCSE examination results in 2002 were well below average. They were similar in 2003. The test results in 2003 for Year 9 were well below average. Standards in recent years have varied widely. Standards by the end of Year 9 remain well below average. Students make good products but their designing skills are underdeveloped. In Year 7 and Year 10, students' writing and designing skills are closer to nationally expected levels. Their work is improving. Standards of current work in Year 11, although below average, show that standards improve over time. Students compare different design ideas, make good quality products, understand manufacturing processes and draw good plans. Mathematics skills are used well. However, students' work does not sufficiently include key decision points, explanations, or their reasons for making decisions. Computers are not used well. Sources of information and procedures are not evaluated.
111. Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. Students with good communication and study skills progress well and those with special educational needs do well when supported by teachers or other adults. Students enjoy practical work, especially in food. However, teachers' expectations in some lessons are not challenging enough for higher-attaining students. If lessons proceed at too slow a pace some students quickly lose interest, especially in Year 9. However, attitudes and relationships between all students are good.
112. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Practical lessons are often exciting but the pace of learning in other lessons is too slow. Good features include teachers' high expectations and the scope given to students to assess their own work and that of others. In the very best lessons, good knowledge, enthusiasm and planning enable teachers to challenge all students. There is a weakness in marking because it does not consistently show to students how they can improve. Good links with local firms are benefiting the departments work in manufacture.
113. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because staffing difficulties have caused standards to fall. However, the well-led and competent team of specialist teachers has now stopped the decline, but recent improvements have not been in place long enough to be fully effective. However, there is a good plan to sustain improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management have led to an improving department.
- GCSE examination results are well below national averages.
- Good curriculum planning incorporates good opportunities for literacy and raises students' awareness of multi-cultural art and design.
- There is a lack of specialist support for students with special educational needs.
- Student's progress is limited by previous gaps in their knowledge, understanding and acquisition of skills at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Resources are inadequate, storage is limited, the studios are tired and shabby, and ventilation in the art/photographic studio is poor.

Commentary

114. Standards are below average by Year 9 and by Year 11. Students in Years 7 and 8 generally achieve in line with expectations and they make satisfactory progress. Achievement in Years 9, 10 and 11 is patchy and therefore unsatisfactory. This reflects the gaps in students' prior attainment, knowledge, skills and understanding. The results of teachers' assessments for students in Year 9 were below average. GCSE examination results in 2002 were well below average. Girls performed better than boys. The proportion of students gaining A*-C and A*-G grades was significantly lower than the proportion nationally. These results reflected low achievement, with students performing less well in art than in other subjects.
115. Students enter Year 7 with skills in drawing and painting that are below average. Standards improve slightly, but remain below average by Year 9. Drawings in Year 7 and 8 are bold and imaginative, and are beginning to show greater skills in observation and application of media. Mask-making in Year 8 shows imaginative and lively interpretations of ideas. In Year 9, students' weak drawing and evaluative skills are the main reason that achievement is uneven, despite some good teaching. The scheme of work is flexible enough to enable higher-attaining students to achieve appropriately and in some lessons well.
116. Current standards are slightly higher than those attained in recent GCSE examinations. This indicates improving achievement compared with students' below average prior attainment. By Year 11, students' skills in annotation, research and evaluation are steadily improving through direct teaching and an improved curriculum. Students' use of technical language is also improving as a result of the applied literacy strategy in art. Students with special educational needs usually achieve appropriately due to well-targeted support. However, on occasions when specialist support would be beneficial and is not present, students make limited progress and also interrupt the progress of other students. Students' progress is hindered by previous gaps in their knowledge, understanding and acquisition of skills. Some older students lack the technical competencies to improve the quality of their work. Personal studies lack any real depth and breadth of study. As a result of good teacher interaction and good assessment practices, improvements are beginning to be evident. In Years 10 and 11, current work points to better progress made by a significant proportion of students, although standards remain below those nationally. Limited skills and lack of direct access to ICT limit their exploration and opportunities to attain the highest grades in the GCSE examinations.
117. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, and in a third of lessons seen it was good. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. Specialist teaching motivates and interests students. They are well supported and encouraged to improve their research and investigative skills. Some students lack the confidence to work independently and are too reliant on teachers to provide resources and direction. Teachers generally manage classes satisfactorily – and some can be particularly challenging. Positive features of all lessons are detailed planning, good

opportunities to develop speaking, listening and evaluative skills and a good focus on art from different cultural traditions, including Western. Suitably chosen activities improve levels of confidence as well as understanding of the basic formal elements of art.

118. Learning is satisfactory in both key stages. In the majority of lessons, students are interested in the activities and are eager to learn and work co-operatively. Limited resources prevent students from using a wide range of resources to develop their preparatory ideas. Students enjoy art and are beginning to form good links between their own work and other artists' techniques.
119. Since the appointment of the new head of department, effective self-evaluation and well organised schemes of work show that students are developing a systematic approach to learning and are acquiring basic skills. Addressing the gaps in students' previous knowledge and experiences continues to be a priority. With the support of teachers, the head of department has identified key areas for development and these are progressing effectively. Monitoring has contributed much to the good development. The department is now showing all the signs of a rapidly improving department. The profile of art in the school has improved. Students now take a pride in their work, and are pleased when it is displayed. The climate for learning is better and there are signs of improving standards, attitudes and behaviour. Resources, including ICT, to help to raise standards are limited. Studios, despite interesting displays, are shabby and tired, storage is limited and one art/photographic studio has poor ventilation. Significant changes have occurred since the last inspection but the very positive developments that have taken place have not yet had sufficient time to make an impact on standards. Nevertheless, progress has been satisfactory

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are effective, committed, hard working, and enthusiastic.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular ensembles and activities.
- There are insufficient computers for use in Years 7 to 9.
- Accommodation is not adequate for larger classes.

Commentary

120. The standard of current work in Years 9 and 11, and the 2003 assessments and GCSE examination results, show that standards at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are below average.
121. Students' achieve at least as well as those in similar schools but to raise their achievement further they need to take more responsibility for their own learning. The most able students do not always do as well as they could because classwork does not always challenge them and give them opportunities to achieve at the highest levels. However, in the extended curriculum more able students are given good opportunities to excel. During the inspection, students with English as an additional language and students with special educational needs made appropriate progress and there were no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. This is because the curriculum and its delivery are accessible to all students irrespective of their gender, ability and culture.
122. Teachers know their subject and their students well. They deliver well-planned, well-structured lessons which focus on learning; they insist on high standards of behaviour and develop firm, fair and friendly relationships with students. Consistent, good teaching means that students acquire and consolidate musical skills and knowledge; they apply themselves, concentrate and work productively – though not all of them willingly. In Years 7 to 9, homework is set according to the school policy but it does not always develop musical learning. Homework is used more effectively in examination groups. Assessment and feedback in the classroom are good. Students reflect on what has been learned and they receive accurate appraisals of their work. Teachers use assessment of what students can and cannot do to inform planning.
123. A strong, effective team of class and peripatetic teachers is led very well with a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations. Resources are managed very well but accommodation is inadequate for larger classes and there are not enough computers to deliver the statutory requirement for ICT in Years 7 to 9.
124. The school provides a good range of out-of-school music-making opportunities, with repertoire appropriate to the students. Ensembles perform in the school and the wider community. This provision might be developed further, particularly in music that reflects the rich cultural diversity of the school and its community, but this could not be done within existing resources. On balance, the progress made since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Drama

125. Lessons in drama were sampled and evidence indicates that provision is satisfactory. Three lessons were observed and all were satisfactory. The drama programme is managed competently by an experienced specialist teacher and the drama space is used appropriately but students do not have a properly equipped performance area with stage lighting for GCSE practical work and extra-curricular activities, and this militates against high quality work being achieved. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 enjoy their fortnightly drama lessons because they develop improvisation skills and begin to study drama texts through performance. Two large groups in Years 10 and 11 have chosen to study drama to GCSE examination level. Achievement in the examination has been consistently in line with standards obtained nationally and sometimes better. A significant proportion of students obtain good grades and the pass rate is among the highest in the school. Students who devote time, thought and effort to coursework are the most successful, although all students enjoy the practical work.
126. The teaching observed was satisfactory. Instructions were clear, guidance appropriate and time was used well. In the lessons observed, disruptive behaviour which hindered the progress of other students was dealt with firmly and positively by the teacher. Written coursework for GCSE examinations is marked meticulously, indicating the need for students to review their experiences in practical work and evaluate the effect of their acting performance on an

audience. Students are learning to build stable working relationships with each other, interacting harmoniously to control their emotions and contribute to a whole-group performance. Overall, drama makes a valuable contribution to students' personal development because they learn that each individual is responsible for the success of the whole group.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management are resulting in the creation of a strong and purposeful ethos.
- Provision for activities outside normal lessons has been extended considerably.
- The number of students on the examination course has increased dramatically.
- Curriculum time for students in Year 10 and 11 is inadequate.
- A great deal of time is lost in travelling to and from the playing fields.
- Indoor facilities are poor and restrict the range of activities available for students.

Commentary

127. In 2002 and 2003, the percentage of students who gained A* to C grades in the GCSE examination was well below average. Teacher assessment shows that standards by the end of Year 9 in 2003 were also well below average. Current standards in Year 9 are below average but are improving. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are average. In the one lesson observed in Year 11, where there were some very talented footballers, standards were above average. The attainment of GCSE examination students in Year 11 is below average overall, but is significantly higher than in the two previous years. Individual students reach standards which are above average in athletics, cricket, cross-country, football, girls' football and gymnastics.
128. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Starting from a very low base, most are improving their skills in activities that are new to them, such as gymnastics and volleyball. In core physical education in Years 10 and 11, achievement is unsatisfactory because curriculum time is inadequate. The achievement of students following the examination course is good. Most students with special educational needs or those for whom English as an additional language progress as well as others because they are well supported by their teachers.
129. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. It is good in almost all lessons. Practices are carefully structured and a progressive series of challenging activities results in good learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and relationships with students are generally very good. As a result, most students behave very well. Teachers deal firmly but sensitively with those students who have behavioural difficulties.
130. The head of department has been in post for only two years. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear sense of purpose and a strong focus on raising standards. Teachers are working together well. The positive ethos that is being created is having a significant impact on the response shown by students. For example, last year only 13 students sat the GCSE examination, whereas now there are about 120 students in Years 10 and 11 studying at this level. Good improvement in the past two years has seen the introduction of a new assessment system, revised schemes of work and an extension of extra-curricular provision. Some areas of concern remain. The amount of curriculum time is inadequate in Years 10 and 11. A considerable amount of time is lost for all students in travelling to and from the playing fields. Indoor accommodation is poor and restricts the range of practical activities that staff can offer. There is no permanent base for teaching the theoretical elements of the

GCSE examination course. In spite of these difficulties, good progress is being made in the quest to raise standards. The potential for further improvement is very evident.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good enthusiastic leadership is strongly committed to citizenship education.
- A curriculum plan is effectively integrating citizenship into personal, social and health education.
- The monitoring of provision is not sufficient to ensure that the experience of citizenship education is positive.
- The time allowed to citizenship in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate.
- Development planning is not yet completed or implemented.

Commentary

131. In Years 10 and 11, students have some limited experience of citizenship during one registration a week lasting for less than 20 minutes; given poor punctuality and attendance, some students have minimal experience. A significant number of students show little interest, even in topics such as human rights. Only in better behaved tutor groups do willing co-operation, good thinking and meaningful discussion result in average standards and, occasionally, good achievement.
132. Students in Years 7 to 9 have a regular experience of personal, social and health education and take the introduction of citizenship into these lessons in their stride. Most students behave well, are attentive, exchange ideas willingly and work with enthusiasm. Lively and good-humoured discussions reflect good thinking and understanding of the roles and seriousness of the responsibilities assumed by adults around them as regards personal safety and learning opportunities. As yet standards are average but achievement overall is high.
133. Form tutors deliver the curriculum in all year groups. Teaching overall is satisfactory. It is good in Years 7 to 9, where teachers have the advantage of hour-long lessons with time for different learning activities. Teaching is less successful in Years 10 and 11 where pastoral demands often curtail the meagre time available. The subject is new to all teachers, who are still getting to grips with content and teaching methods. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of the very good resources available. The engagement and management of younger students are good but are more problematic with older students. Not all teachers adhere to the curriculum plan.
134. Leadership is good. The head of department is the driving force behind the introduction of citizenship. Her enthusiasm and commitment have won the support of colleagues. Curriculum planning is very good and reflects hard work and good thinking about outcomes. The integration of citizenship with personal, social and health education has been managed effectively. Resources are very good. There is still, however, much to do on the development front. Teams of teachers for teaching citizenship have yet to be identified and given the necessary training; detailed schemes of work have still to be prepared. An audit of cross-curricular aspects of citizenship has yet to be undertaken. The school council and prefect system are not part of the planned provision and post-16 involvement has yet to be considered. Day-to-day management of the current provision is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient monitoring, especially in Years 10 and 11, to check that the desired outcomes are being achieved and that there is quality of provision in all year groups.

Personal, social and health education

135. There is a well-planned programme for students in Year 7 to 11. Appropriate aspects of sex education, drugs education and citizenship education are included in the programme in both key stages, taking into consideration students' needs and stage of maturity. The programme is particularly effective in Years 7 to 9 by being delivered in a single, one-hour lesson each week.
136. Leadership is good and has led to effective provision overall. Tutors are given good guidance and have access to appropriate resources. However, the allocation of three shorter time slots in tutor time in Years 10 and 11 is not effective as registration, administration and, in some cases, students' poor punctuality reduces time for teaching and learning.
137. The quality of teaching and learning varies across both key stages. In the best lessons, planning is good and students respond positively, but not all students, especially in Years 10 and 11, behave well and this limits the impact of the programme. Inadequate time in Years 10 and 11 also reduces opportunities for effective discussion.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The tables below show entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	6	100	81.6	16.7	33.2	35	33.2
Chemistry	7	42.9	84.8	0.0	36.9	12.9	35.2
Physics	5	40	82	20	36.2	14	34.3

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
English literature	7	71.4	98.5	14.3	43.7	48.6	84.3
Mathematics	12	100	93.3	50	52.2	85	84.7
Biology	12	75	91.6	8.3	36.3	53.3	74.1
Chemistry	8	62.5	94	12.5	45.9	47.5	81.1
History	7	100	97.1	0.0	41	54.3	81.2
Design and technology	6	100	95.3	0.0	35.5	50	76.5
Art and design	11	54.5	96.1	18.2	48.7	40	85.1
Other social studies	7	71.4	94.3	14.3	38.9	42.9	77.7
Communication studies	6	62.5	94	0.0	36.8	46.7	81.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature

Provision in English literature is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough.
- Students enjoy their courses because teachers value their efforts and mark their work in detail.
- Students do not have enough practice in sustained writing.
- Students analyse a broad range of literature interpreting meaning from the texts.
- The personal responses of students to literature need further development.

Commentary

138. Standards of attainment in the AS and A-level examinations are too low. This is because many students begin their courses with relatively low grades. Staff are encouraging students to re-take these GCSE examinations to improve the quality of their written work before tackling AS levels. As a result of skilful teaching, with an emphasis on the critical evaluation of texts, students' achievements are improving steadily on both courses. Overall the quality of teaching is good. The quality of learning is also good because teachers plan their lessons carefully so that students develop a critical awareness of the effects that poets create through the forms of language they use and their choice of words to convey thoughts and ideas. The quality of marking is very good because teachers give students clear advice on ways to improve. The curriculum is well balanced because students study a broad spectrum of poetry, plays and novels, but students need more practice in writing at length.
139. Some perceptive analysis of poetry across periods of time indicates that students are equally sensitive to the devices used by the metaphysical poets to convey their opinions and the more robust views of a changing society expressed by contemporary American poets. Students explore Shakespeare's use of imagery and symbolism in 'Hamlet' and 'Othello' by tracing the themes of revenge and tragedy. Students spoke enthusiastically about reading contemporary novels and compared Margaret Atwood's views of women in society with those of the nineteenth century novelist, Elizabeth Gaskell. Students use quotations appropriately to validate key points in their essays but written work is limited in scope because students accept too readily the opinions of established literary critics. They need to develop their personal ideas and express these positively at some length in response to the literature they study. The new sixth form library is a positive asset because students are encouraged to develop their wider reading skills, and the library has the resources to support them. Overall, sixth form provision has improved since the last inspection because teachers are sensitive to the students' need to develop the skills necessary for successful entry to further education.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

140. Standards of literacy are satisfactory but some individual students lack confidence and they do not have access to a well-designed course dedicated to improving basic skills and improving their overall communication.

MATHEMATICS

141. The inspection focused on the A-level course with modules in pure mathematics and mechanics. In addition the GCSE examination course, for those wishing to improve their grade, was inspected.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards are achieved in A-level examinations.
- Experienced teachers draw upon their good subject knowledge to direct students' learning.
- Insufficient individual support is given to lower-attaining students.

- The marking of students' work does not give students enough guidance or how to improve.

Commentary

142. The mathematics department has provided well for students completing the A-level course. Notable features for the last two years are that all students have been successful with more than half of the 26 entries resulting in A and B grades. In mathematics, students generally do as well as or better than in their other subjects. Currently, smaller numbers of students are following the course. They have very good GCSE examination results in mathematics; their modular results to date are in line with A-level expectations but, as yet, few high-grade module results have been recorded.
143. Overall, teaching is good because it is carefully structured and builds well on students' prior knowledge. In Year 13, students confidently discuss their work and are appropriately prepared to tackle examination questions at speed. Some students who begin the course with good qualifications are unsuccessful and repeat the first year; their needs are not sufficiently considered to overcome their difficulties. In common with other Year 12 students, they are not sufficiently aware of the standards of their work: they do not know what to do to improve. Students lack the benefit of having their work marked by teachers and consequently cannot refer back to guidance if they have not remembered oral feedback and this is a weakness.
144. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Teachers liaise insufficiently to serve the best interests of all students following the first year of the A-level course. In Year 13, students have developed good attitudes towards study and so are confident to discuss work with each other and with teachers. They have access to additional support and their planning for university education includes the study of mathematics and disciplines within which mathematical knowledge will be required. Since the last inspection, A-level standards have been restored following a dip.
145. The GCSE examination mathematics re-sit course has been successful in enabling some students to improve their grades. Currently attainment is jeopardised by erratic attendance. Teaching is satisfactory but not enough homework is set and work is not marked adequately. Students are insufficiently supported because they have no text to take home and are not given firm guidance to appreciate what is required of them for success at the higher grade.

Mathematics across the curriculum

146. Students use of mathematics is satisfactorily. They use mathematics competently to support A-level studies in biology and physics. Students on business education courses successfully apply mathematical knowledge to the analysis of financial data, including preparation of invoices and determination of break-even points. Mathematical skills are developed well in A-level and GNVQ ICT courses to use logic algorithms and to analyse questionnaires.

SCIENCE

147. Biology was the focus on this inspection. Chemistry and physics are also taught to A-Level standard.

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at A-level and AS-level are improving.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The students work hard and are keen to do well.
- Teacher-student relationships are strong and help encourage students to study.
- There are no alternative courses to A-level for lower-attaining students.
- The range of teaching styles is not wide enough to match the range of students' abilities.
- Data analysis and target setting are not rigorous enough.

148. A-level results in 2002 were well below average. In 2003 there was some improvement and the students currently in Year 13 are expected to produce at least average results. AS-level results in 2002 were well above average. There were no AS-level results in 2003 because all the students chose to continue the study of the subject to A-level. The standard of work seen in lessons and in books is good overall. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and standards are continuing to improve.
149. While the most recent A-level results were below average overall, some students gained high grades, reflecting very good progress. Some students had begun the course with insufficient prior knowledge and understanding and their achievement of A-level grades, albeit lower grades, reflects satisfactory progress. Most students in Years 12 and 13 are making good progress in lessons but those who did not achieve a higher-grade GCSE in science are not progressing as well.
150. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they share their enthusiasm for the subject with the students and they explain difficult concepts well. The strong teacher-student relationships enable the students to engage readily in discussion, helping them to develop their thinking skills. In a genetics revision lesson in Year 13 students were articulate in discussion and displayed a mature attitude to their work. However, as the students are of varying abilities and lessons are long, they would benefit from a wider range of teaching and learning styles. They do not at present make enough use of videos and computers. All students, but especially higher attainers, have undeveloped independent study skills and are not given enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.
151. The leadership and management of the subject are good and focus on raising standards. The head of department has a clear vision of how she would like the subject to develop. The development plan includes increasing the number of students choosing to study biology beyond GCSE, selecting only higher-attaining students for the A-level courses and offering alternative courses for lower-attaining students. There is good teamwork between the two teachers of biology and, through working together on a review of the current Year 13 students' attainments and progress, they devised a revision programme which has resulted in improved standards and in the students' increased confidence. The subject development plan, while sound, is not yet a working document with clear and timed objectives, which would help ensure its implementation. Likewise, the students' attainments, strengths and weaknesses are not well enough documented and updated to enable useful target setting for students' academic and study-skill development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communications technology across the curriculum

152. This is an area which needs much development. Because of a lack of access to computing facilities little work is planned in many areas. As a result, there are many missed opportunities to use ICT in lessons. In business and travel and tourism, ICT is used satisfactorily to research topics, present work and analyse data. In English, music and science, students are encouraged to use ICT. In English some students present their work in word-processed form. Many of these applications are done outside normal class time and at home. When ICT is used the work is normally well done.

HUMANITIES

153. On this inspection the focus was on history. Geography, sociology and psychology are also taught to A-level standard. Although it was not possible to see any lessons in geography because students were on trial examinations, the students' work was sampled. No students are currently studying the subject at AS-level. There are four students in Year 13 one of whom is in Year 14, retaking the subject. The sample of work indicates good coverage of the relevant modules and learning in some depth. Students make good use of information and texts provided and their level of understanding is good. A significant weakness is that students do not present well-drawn and annotated diagrams and even if this is done they are not always linked to the text. Examples and/or named areas are also neglected. This reduces the quality of their work. Standards overall are average and achievement, given variable standards on entry, is good. Marking is detailed and constructive.

History

Overall, provision for history in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is rising to meet the national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Good use is made of assessment to keep students and teachers informed about progress, and marking is good.
- There are no opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum outside lessons.

Commentary

154. Attainment at A-level in 2003 was below the national average for 2002, the most recent year for which comparative statistics are available. Fewer students than average attained grades A and B, although all attained a pass grade. This represents an improvement since 2002, when the average points score of students was very low. The predicted grades for students currently in Years 12 and 13, based firmly on regular assessments, are very close to the national average and the evidence of the inspection confirms this.

155. Students who are currently studying for AS and A-level in Years 12 and 13 started the course with good prior attainment in their history and English GCSE examinations and this forms an appropriate basis for the considerable demands of studying history at this level. They are currently achieving well in response to good teaching and are on course to attain the grades predicted for them. Students make good progress in handling a very wide range of historical information and in planning their written answers to utilise this effectively. They make good use of a wide range of additional reading from the works of well known historians in order to enhance their understanding of the contextual background of the periods and situations they

study. Students respond to this reading with interest and good judgement. They also make good progress in the confident handling and interpretation of a wide range of contemporary source material.

156. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Teachers provide a good range of activities in lessons, including ones which give students the opportunity to make a substantial contribution in the form of class presentations. In order to get through everything that has been planned, students and teachers have to work hard and there is no time wasted. Teachers provide a good range of resources – for example, photographs, contemporary accounts and extracts from the work of reputable historians – in order to clarify the diversity of possible interpretations, and students respond with great interest and commitment. Teachers are confident in their very good subject knowledge and this gives students additional confidence in tackling the demanding requirements of the course. There are very good opportunities for questioning and discussion; students listen well to the ideas of others and make good progress. The quality of marking and feedback is good. Students are given a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve and they speak approvingly of the amount of help they are given. Their understanding of how to improve their work is enhanced by the fact that teachers provide clear information on the examination criteria which are used to award marks to their written answers.

157. The leadership and management of the recently appointed head of department are good. Some priorities for improvement have been put into practice at an early stage; for example, careful analysis of examination results has led to the identification of where it would be sensible to make changes to the syllabus in order to enhance students' chances of success. Procedures for regular formal assessment, based on examination questions, are good and give students good practice in these vital skills, as well as giving very precise information on their progress. Students are given useful feedback on their performance in assessments and they show good understanding of how they can improve their grades. Teachers also keep parents informed when students are experiencing difficulties, especially in coming to terms with the early part of the AS-level course. At present there are no opportunities offered for the enrichment of students' experience of history outside lessons, which is unsatisfactory.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

158. In travel and tourism, two students were examined for the AVCE in 2002, both obtained an E grade. In 2003, the examination results were the same. No lessons were observed.

BUSINESS

Business studies

The quality of provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning and management of students in lessons are good.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are normally good.
- Students drop out from the GNVQ course.

Commentary

159. Standards on entry to the sixth form are average. In 2002, the GNVQ examination results at intermediate level were broadly average but nearly half of the students enrolled withdrew in the early stages of the course. In 2003, the examination results were lower but the retention rate improved. The AVCE course has yet to be finally examined. In 2003, AS examination results

were broadly average. A certificate in financial services has recently been started successfully. The standards in the lessons in all courses observed were average. Overall, achievement is broadly average.

160. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. They plan and manage students in lessons well. As a result, students' attitudes are positive and their behaviour good. Teachers use good course materials and textbooks in lessons. All topics are introduced satisfactorily and sometimes well. In the best lessons, students are motivated well by the teachers asking them questions as the lessons progress. Students are given good help and advice by teachers during practical activities. When lessons are less successful teachers fail to maintain the attention of students and do not challenge them sufficiently. As a result of a lack of resources, not enough use is made of ICT to present work, research topics and analyse results.
161. All courses are well managed. The two members of staff work together well and there are good plans for improving provision. ICT resources in the teaching rooms are insufficient for all students to use ICT in their work as matter of routine. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained and the range of courses increased.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

162. A sampling of PSHE provision, including teaching, showed that students in both years are provided with good service and support, both in relation to careers and their own personal development.

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