

INSPECTION REPORT

OXTED SCHOOL

Oxted

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125253

Head teacher: Margaret Hawley

Lead inspector: Grace Marriott

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th September 2003

Inspection number: 259300

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 - 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll;	2165
School address:	Bluehouse Lane Oxted Surrey
Postcode:	RH8 0AB
Telephone number:	01883 712425
Fax number:	01883 723973
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Margaret McNaughton MBE DL
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very large secondary school situated in the small Surrey town of Oxted, on the southern edge of Greater London. It has over 2000 students on roll, including a sixth form of 450. The school has achieved the Charter Mark, Sportsmark, the Careers Excellence Award and an award for the Partnership with Parents. The school facilities are extensively used for adult education. The students come overwhelmingly from white UK backgrounds, few are from ethnic minorities and very few are at an early stage of learning English. Students come in the main from advantaged homes, and the proportion entitled to free school meals is very low. The proportion of students with special educational needs is below average though it is rising slightly. These needs relate mainly to dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school also has a specialist unit for students who are visually impaired. The students join the school with above average attainment overall, though with relatively few students at the highest levels.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Lead inspector	
9596	Susan Cash	Lay inspector	
23487	Patricia Kitley	Team inspector	English 11-16 and 6 th Form, English as an additional language
18178	Ian Matthews	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-16 and 6 th Form
29742	Patricia Fyans	Team inspector	Science 11-16 and Chemistry 6 th Form
32231	Adrian Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-16 Economics 6 th Form
8159	Kevin Wright	Team inspector	Art and design 11-16 and 6 th form
1583	Paul Morgan	Team inspector	Design and technology 11-16
8096	Nigel File	Team inspector	Geography 11-16
10761	Patrick Willan	Team inspector	History 11-16 and 6 th Form
15075	Bryan Stephens	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages 11-16 French 6 th Form
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Physical education 11-16 and Sport 6 th Form
2652	Robin Lomas	Team inspector	Special educational needs Psychology 6 th Form
22423	Jon Lovgreen	Team inspector	Theatre studies 6 th Form Communication studies 6 th form
31503	Kevin Sadler	Team inspector	Music 11-16
22982	Denise Chaplin	Team inspector	Religious education 11-16, Philosophy 6 th Form
22754	Brenda Parsons	Team inspector	Vocational education
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Citizenship
17171	Mary Last	Team inspector	Visually impaired unit
10060	David Guttman	Team inspector	Health and social care 6 th form

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Ltd

Langshaw
Pastens Road
Limpsfield Chart
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0RE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	10
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	12
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	
Teaching and learning	14
The curriculum	17
Care, guidance and support	18
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	20
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	21
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	
Provision for visually impaired students	23
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	25
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	45
Part D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	64

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Oxted is a very successful school. It has an ethos which strongly promotes and values achievement in all areas and at all levels. A high level of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, and very good management lead to high standards. Students think this is a good school and are proud to attend it. Their parents are also supportive. The school is not complacent about its success and is keen to improve further. It gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average overall and students achieve well.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good overall and the head teacher provides excellent leadership.
- The sixth form is very good.
- The school provides an exceptionally wide range of enrichment and extension activities.
- The provision for visually impaired students is very good.
- The vast majority of students have very good attitudes and behave very well. They are prepared to work hard and relationships are very good. A very few students have negative attitudes which at times affect other students' learning.
- Some recent developments, for example in assessment, have not had enough time to have a significant impact on students' progress.
- The provision for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the last inspection, but there is still scope to extend its use further.

The school is very aware of the areas which, though satisfactory, need improvement and is working hard on these. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection and the issues raised have been dealt with well. Development planning and monitoring are systematic and clearly focused on significant issues relating to teaching, learning and curriculum development. Requirements for design and technology are now met and with the extension of religious education into Year 13 this year, this requirement is also met. The school has a structure in place to provide a daily act of collective worship, but this is not implemented consistently.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Students achieve well and many achieve very well.

- Students join the school with above average standards though with few very high attainers.
- They achieve very well overall and standards are well above average in Year 9 tests, at GCSE and at A Level.
- The inspection evidence showed particularly good standards in Years 7 to 11 in English, science, geography, physical education (PE), and also in RE and music in Years 10 and 11.
- In the sixth form subjects inspected in depth, standards are well above average in English, mathematics, drama, communication studies, health and social care, psychology and economics and above average in PE, French, chemistry and philosophy. They are average in history and art.

- In the sixth form subjects sampled, the 2002 A Level results were well above average in geography, biology and sociology.
- In 2002, results in Year 9 tests show students achieving better than might have been expected in English.
- Boys and girls are doing equally well in mathematics and science, but girls are doing better in English in Year 9 and at GCSE, though the gap is narrowing.
- The 2002 GCSE results overall were as good as those of similar schools.
- Almost all subjects have improved their GCSE results over the last four years, or have maintained their already high level.
- Visually impaired students make very good progress and achieve very well.
- The 2003 results are similar to previous years except in design and technology where results which had been below average improved considerably and in A Level art where results were affected by staffing difficulties.

Students develop into mature and responsible young people. Their spiritual, moral, and cultural development is **good** overall, social development is **excellent**.

- The vast majority behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards school.
- Attendance is well above average and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school is providing a very good education for the vast majority of its students.

The very good curriculum has an unusually wide range of enrichment and extension activities and an exceptional range of opportunities for social and personal development. The introduction of vocational courses is very appropriate and is being well-managed. The house structure supports academic and personal development very strongly.

The teaching is very good overall and particularly good in the sixth form

The high level of good and very good teaching which leads to very good learning, is a very important reason for the success of the students. Teachers are very keen to share their very good subject knowledge. Lessons have a clear structure, moving from simpler to more complex tasks in a logical sequence which helps students to understand the work and make good progress. In the few unsatisfactory lessons with younger classes, the match of work to students' needs and abilities was not good enough and a very few teachers did not deal firmly enough with behaviour which was irritating rather than seriously disruptive. Most of the marking and assessment of students' work gives them helpful guidance, but this is not wholly consistent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good.

The head teacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by a strong senior and middle management team. They are maintaining the high standards and successfully bringing about improvement in monitoring of teaching and in assessment. The very good governing body is closely involved in strategic planning and in monitoring.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has very good links with parents and students are positive about the school.

- Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the quality of education provided. Some parents have concerns such as the behaviour of a minority of students, the impact of staff turnover in some departments and the consistency of marking and homework. In all cases the school is aware of the concerns and is working to improve the situation. Considerable effort has gone in to recruiting well-qualified staff and the turnover has not had a significant impact on standards. Some parents do not feel well enough informed about their children's progress. The inspection team felt that the general information available to parents is of very good quality. Reports meet requirements and are informative.

- Students appreciate the range of opportunities and the quality of teaching. They were confident that bullying, particularly anything physical, was dealt with quickly and effectively, though a few students felt that a few staff did not always take verbal bullying seriously enough. The school takes bullying very seriously and tries hard to achieve consistency in how it is dealt with.
- Sixth form students in particular play a major role in the school. They provide support and activities for younger students and see this as a means of giving something back to the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

To raise the already high standards further, the head teacher, staff and governors should work to ensure that the expectations and level of challenge evident in a high proportion of the school's work are available to all students. The most important things the school should do to improve are:

In Years 7 to 11

- Make more consistent use of information from marking and assessment to match work to students' needs.
- Apply more consistently the strategies for improving the behaviour and attitudes and dealing with the anti-social behaviour of a small minority of students.
- Extend the use of ICT.

In the sixth form

- Raise achievement in art particularly in relation to the higher grades.
- Extend the use of ICT and improve the overall co-ordination of provision.

SIXTH FORM SUMMARY

Overall Evaluation

Oxted has a very successful sixth form. The strengths apparent at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and the curriculum has been broadened to include vocational courses. Academic standards are well above average in most subjects, students achieve well and the teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. Sixth formers have access to an exceptionally wide range of enrichment and extension activities, as well as opportunities to take responsibility and develop leadership skills. They play a significant role in the school's provision of activities for younger students. The sixth form is cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Well above average academic standards overall, with girls doing better than boys by a similar margin to the national difference.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Students who show considerable maturity in their attitudes to work and make a substantial contribution to the life of the school.
- The use of ICT, though not a significant weakness, could be extended further to support work in most subjects.
- A Level general studies is less successful than other A Level subjects and the proportion of higher grades in art is significantly lower than in other subjects. Neither subject is unsatisfactory.

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 literature	Very good: very good teaching and teachers' subject knowledge result in standards that are well above the national average.
French	Good: good teaching, which enthuses students and enables them to reach above average

	standards in oral and written work.
Mathematics	Very good: good teaching, which encourages and motivates students, results in high standards well above national averages.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
Chemistry	Good: teachers' subject knowledge makes learning chemistry challenging but fun. Very positive students' attitudes lead to above average standards.
History	Good: enthusiastic teachers and committed students ensure students meet their expectations.
Philosophy and ethics	Good: as a result of the good quality of teaching, students enjoy philosophy. They are eager to learn and they achieve good results.
Psychology	Very good: the continuing high standards are primarily down to very good teaching and the very positive attitudes of the students.
Economics	Very good: results and students' achievement are very good. Students are highly motivated by very good teaching.
Health and social care	Good: students achieve well through good and very good teaching. Standards are well in line with national expectations.
Communication studies	Very good: standards are well above average particularly in performance, because of students' enthusiastic response to consistently very good teaching.
Art	Satisfactory: teachers have good subject knowledge and students have excellent attitudes, but the proportion of students achieving higher grades is not as good as other subjects because the curriculum is too narrow and does not develop their critical skills enough.
Theatre studies	Very good: students respond very well to the expert teaching and achieve very well. Standards are well above average.
Physical education	Very good: very good teaching integrates theory and practical work skilfully and imaginatively. Students work very hard to achieve very good standards of practical work and good theory work.

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

The advice available to students is comprehensive and readily available. The sixth form management team, tutors, subject teachers, and other specialist staff understand students' needs very well and provide them with a high level of support. Assessment is thorough and clearly based on examination requirements. Written work is thoroughly marked and students receive very clear guidance on how to improve.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management in the sixth form are very good.

- The head of the sixth form, supported by the head teacher and leadership team, has a very clear vision for the sixth form and a good development plan.
- The growth in the size of the sixth form is being very carefully managed to ensure that the school provides appropriate and viable courses.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are positive about the sixth form; they value the quality of teaching and willingness of staff to give up time to help them. The questionnaire indicated some concerns about the quality of advice and support available, but in discussion it became evident that this reflected recent changes to the tutor system which had not had time to settle down, and in practice, students felt well advised and supported. Sixth formers also felt that the social accommodation was inadequate, a view shared by

the staff and governors. The school is working hard to remedy this, within the constraints of an already crowded site.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Standards are **well above average overall**. Students achieve **very well** and there is little significant under-achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are well above average in Year 9 tests, at GCSE and at A Level.
- In 2002, results in Year 9 tests show students achieving better than might have been expected in English.
- The 2002 GCSE results were as good as those of similar schools.
- In the sixth form standards are well above average at A Level.
- The 2003 results at GCSE and A Level are similar to previous years except in design and technology where results are better and in A Level art where results were not as good as in previous years.
- Students are achieving well – there is little under-achievement.
- Students with special educational needs and visually impaired students make very good progress.
- Boys and girls are doing equally well in mathematics and science, but girls are doing better in English in Year 9 and at GCSE.

Commentary

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)

1. Students join the school in Year 7 with standards which are above average overall when compared with standards nationally. Relatively few are very high attainers and, though below the national average, the proportion of students with special educational needs is increasing. The vast majority of students are achieving very well and there is little under-achievement. By the time they reach the end of Year 9, standards overall are well above average. The school has very few students for whom English is an additional language and they achieve at a similar level to other students.
2. The results of the national tests in Year 9 are rising at a faster rate than they are nationally and the gap between the school's and national results is widening. Students have made most progress in English, where the standards achieved in the Year 9 tests in 2002 were better than those of similar schools. In mathematics and science, the results were in line with those of similar schools. At the end of Year 9 and at GCSE, boys and girls are doing equally well in mathematics and science. In English girls do better than boys at all levels, but the action the school is taking is proving effective in narrowing the gap.
3. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are very consistent across subjects and the standard of work represents good achievement overall. The work seen was particularly good in English, science and history, and good in almost all other subjects. Standards in ICT and music were average. This is largely because the time allocated to ICT is relatively low and in music the work is not always matched well enough to students' needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.4 (37.3)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	37.6 (37.2)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	36.1 (36.2)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 371 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2001

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

- GCSE results are well above average and the percentage of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades has been maintained at the level reported in the previous inspection. Overall, more than two thirds of each year group achieve five or more A* to C grades and many achieve significantly more. The average point score per pupil has improved slightly which means that students are achieving better grades. Over the last four years most subjects have increased the proportion of students achieving A* to C grades or have maintained already high standards. In 2002 (the latest year for which national comparisons are available) students achieved their best results in biology, business studies, chemistry, geography, food technology and RE. Their relatively weaker results were in English, English literature, French, ICT, and resistant materials, though in almost all these subjects the results were above or well above average.
- In Years 10 and 11, students maintain the good overall rate of progress evident in Years 7 to 9 and in drama, RE and geography their achievement improves. In individual subjects standards are well above average in English, science, geography, sociology, art, music and drama, and above average in most other subjects. Food technology results have improved and are now above average. Results in resistant materials have been below average, but staff have worked hard to raise standards and have been well supported by senior management. The 2003 results show significant improvement and are now broadly in line with the national figures. Standards in RE are much improved since the last inspection because more time is allocated to the subject and the quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved significantly. Though standards in ICT are above average, there is some under-achievement because the students take the full course GCSE with half the recommended teaching time.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	69(69)	50(48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97(96)	91(91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98(97)	96(96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	50.7(n/a)	39.8(n/a)

There were 333 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for 2001.

Literacy and numeracy

- Literacy standards are good. Students write with good technical accuracy and other subjects provide an impressive range of opportunities for boys and girls to read, research and present their findings. Numeracy skills are similarly good and some subjects such as geography, science and PE, provide good opportunities for students to use their skills, though this is not as widespread as the emphasis on literacy.

Special educational needs and visually impaired students

- All students with visual impairment make at least good progress in all areas of learning and in the majority of cases, in relation to their previous achievements, their progress is very good. This is because the work is very well planned to meet their specific needs and the subject teachers and support staff work very closely together. Students with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them, particularly in withdrawal sessions, because of the very good support they receive. They make good progress in subject lessons where, as in some history and design and technology, there has been good joint planning.

Sixth Form

8. At A Level, the percentage pass rate, the average point score and the proportion of students achieving A and B grades have all improved since the last inspection. In a very high proportion of subjects, all students taking A2 or advanced vocational examinations in 2002 achieved at least a pass grade and most did significantly better. In subjects where enough students were entered to make comparisons with national figures valid, the results were highest overall in English language and literature, biology, drama, music, sociology, health and social care, geography, mathematics, psychology and physics. Results in some subjects, for example history, German and biology have fluctuated, but in most years have been better than the national average. In art, results are better than the national average in terms of the overall pass rate but have declined in terms of the proportion of students achieving the highest grades. Girls did better overall than boys. They did relatively better in classical studies and drama than in their other subjects and relatively worse in art. There were no significant subject differences for boys.
9. In the subjects inspected in depth during the inspection, the standards are well above average in English Literature, mathematics, communication studies, economics, psychology, physical education, theatre studies and above average in chemistry, French, philosophy, health and social care. In history, current standards are average. In art, the standard of current students is similar to the results achieved at A2, mainly because students' work appears to stop short of deeper analytical study or extended technical research and application. In the subjects sampled, standards were very good in geography, music and sociology and good in all other subjects.
10. In almost all sixth form lessons seen students displayed very good skills in debate and discussion, often asking searching questions. They were confident enough to express views which were different from others'. In general they have very good literacy skills and good numeracy skills. They are competent users of ICT, though they do not always have enough opportunity to use it in all their subjects. The teaching helps them to make good progress, not just because teachers have very good subject knowledge but because they give students prompt and constructive evaluation of their work.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	98 (98.1)	94.8(89.9)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	37.3(50)	38.4(35.6)
Average point score per pupil	80 (86.8)	78.6(75.9)

There were 156 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2001

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Students develop into mature and responsible young people. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall, and **excellent** for social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The vast majority of students have very positive attitudes towards school and behave very well.
- The provision for students' social development is excellent.
- The provision for moral and cultural development is good and for spiritual development is satisfactory.
- Attendance is well above average, punctuality is very good and the school has very efficient systems for recording and monitoring both of these.

- A very few students have negative attitudes which at times have an impact on other students' learning.

Commentary

11. The vast majority of students in all year groups have very positive attitudes to school. They come prepared to work hard and make the most of the opportunities offered. Their attitudes were evident in a wide variety of lessons where they questioned, discussed and debated with considerable maturity. They were prepared to listen and learn from each other. Relationships are very good at all levels. They work conscientiously alone, in groups and in teams.
12. The school has high expectations for behaviour and in general these are met. Students move around a crowded site very sensibly and show consideration for visitors. In most lessons behaviour was very good, because students are well motivated but also because their attention and interest were caught and held by good and very good teaching. Students and staff are aware that there is some bullying in the school though it is not seen by students as a serious problem and staff work hard to try to eliminate it. Students are generally confident that when reported, bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively though one group felt that physical bullying was sometimes more effectively dealt with than verbal bullying.
13. Some younger students, mainly boys, occasionally behaved in a silly and immature manner. Most staff managed this well and did not allow it to get in the way of learning, In a few lessons, though not sufficient to make the lesson unsatisfactory for other students, it was not dealt with as effectively and wasted valuable teaching time. A very small group of older students have negative attitudes to school and are reluctant to work themselves or to let others work. Though often well-managed, in a very few lessons they were disruptive and the learning of other students was affected. The school is working hard with these students to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate to their needs and that they do not affect the education of others.
14. The school provides an exceptional range of opportunities for students' social and personal development through the taught curriculum, enrichment opportunities in sport, the arts, community service, visits to places of interest both at home and abroad and through the general life of the school. The house structure also plays a major role in this and students in all year groups willingly accept responsibility. Sixth formers are very fully involved in this aspect of the school's life and see it as an opportunity to give back something to the school. Much of the provision for cultural development is very good. Students participate in a wide range of activities celebrating their own and other cultures, but currently provision for multicultural education does not sufficiently prepare students for life in modern multicultural Britain. The school provides an environment where students are encouraged to be true to their feelings, values and beliefs and to respect those of others. Although there is not systematic planning in all curriculum areas, work in several subjects and some collective worship experiences provide opportunities for reflection and sensitive response to issues of human experience.
15. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Students, and their parents, value the education they receive and almost all students say they enjoy coming to school. The school is assiduous in following up absences and makes excellent use of IT to record and monitor attendance. Students returning after extended absence, or who are reluctant to attend school are very well supported. Parents can phone a dedicated hotline to report reasons for absence. The school is working hard to discourage parents from taking holidays in term-time and so categorises these as unauthorised absences. A very high proportion of students depend on public transport to get to school. When buses and trains are on time, punctuality is very good. The school has very sensibly built in time for students to move from lesson to lesson on such an extensive site, so that they arrive punctually for lessons. Students in the sixth form must register at least once a day and must sign in and out if they have study leave. Their attendance is lessons is closely monitored and is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.4	School data :	0.3
National data:	7.8	National data:	1.2

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school

Categories used in the Annual School Census	year		
	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	2036	56	4
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	14	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 222 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (5%)	61 (27%)	95(43%)	47(21%)	8 (3.5%)	1 (0.5%)	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.

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall particularly in the sixth form where there were no significant weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have very good knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects.
- Well structured lessons enable students to progress with understanding from simple to more complex tasks.
- Teachers know students' strengths and weaknesses and give them good feedback in lessons.
- The joint planning for visually impaired students is outstanding and enables them to achieve very well.
- Teachers use a wide variety of teaching styles and methods which help to motivate and encourage students to work hard and learn very well.
- In a few lessons in Years 7 to 11 the match of work to the needs of some students, though satisfactory, was not as good as it could have been.
- Much of the assessment of their work gives students in Years 7 to 11 good information on how to improve, but this is not consistent enough.
- Occasionally teachers were not firm enough in dealing with minor misbehaviour.

Commentary

16. In the school as a whole, three-quarters of the teaching seen was graded good or better and in the sixth form over 9 out of every ten lessons were graded good or better and four out of every ten were very good or excellent. The high level of consistently good and very good teaching is the main reason for the success of the students.
17. In the good and very good lessons in all year groups, the depth of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to impart what they know to their students are very significant factors. Teachers are experts in their subjects and keen to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with students. In lessons, the quality of questioning challenged students to think critically and developed their ability to express their ideas in depth. In a Year 13 communication studies lesson, the teacher used the question 'Is Christianity still the state religion in Britain?' to bring in dimensions of politics, religious apathy and the multi-faith/cultural nature of the country so that students began to understand the complexity of what had initially seemed a straightforward question. In most lessons questioning is carefully targeted to identify and meet individual needs and to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for the range of students in the class.
18. The good and very good lessons had a clear structure which moved students' learning on from simple to complex tasks in a logical progression which they fully understood. For example in a mathematics lesson a class of Year 10 students working on circle theorems were introduced to the topic through some skilfully managed investigative work. They were then able to deduce orally the full theorem through the teacher's structured questioning. Similarly in a Year 11 lacrosse lesson where students started with limited skills, the very good demonstration, pace and challenge resulted in their being able to play skilfully in an energetic game.
19. The use of a variety of teaching styles: exposition, demonstration, discussion, individual, paired and group work kept lessons moving at a brisk pace and motivated students to work hard and to enjoy what they were learning. A sixth form philosophy lesson in Year 12 on the "real self" built up the students' understanding of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle through an activity carried out in pairs and which gave students ample opportunities to demonstrate understanding and to ask searching questions. This was then further extended and developed with a homework task.

20. In most classes, teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students and give good feedback to individuals based on good assessment of their work. Support staff are well deployed to work with individuals and groups. In particular the very good joint planning with visually impaired support teachers and assistants enables these students to take part fully in lessons and learn well. Almost all lessons showed a high level of mutual respect and a good partnership between teachers and students. In the vast majority of lessons students behaved well, but teachers were able to bring students back on track in lessons if their attention wandered. There were no significant differences overall in the attitudes of boys and girls.
21. In almost all subjects in Years 7 to 11, the overall quality of teaching was good and in the subjects inspected in depth in the sixth form, the teaching was graded very good overall in English, mathematics, geography, physical education, economics, theatre studies, philosophy, communication studies, and psychology. In design and technology in Years 7 to 11, the teaching is satisfactory overall. There was some good teaching, but in other lessons the teaching did not give students clear enough guidance on what they needed to complete during the lesson and the standards expected. In music, the teaching was satisfactory overall because in the whole class lessons in Years 7 to 9 the level of challenge was not always as good as it could have been. However the teaching in the Year 10 and 11 examination classes was good. In art in the sixth form, the teaching is good when teachers were working individually with students, but satisfactory overall because of the limited provision for development of some skills.
22. Some of the features of the good and very good lessons were present in the satisfactory lessons, but in these lessons the pace tended to be slower and the level of challenge was not as well matched to the range of needs in the class. At times some students were able to 'switch off' or 'coast' for part of the lesson. Overall this did not affect any one ability group more than any other but tended to happen more in lessons with younger students. On a few occasions teachers did not deal firmly enough with behaviour which was irritating rather than seriously disruptive, but nevertheless took time away from teaching and learning. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons, learning was hindered by the attitudes and disruptive behaviour of a minority.
23. The teaching of students with special educational needs is good overall and very good in withdrawal lessons and where there is joint planning between subject teacher and support teacher or support assistant. The special needs departments recommend a range of practical strategies for subject teachers, and many of the targets set for students (to which they contribute) in individual education plans are good. They are not as effective in practice as they could be because they are not used consistently in planning lessons.
24. In the subjects inspected in depth in the sixth form there were no really significant weaknesses in the teaching. In Years 7 to 11, the most common weakness in teaching was the inconsistency in marking and assessment though this was not unsatisfactory. In general, teachers know their students' capabilities well and often give very good oral feedback in lessons. In discussion it was evident that students were confident that they knew how well they were doing and how to improve. However the written comments did not always give enough guidance on how to do this. Sixth form marking was thorough and gave students good guidance.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is **very good** with particular strengths in the provision of enrichment and extension activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Flexible curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to increase the opportunities and meet the needs of all students.
- Opportunities for the most able to take GCSE mathematics early, to continue with two modern languages and take separate sciences.
- An exceptionally wide range of enrichment and extension activities, both as part of subject teaching and outside the taught day.
- Very good personal, social and health education course.
- Very good specialist accommodation for music, drama, PE, careers, the library.
- A very good curriculum and accommodation for visually impaired students.
- Additional specialist equipment needed in art.
- Much improved provision for ICT but still scope to take this further.

Commentary

25. The curriculum is broad and balanced in Years 7 to 11. In Years 10 and 11 the school has taken advantage of the opportunity to introduce a more flexible curriculum to provide for the needs of the students of all abilities through enabling students to pursue vocational options within school and at local college, in addition to traditional GCSE courses. Some students undertake weekly work experience to support their vocational and non-vocational courses. The school developed its Key Stage 4 curriculum following consultation with students and their parents. Students interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the wide range of opportunities offered by the school.
26. The curriculum offered in the sixth form meets the needs of students well. It provides a wide range of A Level and AS Level courses, opportunities for vocational education, key GCSE courses and a course of general studies for all. Students get access to religious education through planned modules within the general studies programme and through 2 half-day conferences. The school recognises that it needs to provide more effectively for the full range of abilities in the sixth form and is developing its provision in key skills to ensure that all students who wish can pursue a worthwhile course of sixth form study successfully.
27. The school provides a very effective programme throughout the school to enable students to develop their understanding of personal, social and health issues. The structured programme for assembly and tutorial time ensures an act of collective worship takes place, but its implementation is not yet consistent enough to ensure every student receives this experience on a daily basis.
28. Very good provision is in place for students with special educational needs. Students have their needs identified well and are appropriately supported. The early morning provision in the library is excellent. The provision required in statements of special educational needs is fully met. The school has full regard to the Code of Practice, and is being pro-active in increasing access for students with disabilities. Students with visual impairments have specialist equipment and receive very good support from their class and specialist teachers.
29. Outstanding opportunities are provided for students to develop interests outside the taught day. There is an exceptional variety of sports and competitive games and opportunities for students to develop creatively and socially. Students can take part in a range of sports and outdoor pursuits and large numbers of students pursue the Duke of Edinburgh scheme up to Gold Award level. Sporting activities are very popular and the school is very responsive to students' needs by providing additional opportunities where there is a demand, for example a fishing club. The school provides curricular clubs in most subjects. These make a valuable contribution to

the standards students achieve and foster their general interests. A very wide range of visits are organised to enrich the quality of the curriculum. For example, there are exchange programmes for modern foreign languages and field trips in science and geography. The school also caters exceptionally well for the social development of students by providing a wide range of interest clubs including chess, a cyber café, drama and arts. Opportunities exist to pursue music at all levels from the school choir through to performing orchestras and ensembles of the highest standard. Students have many opportunities to work within the community, for example in local nurseries and residential care homes for the elderly. Staff give their time generously to make this an outstanding feature of the school's work.

30. Overall, accommodation is good, with very good features in drama, music, careers, PE and the unit for visually impaired students. Teachers make the most of older accommodation, such as the huts. The school is aware of the need to increase access for physically disabled and visually impaired students, and this is constantly under review. The large number of students efficiently navigate their way around the site.
31. The effective site management team ensures that a programme of repairs and improvements is kept under review, for example to ensure appropriate health and safety standards. The site, which is relatively small for the size of the school, is kept remarkably clean, tidy and litter-free.
32. Resources are good. Departments spend their budgets wisely to support their curricular needs. Specialist equipment and software in particular enhance provision in design and technology, careers, sociology, economics, health and social care, and the special educational needs base. Art needs additional specialist equipment. The library offers an attractive learning environment, supporting all areas of the curriculum through texts and periodicals, and allowing for independent learning.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The steps taken to ensure students' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. The advice, support and guidance based on monitoring of students' achievements and personal development are **good** in the main school and **very good** in the sixth form. The involvement of sixth form students in the school's work and development is **excellent** and, for younger students, it is **good**. The school has maintained the high level of care and support reported by the previous inspection and has improved health and safety.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good systems for promoting care and welfare, particularly through the very strong house system.
- Very good careers provision.
- Student opinion regularly sought and valued.
- Excellent contribution by sixth form students to the provision of support and activities for younger students.
- A few staff are not always as quick to respond to verbal bullying as they are to physical
- Good use of assessment and tracking of achievement through the house system, but some inconsistency between subjects in how effectively information is used.

Commentary

33. The school pays close attention to ensuring that students work in a clean and safe environment. Child protection procedures are firmly in place. First aid and medical care are of high quality. Induction arrangements for all students, at whatever stage they join the school, are thoughtfully implemented. Students are confident that, if they have a concern over their work or personal relationships, there is an adult to whom they can turn for support. Younger students spoke warmly of the support they receive from sixth form students, some of whom are trained mentors or are attached to a tutor group. Students were confident that, if they reported an incident of physical bullying, it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. A few were less confident that staff appreciate that name calling and being ostracised are as serious.
34. The house system is used effectively to track students' academic progress, as well as their personal development. Heads of house collate all subject grades and those who are under-achieving are given specific targets. As part of this academic monitoring, students in Years 8, 10 and 12 have an individual interview annually. The school is considering extending this further to other year groups. It makes good use of students' previous performance data to set challenging but achievable grade targets. Subject departments use the data but not always as consistently or effectively as they could do to ensure all students make maximum progress.
35. Careers provision is very well organised. The school provides a comprehensive and well-taught careers programme for all students in Years 7 to 11. This is well beyond the statutory requirement of a planned programme for Years 9, 10 and 11. Students said that they felt they had been well advised when considering options for GCSE and A Level. Careers provision in the sixth form is equally good. A very good work experience programme in Years 10 and 11 includes longer term work placements for appropriate students. The high quality of information about vocational courses in school and at local colleges, enables students to make appropriate choices between academic and vocational pathways. Careers education is integrated across the curriculum and work related learning is a feature of some subjects with external speakers from business, particularly in the vocational options. Since the last inspection the school has achieved the Careers Excellence Award in recognition of the quality of its work.
36. Students are regularly canvassed for their opinion on aspects of school life. Year 7 students will shortly be asked about induction arrangements, while older students are questioned about the usefulness of information they are given about options. Lockers have been provided for all students following a concern expressed about the security of possessions. The school council provides a forum where students can, for example, propose and plan their own projects and decide how the money raised from the sponsored walk will be spent. House councils plan fund-raising events for charities and social events.
37. Sixth form students make an excellent contribution to the life of the school. Many of them have demanding whole school or house responsibilities, while others help form tutors. An increasing number are volunteering to be trained as mentors and fulfil a very worthwhile role, supporting younger students. Others lead a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which contribute to the very rich experience available in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY?

The school has maintained the **very good** links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges reported at the last inspection. These contribute very strongly to the quality of education.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school provides a very good range of high quality information for parents, including through an internet web-site.
- Parents can very easily contact the school and speak to someone who knows their child well.
- The views of all stakeholders in the school are regularly sought and valued.
- Very wide and varied community links contribute to high standards.
- Very good links with the primary schools, particularly those from which most students transfer, ensure that students settle quickly and happily into Year 7.
- Links with East Surrey College are very effectively managed.
- Some tutors do not consistently ensure that planners are used effectively.

Commentary

38. A very high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting, expressed a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school. They feel that their children are expected to work hard, and that they achieve high standards and make good progress. Teaching is good and their children enjoy coming to school. The arrangements for settling in are particularly appreciated, both into the main school and into the sixth form. The inspection strongly endorsed parents' views. A small but significant proportion of parents, particularly of students in Year 11, expressed concern over behaviour. The inspection found that a very few students do find it difficult to behave appropriately and can disrupt some lessons, but that behaviour is generally of a very high standard.
39. Some parents felt that they did not receive enough information about how their children were getting on, particularly during Years 8 and 10. The school produces very good written reports at the end of each academic year, which are very specific to each student and provide a very clear and honest assessment. Parents have many opportunities to visit the school, both formally and informally. Written information for parents, including the prospectus and governors' annual report, GCSE and A Level course information is of a very high standard, detailed and helpfully presented. Half-termly newsletters celebrate students' achievements and inform parents of current developments. A very wide range of information is available on the school web-site, which is regularly updated. Parents said that they feel very comfortable about approaching the school. Tutors and heads of houses are readily available, as are subject teachers, if parents have queries or concerns. Heads of houses also write to parents when their children have made particularly good progress. The school is looking at ways to increase the commendations it awards. Staff will often initiate contact with parents and this contributes to the very good relationships and support within the school. A few tutors do not consistently check students' planners, which would ensure that homework has been recorded and messages from home received.
40. The school has received the County's Partnership with Parents Award, has twice been awarded the Chartermark and is preparing to apply for its renewal. This was awarded because the school regularly canvasses the views of all stakeholders, so that it has built up an extremely useful database from which to review its work with students, parents, other schools and the local community. A parent focus group, drawn from volunteers in each year group, also advises the school. A strong parent-teacher association and the Oxted School Trust raise considerable sums of money to benefit the school and provide opportunities for parents, students and staff to meet socially.
41. Oxted has only one maintained secondary school and the community is pleased to support it. For example, several volunteers help to invigilate during examinations, releasing teaching staff

for other duties, and newsletters are sponsored by local businesses. Social links with local elderly people are greatly appreciated by all concerned. The highly successful Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is enhanced through links with organisations and supporters in the neighbourhood. School premises are frequently used for evening classes and sports clubs.

42. Over many years, the school has built up a very close and effective working relationship with the primary schools from which it draws its students. This not only contributes to the pastoral care of students but also improves curriculum continuity. Strong links with East Surrey College enable some students to pursue work related courses alongside their school work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **very good**.

Main strengths:

- The head teacher provides excellent leadership and is strongly supported by the leadership team.
- The school has very effective teams for managing academic and pastoral work.
- The governing body is very well informed and fully involved in shaping the direction of the school.
- Staff recruitment and professional development are very well managed.
- The administrative and support services make a very strong contribution to the smooth running of the school and its ethos.
- The head of the sixth form, supported by the head teacher and leadership team, has a very clear vision for the sixth form and a good development plan.
- The growth in the size of the sixth form is being very carefully managed to ensure that the school provides appropriate and viable courses.

Commentary

43. The head teacher and other key staff have very high aspirations, a sense of purpose and clarity of vision for the development of the school. The high standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained and improved in several areas. The quality of leadership is very good overall. The head teacher is an excellent leader who has clearly identified, and has been willing to tackle, areas where a very successful school could be improved further. For example, the provision for ICT, assessment, development planning and the monitoring of teaching are all areas identified as priorities and, though these have improved, the leadership group and governors are fully aware that there is scope for further improvement. The head teacher has given staff at all levels opportunities to be involved fully in decision making and in setting priorities. She has encouraged staff to take responsibility and provided them with very effective support. Staff appreciate this approach and morale in the school is high.
44. The leadership group is strong. It contains a good balance of staff with a long experience within the school and others from outside. The team members complement each other very well and their responsibilities match individuals' strengths and preferences. There are plans for some roles to be reallocated shortly in order to provide new challenges and experiences. The head teacher and the members of the leadership group have a very strong commitment to providing for all students and a concern for the needs of individuals. This is clearly shown in the efforts to improve the curriculum for all students both in the main school and the sixth form, and extend the provision for special needs and the visually impaired students.
45. The strategic planning in the school is very good and promotes very effectively the school's ambitions and goals. The leadership group meets on a regular basis, both formally and informally, and has developed a strategic development plan with clear priorities which are costed. The head teacher and the leadership group carefully evaluate all initiatives and seek advice and comments from a wide spectrum of informed opinion before taking decisions. Teaching and support staff are fully consulted, as are students where this is appropriate. Heads of department and heads of house have also produced development plans which link into the

overall school development plan. These have target dates for meeting objectives and appropriate criteria to measure success. Plans include becoming a training school and the development of closer links with the community and the local college of further education.

46. The governing body plays a central role in shaping the vision and direction of the school and fully shares the head teacher's vision for the school. Governors work very closely with the school and have an excellent understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body, led by a very experienced and knowledgeable chairman, challenges and supports the head teacher and the leadership group very effectively. Governors are fully involved at a strategic level in the formation of policy and are very actively involved in identifying priorities for the development of the school. They comment on the school development plan at an early draft stage and evaluate progress on meeting objectives once it is finalised. The governing body works very efficiently in specialist sub-committees which have clearly defined responsibilities. They are regularly briefed by staff on the achievements of departments or the progress of initiatives and visit the school to talk to staff, track students in lessons or spend time with departments. Teachers value the insights which the governors bring. The governing body has ensured that the school satisfactorily meets statutory requirements.
47. The leadership group has introduced a formal monitoring structure as part of the school's process of self evaluation. This has started with a scrutiny of students' work and audits of teaching in Years 7, 12 and 13 in order to identify and disseminate good practice. In addition, they regularly visit classes on an informal basis and talk to students about their work. Heads of department also carry out a well co-ordinated policy for the monitoring of teaching and learning.
48. The school has created effective teams to manage the curriculum and pastoral work. The management structures are clear and procedures for monitoring progress in achieving whole school and departmental targets are good. The heads of house, key stage co-ordinators and heads of department liaise very effectively with each other and with senior managers over administrative, organisational, curricular and pastoral issues and all have a very clear focus on promoting high achievement. In addition, there are many valuable informal links between managers.
49. The school is very well run. Financial management supports the school's educational priorities very well and the administrative and support teams make a very strong contribution to the success of the school by providing very good support.
50. The systems for the induction of new staff and the opportunities for continuing professional development are very good. Performance management has successfully been introduced and training opportunities are frequently identified as a result of this. The training days organised by the school meet teachers' needs and are of high quality. The school makes a very good contribution to initial teacher training. It has very good links with six establishments of higher education and is currently offering 24 training places. The recruitment and retention of staff is very well managed. The school is fully staffed with a very good match of qualifications and experience to the demands of the curriculum.

Leadership and management in the sixth form

51. Leadership and management in the sixth form are very good. The head of the sixth form has a very clear vision for its development and this is strongly supported by the head teacher and the leadership team. The systematic planning has enabled the school to manage the growth in sixth form numbers effectively. The sixth form is currently cost-effective and the senior staff are very clear that courses must meet identified needs and be viable. The management of subjects taught in the sixth form is generally very good and contributes to the high standards achieved.
52. Sixth formers are regularly consulted over matters which closely affect them. They are also strongly encouraged to play a full role in the life of the school and this contributes to the respect which younger students show towards the sixth form. The school is very aware that the sixth form social accommodation is inadequate and is working hard to remedy this.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	6509907
Total expenditure	6462122
Expenditure per pupil	3010

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	470026
Balance carried forward to the next	*517811
<i>*Most of this balance is committed expenditure</i>	

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

UNIT FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

The provision for visually impaired students is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students have very good attitudes to learning and make very good progress overall.
- Students take part fully in school life, becoming increasingly independent and confident.
- Specialist teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable and highly skilled in providing support.
- The joint planning between subject staff and specialist staff is outstanding and enables students to achieve very well.
- The specialist equipment and the new accommodation strongly support students' achievement.
- Records of students' progress have become too cumbersome and do not include consistent or sufficient details of the students' learning in lessons and over time.
- Visually impaired students are not always able to be fully independent when moving round school.

Commentary

53. Without exception all students with visual impairment make at least good progress in all areas of learning and in the majority of cases, in relation to their previous achievements, their progress is very good. The students have very good attitudes to learning, they are confident in speaking to visitors, they work hard, concentrate and behave very well. Their social and academic achievements are very good and as they mature they become increasingly independent and able to manage the specific resources to maximise their learning. For example, by the time they reach the sixth form students are often totally independent, receiving help from specialist staff only at their own request. Where students have entered the school with significant behavioural problems, the highly effective use of learning support and behaviour management programmes have enabled them to understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning and therefore improve their knowledge and understanding.
54. A major factor in these students' success is the extremely high quality support they receive from specialist teachers, assistants and their subject tutors. The joint planning between subject teachers and specialist staff is outstanding and consistently ensures that students are totally included within the whole learning experience and take an equal role in all activities. For example, teachers describe practical activities as they take place so that the students gain a mental picture and they include all students in questioning and demonstrations to the class. In a French lesson, a higher attaining pupil spoke more of the target language than any other student in the class and in science, a visually impaired student was the first to describe the changing colour of a Bunsen burner flame. Regular examples of such high-level work were seen in all year groups and in many subjects including English, religious education, history, design and technology, mathematics and business education.
55. All staff are highly skilled and show an outstanding commitment and determination to seeing the students succeed. All students play a full part in the life of the school and take part fully in

school trips as part of their curriculum experience. These are carefully planned and health and safety issues are a major focus. Relationships between staff and students are very good and mainstream subject teachers benefit from regular, practical advice on how to meet the students' specific learning needs.

56. The purpose-built accommodation is fully equipped with up-to-date aids to learning including the latest information technology. All students have access to a laptop computer and several are competent in producing documents in print and/or Braille. One support teacher is particularly skilled not only in speaking French, but in brailleing it too!
57. The leadership and management of the department are good and show a very clear grasp of issues for development. These include rationalising the amount and the value of students' records. Since the last inspection, these have become cumbersome and do not include consistent or sufficient details of the students' learning in lessons and over time. Other issues include better planning for all students' movements so that the traffic flow in corridors is better controlled and enables more visually impaired students to move between lessons independently. The purpose-built accommodation, the high quality resources and their good use in promoting students' learning all represent very good progress since the last inspection with the potential to build upon and share current best practice for the benefit of students with a wider range of learning difficulties.

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

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Results in national tests and GCSE examinations are very high.
- Students have positive attitudes to work.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Information gained from assessment and monitoring is not used as fully as it could be to share expertise and good practice and to ensure consistency in marking.

Commentary

58. Results in the 2002 national tests taken at the end of Year 9 were very high compared with the national average. They were much better than those achieved by students in similar schools and better than might have been expected from their standards in Year 6 national tests. Students did better in English than in mathematics and science. Teacher assessments are close to the test results. The standards achieved in GCSE English and English Literature examinations were also very high. In 2002, students generally made more progress in their other subjects, but indications are that this has been reversed in 2003 though fewer achieved the highest grades. Girls do better than boys in both national tests, but the gap is narrowing. The evidence of students' work indicates that there is little difference in attainment in lessons.
59. The standard of work of students at the end of Years 9 and 11 is very high compared to the national average. By Year 9, students have good techniques for analysing literature because they read a wide range of high quality poetry, fiction and plays. High attaining students write with a mature choice of vocabulary and use complex sentence structures. Average attainers' letters and diary entries show how well they have understood the meaning behind the words that characters speak. Lower attaining students' writing is clear and entertaining although they describe rather than explain what is happening.
60. By the end of Year 11, higher attainers' persuasive writing challenged issues relating to the school community and the wider world. Average attainers created good atmosphere in their 'gothic horror' short stories. Lower attaining students used quotation accurately, but were less confident in their analysis of literature. The attainment of students with special educational needs, or who speak a language other than English, is very good. All students in these groups achieved a grade in GCSE English, and most in English Literature.
61. Students have positive attitudes to work that is demanding and challenging, and most achieve well as they move through the school. Very good relations between teachers and students create a respectful learning environment where boys and girls are confident to share their ideas. Pair and group work play an important part of the pre-writing process. However, for some students, the potential they show in discussions is self-limited by unfinished or poorly presented written work.
62. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teachers are knowledgeable and lessons are well planned so students are challenged and work hard. In a highly effective lesson on attitudes to love in pre-1914 poetry, very good notes from previous lessons helped students explain a Shakespearian Sonnet to the rest of the class. Teachers make effective use of questions that help students to think critically before reaching conclusions. In a good lesson on 'To Kill a

Mocking Bird', students were quick to explain the nuances in language that signal characters have changed their view of Atticus. In a small proportion of lessons, committed English teaching is made less effective by poor management of casual behaviour, or planning that does not challenge different groups within the class. Conscientious students carry on with their work, but others allow their attention to drift.

63. Leadership and management are good. In spite of significant staff turnover, there is a collaborative ethos, morale is high and staff feel valued. As a result of information gained from internal monitoring and assessment, the department has identified the variable quality of marking and the need for greater consistency to share expertise and good practice so that students experience the same high expectations and challenge.
64. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. High standards have been maintained, and the gap between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed. Standards for students in Years 7 to 9 have improved as a result of curriculum changes made to meet the needs of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. The opportunities for learning about ICT skills are good as are the imaginative links with the drama department to assess speaking and listening. Library provision is good and promotes students' wider reading choices.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Provision for teaching English language and literacy throughout the school is **very good**. It is promoted at a high level in the school management team and not seen only as the responsibility of the English department. An impressive range of opportunities are planned for boys and girls to read aloud, research and present their findings in subjects such as science, food, geography, and religious education. The history department includes works of fiction to accompany the study of slavery. The marking of books highlights the need to write in sentences and corrects the spelling of key words and technical language. The use of structured writing guidance in leisure and tourism was helping students to achieve well. Opportunities for deductive reasoning are underdeveloped in mathematics and questioning techniques in design and technology lessons do not extend students' answers. In geography, though there were many opportunities for students to use research skills and present their ideas, some of the work was not always matched well enough to the particular needs of students with literacy difficulties.

English as an additional language

66. The school has made **very good** provision for the few students with another language at home. There are very good links with outside agencies to ensure that new arrivals are assessed quickly, and care is taken to differentiate between language and any other special educational need. The achievement of the few students who arrived at the school with very little English has been monitored carefully. They have made very good progress.
67. The school is working with outside agencies to improve transition from primary school for this group of students. It is also in the process of assessing the number of students who have access to another language at home so that appropriate support can be targeted where necessary. Many families use a relative or friend as an interpreter at academic reviews. Some parents request written information instead of a telephone call and the school uses e-mail to provide this.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The provision in modern foreign languages (French and German) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Above average standards and achievement in both French and German.
- Both languages are well taught by enthusiastic and committed staff.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and very good linguistic skills.
- An excellent programme of trips and exchanges to France and Germany.
- The departmental handbook is out of date and does not include enough information on assessment or ICT.
- Students are not aware enough of National Curriculum levels.

Commentary

68. The level of students' French when they arrive in Year 7 is uneven, and most students have no knowledge of German. The standards of French and German observed in lessons and in students' books in Years 7 to 9 are generally above national expectations. In a Year 9 class containing many low attainers, students had good accents and were able to talk about lunch in French. In a Year 9 top set in German, pronunciation was good and students could confidently ask and answer questions about holidays using past tenses. In both languages, higher and average attainers write accurately using different tenses, simple structures and appropriate vocabulary.
69. Generally, the school enters most Year 11 students for GCSE in French or German, whereas nationally the entry is just under 60%. This makes comparison with national standards difficult. Nevertheless, GCSE results in French in 2002 were above the national average and results in German GCSE were broadly in line with national results. Although girls achieved better than boys, the difference was not significant. There was, however, some underachievement in relation to students' performance in other subjects. The results in French in 2003 are well above the national average and GCSE results in German in 2003 are above national expectations. Again girls performed better than boys.
70. Standards in French and German in Years 10 and 11 seen during the inspection were well above average. Students' written work is generally good. Most students write using different tenses, basic structures and a good range of vocabulary. The standards observed in most Year 10 and 11 lessons in both languages were also generally above average. In a Year 10 German class of largely lower attainers, students enjoyed the challenge of a demanding listening task and were able to describe themselves and others accurately and fluently. In a Year 11 top set in French, students' pronunciation was very good and several spoke very fluently about films.
71. Students achieve well in French and German in Years 7 to 9. At the beginning of Year 7 they can recognise and use words and short phrases in familiar contexts, but by the end of Year 9 they are coping with lessons conducted mainly in the foreign language and have built up a solid grammar and vocabulary base for everyday topics. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is also good. By the end of Year 11, the higher attainers can understand French or German spoken at normal speed on the topics they are studying and they also speak with confidence. Their writing is generally accurate and they are starting to use more complex structures and a wider range of vocabulary. Many lower attainers communicate well in spoken and written language on the topics they have prepared.
72. The teaching and learning of French and German are good. Teachers' linguistic skills are very good and they have a good knowledge of the National Curriculum and GCSE. Lessons are very well planned and lesson aims are made clear. All lessons deal with listening, speaking, reading and writing in a logical sequence and homework always consolidates or extends class work. Modern foreign languages contribute well to students' general literacy. Lower attainers and students with special educational needs are very well supported. Students generally learn well. Most students are actively involved and quickly tackle written and oral tasks. They listen

carefully to listening texts. Occasionally a few students are slow to start a task and do not work at an acceptable rate. Teachers mark students' work regularly and set targets but do not routinely use National Curriculum levels to keep students informed of the progress they are making.

73. The management of the department has changed since the last inspection. The day to day management is good and policies and approaches are under review because departmental documentation is somewhat out of date and does not include enough information on assessment or the use of ICT. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed and work well together as a team. The excellent programme of trips and exchanges to France and Germany is of great benefit to a large number of students. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards overall are consistently above national averages.
- Students achieve well because learning is encouraged by good teaching.
- The leadership and management of the department are effective in raising standards.
- The marking of students' work is inconsistent and much of it does not give students guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- A small number of underachieving students need to be more challenged in the content and pace of work.

Commentary

74. Students enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding, which are above average. By the end of Year 9 their results in the national tests are well above average. There is little difference between the results of boys and girls. The students have achieved well during the first three years at the school.
75. Results at the end of Year 11 at GCSE have shown some variation over time but have usually remained at least 7% to 10% above the national average. The school has a very effective policy of entering future A Level students for Mathematics GCSE at the end of Year 10. In Year 11, these students take an additional GCSE in Statistics. These students attain high standards and are successfully prepared for future courses in the sixth form.
76. Standards of the work seen in exercise books and in lessons in Years 7 to 9 are good with some very good standards in some lessons. An exercise book of a Year 8 pupil showed examples of work on quadratic graphs. Normally this would not be attempted until the end of Year 9, and then only by high attaining students.
77. Some Year 10 students in one of the two classes being entered early for GCSE successfully deduced one of the more difficult circle theorems. Low attaining students in Year 10 were also successfully working on some quite difficult number problems. Overall, standards in Years 10 and 11 are good, but with examples of very good standards in some classes.
78. Throughout the school, in all years, the students make good progress and achieve well. For some students achievement is very good. Students in the groups entered for early GCSE and some students in the younger year groups make particularly good progress, mainly because of their enthusiasm for work and the style of teaching. A very small number achieve less than they could.
79. Teaching overall is good with some that is very good. The best teaching uses a style which encourages students to think carefully about the topics and to make deductions about methods.

For example, a very effective Year 8 lesson on difficult number sequences was structured so that the students were carefully drawn toward the solution by having to think about each stage of the process. They successfully found the pattern and could apply it to others, because of this approach. A Year 10 group working on circle theorems was introduced to the topic through some skilfully managed investigative work. The teacher's careful stage by stage questioning enabled them orally to deduce the full theorem. In these classes and in others, the teachers maintained a high pace of work. Students were challenged to complete work at a high standard and they responded well to the demands being placed on them. This, however, was not a common practice in all classes. Whilst all staff used elements of this very successful methodology, in some lessons, the students were not allowed to think things through and in some the pace was allowed to slacken. Some students were able to 'switch off' for periods of time. These students were then not working to their full level of ability.

80. The leadership and management of the department are good. Teachers get good support and there are well written schemes of work which give good guidance to staff. These need to be modified to include specific reference to work in ICT. The marking of students' work needs careful monitoring, since it is inconsistent across the department. The whole school systems for the use of data are not yet being applied completely, and much of the marking gives little direct indication to the students about what they need to do to improve. Some classes have two teachers. The department needs to consider the impact on standards of these classes and the impact on teachers' workload. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

81. The school has an approach to numeracy which places the responsibility for its development in departments. They have very good guidance through the work of the Numeracy Coordinator. Departments have assessed their curriculum and are aware of the implication on numeracy. Practice in some departments is rather limited, although others are making good progress. In geography, students were successfully using correlation graphs to interpret data on the incidence of malaria; in science they were using a wide range of numeric techniques from simple substitution to ratio, and also graphical techniques. Students were using charts and graphs in PE to record data on various biometric measurements.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Students have a very positive attitude to their learning.
- Leadership and management within the faculty are very good.
- A few lessons, particularly in Years 7 and 8, were less challenging because of some inconsistencies in marking, use of assessment data and the Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Commentary

82. Results in Years 9 and 11 are well above average. They have risen since the last inspection and been maintained at this high standard in 2003. This has been achieved through strong leadership within the faculty despite many staff changes. An emphasis on team building has enabled new staff to quickly absorb the ethos and high expectations of the faculty. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In 2003 all higher achieving students took three separate sciences at GCSE. The percentage of A* and A grades increased as a result in biology, chemistry and physics. Students with special educational needs did as well as other students.
83. Current standards are similar to test and examination results. Students make very good progress during Years 7 to 9 and this progress is maintained during Years 10 and 11. They

have very good oral skills when they enter the school that enable them to contribute to lessons in well-conducted question and answer sessions. The emphasis on writing through the careful introduction of key words and ideas allows students to develop this skill. By the time they are in Year 9 they can all explain scientific ideas, the higher achieving students with a good degree of sophistication. Students recall facts well and listen carefully to both teachers and their peers. Where tasks set are at an appropriate level, they work very well on their own. However, if the pace or challenge in lessons is not correctly pitched, they do not work so productively. By the time they reach Year 11, students are able to carry out and record individual investigations. They can discuss their results and evaluate their methods. The higher-attaining students do this very well and often use ICT most effectively to present their work.

84. In the majority of lessons, teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan interesting and well paced activities. Students respond very well to high expectations and challenge and enjoy their learning. In a Year 11 lesson on chemicals from oil, students worked enthusiastically with molecular models to discover the general formula of the alkane family. Relationships in classrooms are very supportive so that students can take intellectual risks confidently. In a Year 10 lesson on earthquakes, lower attaining students who were struggling with difficult ideas were moved on successfully from the security of tracing a map to interpreting information and making predictions. Students with special educational needs learn as well as other students because they are well supported by both teaching strategies and the teaching assistants.
85. At the time of the inspection, many teachers were getting to know new groups. This sometimes meant that class lessons did not always meet the needs of all students. In these lessons, learning objectives were not always clear and some students did not learn as much as they might. This happened more often, though not exclusively, in Years 7 and 8.
86. The leadership and management in the department are very strong. After a period of considerable change, the department is now fully and appropriately staffed both with teachers and technical support. Much work has been done to maintain standards whilst building up the new team. With all positions now filled, the faculty is in a strong position to tackle the remaining inconsistencies, most of which appear on their development plan. A good assessment data bank is being set up which will help the team to develop the curriculum further. It will also help to develop a marking scheme which is more helpful to students via comments and targets.
87. Students' achievement is supported by enrichment activities such as the science clubs, museum visits, residential experiences such as the forensic science course at Royal Holloway College and field trips. The enthusiasm of the staff for science transmits itself to the students and the technical support ensures that things run smoothly and safely in a large department. Improvement since the last inspection has been good as standards and the quality of teaching have improved and other issues have been dealt with.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching leading to good progress in the separate ICT lessons.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Teachers are very well supported.
- The provision for ICT has been very significantly improved in recent years.
- The improvements in provision in the lower school have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on standards in Year 11.
- The curriculum time allocated for separate ICT lessons is below the government's recommendations.
- Monitoring of the ICT contribution of subjects across the school is not yet consistent enough.

Commentary

88. Students begin Year 7 with a wide range of ICT experiences but overall standards are at the national expectations. Teacher assessments suggest that by the end of Year 9, the attainment of the majority of students is above national expectations, but a lack of systematic training and monitoring of the assessment limits the validity of these judgements. There are no significant variations in the standards attained by boys and girls or students from different ethnic backgrounds. In Years 7 to 9, ICT is taught as a separate subject to all students, though for half the time recommended in the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. The improved curriculum time has recently been introduced for ICT and is leading to raising standards but the current Year 9 students have not had the benefit of it and therefore some students are not achieving as well as they could. Again in Years 10 and 11 all students receive a core entitlement of one lesson a week, but this is a minimal base for fulfilling potential at GCSE. The separate ICT teaching in Years 7 to 9 is an innovation which has not yet had a chance to have an impact in Year 11. The 2002 GCSE results were above the national average, but the work seen in the current Year 11 suggests that students have not had enough time to develop the required skills fully. Though the standards of work and achievement are currently satisfactory overall, some more able students are under-achieving.
89. In ICT lessons observed, the teaching is good overall which resulted in good learning and good progress in these lessons. The teaching was never less than satisfactory and often very good. Teachers circulated helping and advising students. Planning was appropriate for the level. Where teaching was very good, the pace of learning was brisk and was supported by very well prepared materials. Teachers had a secure grasp of the subject and were well supported by the available resources. In one very good lesson in Year 9, the teacher's demonstration and question and answer helped students to focus on the task and assess their own work. Data projectors were used effectively and in some lessons students were used to demonstrate techniques and good practice leading to effective learning. Good relationships exist and most teachers have a good range of classroom management strategies. Where lessons were less effective, low level disruption was allowed to continue unchallenged for too long and students were unclear about the expectations. On the other hand, in the best lessons clear expectations were combined with a fast pace of activity keeping students productively occupied.
90. ICT provision has improved greatly in the last two years including the introduction of the Key Stage 3 strategy involving separate ICT lessons for all year groups. The leadership and management of the department are strong. A clear vision and the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff team have brought about significant improvement. The department also does well to gain very creditable examination results from limited teaching time. However, despite these improvements standards in ICT could improve further. Either curriculum time for ICT provision needs to be increased to the government recommendations, or cross curricular mapping in all

years needs to be systematically managed to ensure that all students have the opportunities to develop ICT skills to their full potential and cover all strands of the programme of study.

ICT across the curriculum

91. There are many very good features of the use of ICT across the school. The intranet is a powerful means of communication between staff, students and parents. While all subjects post useful information concerning examination requirements news and key words, some subjects such as history and geography use the web-site imaginatively to provide a range of helpful learning resources. Staff training through the government's New Opportunities Fund initiative has led to increased ICT use in some subjects and the booking sheets for the ICT teaching rooms show great demand across the school. Despite a lot of investment in new computers the number is still below the national average for secondary schools. ICT is widely used in English teaching, Year 11 students were observed using a program to create mindmaps and spider diagrams for notes on crude oil, and in PE very good use of ICT helped with presentations.
92. Several very good examples of ICT use were noted. However, in theory the school has identified how the ICT national curriculum is being delivered and assessed, but in practice it is clear that systems have not been put in place to monitor adequately the impact of this provision on standards.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

The provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are high in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Teaching is good and students learn well.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Effective learning is developed by good resources, wide ranging fieldwork and the topicality of geographical case studies.
- Teaching has some inconsistencies in assessment, in meeting individual needs and in breadth of approaches.

Commentary

93. Standards achieved in the 2002 GCSE examinations were high, as were the numbers attaining A* and A grades. Standards at the end of Year 9 were also high. Current standards are very good. For instance, students of all abilities in Year 10 were able to handle and combine data to independently produce choropleth maps. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is good. In Year 9, students undertook independent investigations of tourism in Kenya and more able students could write in depth and present reasoned conclusions.
94. Teaching and learning are both good overall, with much that is very good. The GCSE course is well planned with good key questions, clear learning outcomes and a good range of teaching activities. This enables students to reach high standards. For instance, in a Year 10 investigation of census data very good teaching motivated the students and carefully planned group work enabled students of all abilities to succeed. In Year 8, students made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of coastal erosion because teaching used students' previous fieldwork experiences and also very good visual resources. In one lesson, a challenging task enabled students of different abilities to communicate their understanding well. Learning is often vivid and relevant due to the good visual resources, internet exemplars which provide interesting topical case studies, and through the effective use of computers. Wide ranging fieldwork activities motivate students to learn and reinforce geographical skills. The

teaching could be improved further by greater consistency in the use of teaching methods to maximise learning for all students. For example, the literacy difficulties of some younger students are not always met.

95. Geography is well managed and since the last inspection there have been improvements in examination results, in management and in teaching. There is a clear focus on raising standards in Years 7 to 9 by developing assessment to make better use of National Curriculum guidance on standards. The planning for progression from year to year is having a positive impact and the new schemes of work and lesson plans have a wide range of appropriate teaching and learning activities. The good practice which is developing is not yet being monitored to ensure that teaching is consistent and all students benefit fully.

HISTORY

The provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Enthusiastic teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Relationships are very good.
- Standards are above average, with significant successes at the top grades of GCSE
- The management of a large team of teachers is very good.
- Teaching materials and methods do not support middle and lower attaining students as well as they do the higher attaining students.

Commentary

96. Results of the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above the national average. Results in the GCSE examination for 2002 were above the national average overall, but the proportion of students gaining the highest grades in GCSE was well above the national and school average. Results in 2003 are similar. Students make good progress in history across both key stages.
97. At the time of the inspection standards were well above expectations for students in Years 7 to 9. In one lesson seen, higher attaining students confidently sorted and categorised various sources relating to the causes and consequences of the great changes brought by the Industrial Revolution. In written work, higher and middle attaining students were able to draw together the information and understanding they had gathered to produce logical and well written accounts of changes in British society. Lower attaining students clearly understood these changes, although they were not able to explain their ideas in as much depth in their written work.
98. Standards of students in Years 10 and 11 were above expectations. In a lesson seen looking at votes for women, all students showed a strong understanding of the different strategies and activities of suffragettes and suffragists. Higher and most middle attaining students went on to evaluate the impact of the First World War on this struggle, using contemporary sources. Some middle and lower attaining students found aspects of the sources, and the writing tasks, too challenging to complete without additional help.
99. Overall, teaching and learning were good. Teachers' planning, strong subject knowledge, supportive marking, and very good relationships with students, resulted in students achieving well. This was seen most effectively in a lower attaining Year 9 class studying the Industrial Revolution. Students gained a good understanding of the causes and features of the Industrial Revolution because the teacher and a teaching assistant had prepared suitable materials, and involved the students in reflecting on what they had learned and how. In a small number of cases in lessons seen, students were sometimes less involved in their own learning. For example, in a Year 11 class observed, students were teacher led throughout. While most middle and higher attaining students made rapid progress in understanding, some middle and

lower attaining students would have benefited from the opportunity to work with, and learn from other students.

100. This large and popular subject is very well led and managed, maintaining the successful features of teaching and management observed in the previous inspection. There are good resources, including the use of the library, information technology, and extra-curricular enrichment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in Years 7 to 11 are above average.
- Some very good and excellent teaching.
- Strong subject leadership has succeeded in raising the profile of RE in the school and students are much more interested in the subject.
- The subject development plan is not clear enough about priorities or about how the impact of actions will be evaluated.
- Some new units in the scheme of work need to be reviewed to ensure the coverage required by the Agreed Syllabus.

Commentary

101. The subject has improved significantly since the last inspection. The revised Agreed Syllabus has been implemented in Years 7 to 9, the GCSE course is securely established in Years 10 and 11 and results have improved. Statutory requirements are now met.
102. Standards in both key stages are above average and all students are being challenged. Some very mature Year 9 responses showed above average standards. Year 10 and 11 students take the short course GCSE and numbers opting for a full course are increasing. Gender differences have narrowed significantly and boys achieve well at GCSE compared with results nationally. In the 2002 GCSE examination results were above the national average and both boys and girls achieved better results than in most of their other subjects whereas nationally RE results were lower than other subjects.
103. Students are interested, enthusiastic, keen to achieve and complete homework tasks with pride. They work well alone or in groups and lessons are productive. Learning is enhanced by excellent relationships between staff and students in all lessons. The development of accurate subject vocabulary and writing tasks contribute well to students' literacy development. Although the school website is used by students for personal study, more use could be made of ICT in lessons.
104. The teaching and learning are good overall, with some that is very good and excellent. In the best lessons well-qualified teachers engage students by well-planned and resourced activities. For example, in an excellent lesson in Year 9 the sensitive use of materials about the Dunblane massacre and questioning which challenged students to think deeply, elicited high quality reflective responses on the nature of suffering. Good assessment techniques ensure teachers and students understand what students know, what they are unclear about and what they need to know next. This enables teachers to match lessons to students' needs and set realistic challenges with high expectations. This will be further developed in Years 7 to 9 by fully implementing the assessment scale introduced in the Agreed Syllabus. Homework tasks contribute well to classwork. In general, teachers have good subject knowledge, but where teaching was less successful teachers had limited knowledge of world religions. The review of new units, particularly for Sikhism and Buddhism, will ensure balanced coverage, reinforce subject expertise and provide the best foundation for Years 10 and 11.

105. Strong subject leadership and management have raised the subject's profile. The department adopts a collaborative approach and staff analyse data, monitor standards and develop and evaluate units of work. They meet often and observe each other formally and informally to monitor consistency of approach. The detailed subject plan clearly identifies what needs to be done, but does not yet give a clear enough sense of priorities or timescale for achieving targets or evaluating the impact of changes on achievement. Resources are good.

Sociology

The provision in sociology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are higher than the national average in GCSE with some extremely high results which have been commended by the Examination Board.
- Very good challenging teaching encourages students' interests and raises their aspirations and performance.
- Very good innovative leadership and management.
- Implementation of more support strategies for the least able.

Commentary

106. Results at GCSE level have shown an overall improvement, on the already very good results, over the last 3 years, with the proportion of A* to C grades being almost a third higher than the national average. Results show no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The high standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained with some students attaining exceptionally high grades and the school being congratulated on two occasions by the Examination Board.

107. Attainment is very good. Lesson observation and work samples show that students quickly build on their basic subject knowledge, then move on to more complicated concepts. For example, studying cultural differences in family life today, recognising how these have changed over time and from place to place and then identifying cultural universals. Throughout the two year course, the majority of students build up a very good knowledge base and apply their knowledge well.

108. Teaching and learning are very good. Sociology is available to students from Year 10 onwards and is a popular option choice. Students are clear about the high standards expected of them and they work hard. All teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subject, are committed and promote high aspirations. Lesson planning, encouragement and engagement of students and the promotion of high standards of behaviour are excellent. Controversial issues such as cultural differences are handled sensitively. Students respect the views of others during discussions. Homework is set regularly and marked using examination grades and appropriate comments aimed to improve understanding and performance. Lessons are designed to challenge all levels of ability, but the support for the least able students is not always as effective as it could be.

109. Leadership and management are very good. The structured modules of work for each examination topic, very good lesson plans, and appropriate tasks all meet the examination criteria. The subject is well resourced and this department has effectively taken the lead in the use of the school intranet for model answers and support for student assignments. This enables students to be very clear about what they are learning and the standards to which they should be performing. Students are encouraged to extend their knowledge through reading newspapers and journals. The subject was not reported on in detail at the last inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about how much it has improved.

TECHNOLOGY

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The provision for design and technology is **good overall**. Two separate departments share the teaching of National Curriculum design and technology. They successfully cover the full range of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 through one department focusing on food technology and the other on resistant materials and graphics technology. Both departments have made good progress since the last inspection.

RESISTANT MATERIALS AND GRAPHICS

The provision in resistant materials and graphics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Examination results at GCSE A*-C have improved substantially since the last inspection.
- Results in 2002 were in line with the national average and have risen again in this year.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average and students achieve satisfactorily.
- Whilst standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average the achievement of students is good.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but not consistent in every class.

Commentary

110. Examination results at GCSE A* to C grades in design and technology have improved substantially since the last inspection. In 2002, they were in line with national averages and have risen again in 2003, though in 2002 only a few students achieved the highest grades of A and A*. Results were in line with the school's expectations for the students taking the examination.
111. By the end of Year 9 standards are average and most students achieve satisfactorily. Students can present several initial ideas in response to design problems. As they move through the key stage they are increasingly able to select the most feasible ideas and improve them for manufacture. They make their chosen ideas using a range of materials and processes finishing their work to a reasonable standard. They cut, shape and join materials successfully and design and make simple packaging and logos using computer equipment. However, evaluations of products are often not sufficiently detailed. The most able students seek and analyse the views of others when judging their work and this enables them to make better evaluative comments. The quality of presentation in students' written and design folios is very variable. Occasionally it is very good but often the quality of drawing and presentation is weak.
112. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. GCSE classes do not have the full range of ability, as many of the most able students do not choose to follow courses in resistant materials, graphics or manufacturing. Many students begin the course with weak presentation skills and produce ideas, which show they have not appreciated fully how they would go about making them. They improve as they progress through the key stage. When making their designs they use a range of materials and processes with reasonable skill and finish their products to a satisfactory standard. Achievement overall is good especially for the lowest attaining students who are developing good manufacturing skills.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with a little that is very good, some good, and a little that is unsatisfactory. Teaching in the very good and good lessons is successful because teachers explain clearly what needs to be done. They use well chosen questions with the whole class to assess and develop students' understanding and set challenging expectations for what should be completed by the end of the lesson. In classes with a disproportionate number of the least able students teachers are aware of their limitations and give them very good support. In these classes teachers break down longer activities into achievable parts, have high expectations for behaviour and achievement and provide good individual support. In a very good lesson, the teacher drew students' attention to his

expectations for learning and behaviour. He gave clear demonstrations backed up by good individual support and reviewed what had been achieved periodically to ensure good progress was maintained. As a result these students made good progress and achieved well despite initial weaknesses in their skills and understanding. In this lesson, the teacher had prepared photographs of the sequence of manufacture, this enabled students to appreciate where their current work fitted into the production schedule as a whole and helped them to maintain their enthusiasm. The unsatisfactory teaching lacked clarity about what needed to be completed during the lesson and the standards expected and had insufficient individual support for students. As a consequence students achieved standards which were below their best.

114. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The curriculum has been substantially improved in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection. Monitoring of standards and quality takes place informally, but this is not effective enough to ensure consistency in the quality of education students receive.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY

The provision in food technology is **very good**.

Main strengths:

- Examination results at GCSE for food were in line with national averages for A*-C in 2002 and have improved substantially in 2003.
- Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average and students achieve well.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are in line with national expectations and achievement is good.
- Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

115. Examination results at GCSE were in line with national averages for A*-C in 2002 and have improved substantially this year.
116. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average and students achieve well. Students have good knowledge and understanding. In a Year 9 class studying food preservation, students recalled most of the common methods for preservation, understood that not all moulds and micro-organisms were pathogenic by explaining that some moulds added flavour to blue cheeses and certain bacteria caused milk to form into edible yoghurt.
117. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are currently in line with national expectations and students' achievement is good. Although food technology classes do not recruit students from the full range of ability students are developing good investigation skills and use these successfully in preparation for designing and making. In a Year 10 class preparing to design and make a luxury biscuit, students evaluated different commercially produced biscuits. They described a wide range of visual, texture and taste characteristics, saying what they liked, using appropriate technical vocabulary. They successfully analysed lists of ingredients on packets to determine what constituents might be responsible for the characteristics observed and explained how they might use this knowledge in their designs.
118. In both key stages groups of mixed ability were able to share ideas and agree ways of working. This enabled the most able students to apply their knowledge and understanding and other students to acquire new ideas quickly for themselves. This approach to group work enabled all students to make better progress and achieve higher standards
119. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall with much good and a little which is very good teaching. Very good and good teaching have many common characteristics. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, organise learning well and use a range of teaching methods to maintain a good pace to learning. All lessons are based on an agreed scheme of work,

incorporate opportunities for students to learn new knowledge, to take part in whole class discussion and to work in smaller groups on activities. This well planned approach ensures students make good progress and achieve well. Leadership and management are very good; teachers work as a team and regularly review the quality of their work. This ensures students receive consistently good teaching in all lessons.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

ART

The provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students have very positive attitudes to the school and to studying art.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good knowledge of their students. Students are given a clear idea of how they might improve their grades.
- Students at all ability levels make good progress in the subject. GCSE results are very good.
- The art curriculum is broad and balanced in Years 7 to 9 with good opportunities for three dimensional work and applied arts such as textiles.
- The art curriculum in Years 10 and 11 offers students a very good range of specialist options.
- Management and leadership provide clear direction and purpose to the department's work.
- Periods of unsettled staffing have contributed to a fall off in standards in some Year 9 work where the range of media is limited.

Commentary

120. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are good. Students do well across a range of media including three - dimensional work, though periods of unsettled staffing have contributed to a fall off in standards in some Year 9 work where the range of media is more limited. They show a good knowledge of the process of developing art. They employ a good range of creative processes to develop their work. Their sketchbooks contain well designed and executed studies. Lower performing students are generally attaining satisfactorily or better in the subject. Year 7 students drawing flowers from observation achieved highly using different strengths of line to indicate the fall of light. The teacher made excellent use of demonstration and work examples to support students' learning. Students are achieving well, overall.
121. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are very good and students are achieving very well. GCSE results are well above the national average, with more than four out of every five students achieving an A* to C pass, and almost a quarter of students achieving an A* or A grade. In recent years the school has achieved a 100% A* to G pass rate in GCSE Art. There has been an upward trend in the school's GCSE results over the past three years. However, girls continue to outperform boys in the subject. Students' sketchbook-journals contain work of very high quality across a range of media. They apply a good range of creative skills. Sketches, colour studies, photography, collage, photomontage and mixed media are all used confidently by students in developing their creative ideas. Good quality clay sculpture and other 3D work are in evidence. Year 10 students making still life studies as a prelude to textiles appliqué work confidently and apply learnt skills to draft their compositions.
122. Teaching is strong in Years 7 to 11 and this leads to good learning. Teachers know their subject well and plan and prepare their lessons carefully. Lessons are well structured and give students clear learning objectives. Teachers employ effective teaching strategies including well-presented practical demonstrations. In a very good lesson in Year 11 where students were presenting the visual diaries completed over the summer holiday, the teaching prompted students to discuss the different media and techniques used. Ongoing assessment is effective and teachers have a good knowledge of the work of their students. Students are given well defined guidance on how to improve their work.

123. The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers opportunities for specialisation. Extra-curricular provision is very good. Informal art workshops are available each day. The art clubs are run by the sixth form 'art captains'. The subject is well managed and staff have worked hard to minimise the effects of staffing changes. Staff organise the specialist areas effectively. The structure of the curriculum and assessment framework in Years 7 to 9 have now been brought into line with the demands of GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11.
124. Since the last inspection standards have fluctuated. There has, however, been an upward trend in recent years and attainment levels are now in line with those at the time of the previous inspection. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall and good recently.

DRAMA

The provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement is good and the standards of students on GCSE courses are well above the national average.
- Students' learning benefits from good teaching by specialists.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The range and quality of enrichment activities are excellent.
- Teachers allow some younger students to become too noisy and inattentive.
- The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 has limited students' awareness of drama routines and techniques.

Commentary

125. Standards achieved in the 2002 GCSE drama examination were above the national average because of the higher than average proportion gaining higher grades, particularly A* and A. Girls and boys did equally well. This continued in 2003, and all students gained pass grades, a third of them (twice the national average) at grades A* or A.
126. Achievement is good overall, but better in the GCSE years than in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9 students' attainment is above national average in terms of poise and confidence when performing, but around a third of students do not listen closely enough in whole class work. Boys and girls are able to work sensibly and unselfconsciously together and this improves the overall quality of work. For instance, Year 7 students happily held hands to form an 'egg' protecting a blindfolded 'yolk' pupil who had to move around the classroom. Warm up routines are used well, but some conventions and skills such as using 'freeze' and holding facial expression are too variable. The standards of the students at present in Year 11 are well above average. Rehearsal is very effectively used to plan and improve practical work, and final performance shows polish and good judgement of how best to convey messages to an audience. Students show very good ability to cooperate and compromise with each other in large and small groups, and to support other group members. As a result, students with special educational needs make very good progress in terms of their ability to act confidently and express their ideas.
127. Teaching and learning are good. They are better and more consistent on the GCSE course than in Years 7 to 9. This is because of more time, better accommodation, and teachers setting out more clearly the skills and noise level/behaviour expected. Students learn to speak in character and to choose vocabulary carefully because of the good model set by teachers. Year 10 students learnt how to interpret ideas physically, more precisely when the teacher prompted them about the range of drama techniques and asked demanding questions about their potential for a task. All lessons have good pace but, within some, students see volume of presentation and pace of movement as more important than matching both to the situation and purpose. When teachers are not alert to this and do not give students early, firm guidelines,

some become too noisy and inattentive. Such students remain keen and co-operative, but their understanding of how to use and develop drama skills is limited. All students learn trust and respect, and relationships between students and with staff are very good.

128. Very good leadership has sustained a vision of what students can gain from drama and how high standards can be achieved both in performance and GCSE examinations. Very good management enables the specialist team to work with a clear and agreed approach to a very good scheme of work. The latter caters very well for performance skills, and places a firm emphasis on students' feelings and personal development. The arrangement whereby students in Years 7 to 9 have taken drama in six-monthly units, rotating with another subject, has hindered their progress in understanding and consistently using routines and conventions. With amendments to the work scheme, the new system of a lesson each week should address this. Whilst classes using the theatre enjoy very good accommodation, some younger students are timetabled in a hut. Much has been done to improve lighting and blackout but the flooring and heating/ventilation issues render it barely satisfactory for practical work.
129. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have remained above the national average despite the limited amount of time which has been available for drama in Years 7 to 9. GCSE drama has become a popular and successful option. Students derive much benefit and enjoyment from drama clubs and ambitious, large-scale productions. During the week of the inspection over 70 students (from over 200 auditioned) were beginning rehearsals for 'Cabaret'. The atmosphere, professionalism and commitment were highly impressive.

MUSIC

The provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above the school and national averages.
- The breadth of extra-curricular activities and the quality of performances are very good.
- Relationships between teachers and students in the department are very good.
- Good practice in teaching methodology and in managing behaviour is not being shared widely enough.
- Target setting could be used better to support learning, particularly at Years 10 and 11.
- Opportunities to use ICT should be introduced at Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

130. By the end of Year 9 the large majority of students are working at least in line with national expectations. In 2002, almost four out of every five students taking music GCSE achieved an A* to C pass which is well above the school and national average. The standards seen in school in Years 10 and 11 were similar.
131. The scheme of work is good and makes good use of students' musical interests and talents. In Year 7, students develop their listening skills to identify features of style and instrumentation that characterise music from places such as Africa, China and Australia. In Year 11, students demonstrate good composing skills using sophisticated harmonic sequences and textures effectively. They use Cubase software to arrange and record their work. Students in Years 7 to 9, however do not have access to ICT.
132. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and in Years 10 and 11 it is good. In GCSE lessons, a mutual respect exists between teachers and students for each other's musical skills and tastes. Where teaching is most effective, expectations were high; the aims of lessons are made clear to all and teachers use judicious questioning to measure progress. In a good lesson on music from different countries, the questioning drew out the difference

between music from different cultures. Where teaching is less successful, activities are not tailored to the learning needs of each pupil, resulting in a lack of challenge for some. Singing is taught effectively with attention given to aspects of technique such as posture and breathing. Assessment is satisfactory with some evidence of good diagnostic marking of students' compositions. Target setting is less well developed. The department is provided with predicted grades for each student at Key Stage 4 but has not yet considered how these can be used to support teaching and learning.

133. Relationships, both between students and with staff, are very good. Behaviour in the majority of lessons was very good. However, in a very few lessons with younger students teachers were not able to control the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of students and this had a negative effect on other students' progress.
134. The leadership and management of the department are good and show a clear vision for the future of music. Learning resources are organised and managed very effectively. The music department does much to enrich the cultural life of the school with music featuring in assemblies, awards evenings and other events. During the inspection, students gave an excellent performance of a Mozart piano quartet in an assembly. The department offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities and about 200 students have instrumental tuition. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students achieve very well. Many perform at county and international level.
- Highly committed teachers provide an excellent programme of challenging extra-curricular activities.
- Students show outstanding enthusiasm for their work.
- Assessment and marking are not giving students sufficient help to improve their attainment.

Commentary

135. Teacher assessments of Year 9 students in 2002 were well above average. Boys' performance was particularly high with many district and county performers. GCSE results in 2002 were significantly above the national average.
136. On entry in Year 7, students' skills, knowledge and understanding are average. By the end of Year 9 students have practical skills and understanding and knowledge of performance above average. Most develop practical skills well above average. The majority of GCSE students are well above average. A significant number have high levels of skill, performing up to international level. Students in Years 10 and 11 core lessons generally perform above expectation for their age.
137. Overall, achievement is very good. In Years 7, 8 and 9, students' achievement is very good in practical work and good in analysis of performance. By the end of Year 11, the majority of students achieve very well in performance. They are very competent players of a wide range of team and individual sports. Gifted sports players achieve highly. Students with special needs, including the visually impaired, achieve well.
138. Teaching and learning are consistently good and much is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and create a very good learning environment. Learning is very good in lessons delivered at pace and where clear, challenging targets are set. This was particularly so in Year 11 pop-lacrosse. Very good demonstration, pace and challenge created a vibrant learning experience for all participants. Starting with limited skills, all students ended the lesson playing skilfully in an energetic game. In GCSE theory, a small number of students were not

sufficiently challenged by activities. Though satisfactory, assessment and marking could be improved to show students more clearly how they can raise their attainment.

139. Leadership and management are good. A strong emphasis upon team-work underpins the success of the department. A skilfully planned and balanced, wide ranging programme of activities engages all students very well. Students' enthusiasm for their work is outstanding and their energy and friendly rivalry are very apparent in all lessons. The department makes a very strong contribution to the House System and to the social and moral development of students.
140. The extra-curricular programme is excellent. The high commitment of teachers and the take-up by students is outstanding. There are excellent links with several local clubs. Opportunities to compete at district and county level involve many students in high level activity. However, all students whatever their level of performance are encouraged to partake and take up the challenge. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements well and the very good extra-curricular provision previously reported is now excellent.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school offers a GCSE course in business studies and has recently introduced vocational GCSE courses in leisure and tourism and manufacturing in Years 10 and 11. The first group to take GCSE in leisure and tourism will do so in 2004 and in manufacturing in 2005. The business studies courses are well-established and chosen by a large number of students of all levels of ability. The standards and teaching are good and in general students achieve better GCSE results in business studies than they do in their other subjects.

LEISURE AND TOURISM

The provision in leisure and tourism is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students are well-motivated and want to succeed, they are achieving well.
- A range of visits and students' work experience strongly support their class-based work.
- Good, well-planned teaching and the use of highly relevant materials engage students' interest.
- Standards are somewhat below average because students start the course with relatively low attainment. Oral skills are stronger than written skills.

Commentary

141. Students taking the leisure and tourism course are interested in it and are achieving well in terms of their previous standards, though the overall standard of work is below average. They are able, with prompting, to explain their ideas orally though most find it more difficult to develop their ideas on paper. They could relate what they are learning in class to practical situations which they have encountered. For example in a lesson on customer care, they knew why it was important for companies to give employees clear guidance. They could give pertinent examples of ways in which they had received good and poor service, and their response. They understood clearly that the way in which customers are dealt with could have a significant impact on turnover and profits.
142. Teaching and learning are good. Resources were well-prepared and relevant. Relationships in the lesson seen were good, with the teacher using a very good blend of patience, humour and firmness which gave students clear boundaries and helped them stay focused on the work in hand. Skilful questioning also enabled students to remember key points from visits they had made. They were also asked to reflect on ways in which good customer care might be important in their forthcoming work experience placements which included work in sports shops and at a leisure centre. A writing guide enabled the weaker students to complete the written task successfully.

143. The introduction of the course is being well managed. The course has been very carefully planned to build on and further develop students' interests and as much as possible to make good links with their work experience placements. A very good range of visits to places of interest develops students' understanding of the various aspects of the course and also helps to keep them motivated. Their work is regularly and carefully assessed with suitable feedback which helps them to improve.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The provision for personal social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths:

- Students appreciate and enjoy the course which makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
- The teaching is good.
- The curriculum covers all essential aspects very effectively.
- Good links with external agencies extend the scope and quality of the course.

Commentary

144. PSHE has high status in the school and makes a valuable contribution to the very good ethos and success of the school. The curriculum is well planned and is exceptionally well structured. It is taught as separate topics as well as being integrated across the curriculum. The policies on sex and relationships education, alcohol and drugs misuse are up to date. All students are made aware of school policies through lessons and in tutor periods.

145. The teaching and learning are good, overall. A lively and stimulating Year 10 lesson on the impact of drugs on society gave students good factual information, encouraged good quality discussion and challenged them to think independently. Skilful questioning and the very good relationships between teacher and students enabled students to discuss in a mature way. They presented their own views and listened to and respected each other's opinions.

146. Outside agencies are well used to support the programme. The Surrey police liaison officer visits regularly to inform and advise on drugs and related issues, representatives from Straight Talking and the school nurse contribute to health education and Valley Trust representatives provide a counselling service. Several other agencies provide services which assist students in their personal development and maturity.

CITIZENSHIP

The provision for citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The students respond positively to the subject.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The very good relationship between staff and students in lessons.
- Good quality of resources, especially in the library.
- A strong commitment of the school and senior management team.
- Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has room for improvement.

Commentary

147. Students are receiving good quality citizenship education. The programme enables students to develop skills of participation and responsible action. They engage in fundraising for a variety of charities, take responsibility for a range of duties around the school, participate in house and school council discussions and organise functions for members of the Oxted community. Work experience in Year 11 provides opportunities for work in the local council offices, a County Court, hospitals and homes for senior citizens. Community links are strongly developed.
148. Standards are above expectations and achievement is good overall. The students have a very positive attitude to the subject and see the relevance to their own experiences. The quality of work they produce reflects good achievement. They increase their knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals in society. The very good ethos of the school promotes a good spirit of community. The provision of timetabled lessons for Years 7, 8, 10 and 11 and cross-curricular provision for Year 9 students ensures good coverage of National Curriculum requirements. Library resources for citizenship are especially good and are well used by students. No significant difference between the achievement of different groups of students was observed during the inspection.
149. The teaching throughout the school was good overall with examples of very good lessons. The very good relationship between staff and students permits mature response to sensitive issues and creates an atmosphere in which good learning takes place. The students acquire knowledge and understanding which enable them to become informed citizens. For example Year 7 students study the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and those in Year 9 discuss the role of multinational drug companies in the control of supply of drugs for the treatment of diseases in less economically developed countries. They begin to consider the importance of the concept of world citizenship. Teaching also provides opportunities for students to develop their research and communication skills through discussion and justifying opinions on controversial issues. This was demonstrated very effectively in a Year 11 class in relation to the law on drugs. A homework task for Year 7 students required them to gather the separate views of parents on the most effective way to deal with bullying.
150. The school is strongly committed to citizenship education. The management and co-ordination of the subject are good and provide a very clear vision for the further development of the subject, building on the good foundation already laid. The school is planning to introduce timetabled lessons for Year 9 and to enhance the monitoring of teaching and citizenship across the curriculum. A wide variety of staff assist in the teaching and the subject is given status and a high profile.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 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
Art and Design	68	95.6	90	33.8	42.7	38.1	39
Biology	41	95.1	81.6	39	33.2	39.3	33.2
Business studies	39	89.7	89.1	15.4	31.7	31.5	35.4
Classical studies	9	100	95	44.4	49.9	45.6	42.3
Chemistry	19	79	84.8	26.3	36.9	28.4	35.2
Communication studies	54	94.4	94.2	48.2	36.1	40.6	38.5
Drama	42	97.6	94.6	26.2	37.6	39.8	39.1
Economics	31	87.1	86.2	41.9	41.5	37.4	37.0
English/English language	62	96.8	92	48.4	29.9	43.2	35.7
English literature	43	100	94.4	61.8	37.9	46.2	38.9
Design technology	10	50	89.2	0	32	12	35.7
Electronics	10	90	n/a	40	n/a	42	n/a
General studies	198	75.8	88.3	26.7	25.7	28.4	30
Geography	30	83.3	91.8	23.3	38.4	29.7	36.3
German	10	100	87.6	40	34.7	40	35.6
History	43	97.7	74.2	30.2	37.2	37.9	37.8
Information technology	25	100	83.4	28	20.6	36	28.5
Mathematics	38	89.5	83.2	50	34.3	40.3	31.3
Music	8	100	93.6	50	39.4	45	39
Physics	25	88	82	52	36.2	38.4	34.3
Other sciences	12	58.3	83.4	0	32.3	16.7	33.4
Psychology	28	85.7	83.2	39.3	32.5	34.3	22.3
Religious studies	14	100	90.9	14.3	38.9	35.7	37.9
Sociology	24	83.3	83.7	8.3	33.6	27.5	33.8
Sports/PE	46	87	88.2	2.2	27.7	25.7	33.8
Health and social care	7	100	67.6	14	21.9	34.3	25.6

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	32	100	96.1	28.1	48.7	78.1	85.1
Biology	22	100	91.6	50	36.3	86.4	74.4
Business studies	16	100	96.4	31.3	32.8	76.3	76.5
Classical studies	7	100	98.5	42.9	42.9	88.6	88
Communication studies	44	100	98.3	36.4	36.8	81.4	81.1
Drama	26	100	98.1	69.2	41.5	98.5	82.9
Economics	10	100	96.2	30	45.8	78	83.1
English/English language	34	100	98.3	44.1	36.5	85.9	80.1
English literature	18	100	98.5	55.6	43.7	95.6	84.3
General studies	14	78.6	90.1	0	29.1	42.9	69.3
Geography	19	100	97.1	36.8	40.5	86.3	80.9
German	6	100	96.3	16.7	44.3	60	82.1
History	26	100	97.1	26.9	41	73.8	81.2
Information technology	28	100	89.1	21.4	22.4	67.1	64.1
Mathematics	10	100	93.3	50	93.3	90	84.7
Music	5	100	97.7	80	41.8	112	82.2
Physics	11	100	92.8	36.4	42.8	81.8	78.6
Psychology	23	100	93.3	52	38.9	93	81.1
Sociology	18	100	95.4	44.4	39.6	90	79.1
Sports/PE	24	100	95.4	16.7	39.4	72.5	73.2
Health and social care (VCE)	12	100	90.1	50	16.3	90	62.5

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

GCE AS and A2 courses are offered in English Literature and English Language and Literature, Communication Studies, French, German, Spanish and Classical Studies. English Literature, French and Communication Studies were inspected in depth and other subjects were sampled. The focus was on English Literature, but English Language and Literature was also sampled. GCSE English is offered as a one year re-sit course mainly for students who wish to improve their grades.

In the German lesson observed in Year 12, the standards and the teaching and learning were good. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and native speaker fluency. The lesson was almost entirely in German which helped develop students' listening and speaking skills. The lesson was very well prepared and the aims were communicated clearly. The teacher corrected students' errors very skilfully, which helped them to make very good progress. Students were very motivated and achieved well. In Spanish, the teaching and learning were very good. Students were all beginners and had only had a few lessons prior to the inspection. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and good linguistic competence. Most of the lesson was in Spanish which provided students with a good model for their own oral work. Many students made short personal presentations in front of the group without notes. This indicates excellent achievement. Their pronunciation was generally good. In Latin and classical studies standards are very good and students tend to do better than they do in their other subjects. This is the result of enthusiastic and very knowledgeable teaching.

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Consistent examination results well above the national average.
- Very good relations contribute to students' positive attitudes to learning.
- Very good teaching and teacher subject knowledge.
- Good leadership in guiding the department.
- More flexible entry requirements to AS and A Level courses require a more structured approach to monitoring teaching and learning than in previous years.

Commentary

151. AS and A Level results in 2002 for English Literature are well above the national average. Standards have risen consistently at a rate that is well above the national average, and this represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Girls achieve at a higher level than boys, but all students have gained at least a pass grade, with well over half achieving grades A and B. Achievement is good based on predictions made from students' performance in their GCSE examinations.
152. The standard of work of current students is well above average. Very good relations contribute to their very positive attitude to learning. Students contribute confidently and feel able to express views which contrast with others. Year 12 students made some sophisticated observations on the different imagery used by Keats and Coleridge to portray women. Students' files are well organised with research notes, summaries and reviews of texts. By Year 13, students reach high standards in writing and handle the terminology of literary criticism effectively. Work on 'Hamlet' shows very good progression from first impressions to well argued essays that show clear knowledge and understanding of the text.
153. Teaching is very good overall, and in the four lessons seen it was never less than good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding of the examination requirements which they share readily and enthusiastically with students. Students' ideas are promptly and constructively evaluated both in discussions and writing. Some find it difficult to link the attainment objectives for examinations to improvement in their work, but feel confident

that they can approach teachers for individual support at any time. Time is well used to move learning forward through focused discussions. For example, at the start of a Year 13 lesson, students work in pairs to explore links between five of Seamus Heaney's early poems before the teacher re-focuses them on clear learning objectives. As a result, high quality discussion and learning take place. The structured approach to the teaching of specific critical skills, for both courses, enables students with slightly lower GCSE grades than usual to structure their writing with confidence and express a clear point of view. Students have ready access to the internet to support their research and the department has developed an extensive collection of wider reading materials to support provision in the library.

154. The leadership and management of English are good. Staff are encouraged to teach to their expertise so their commitment and enthusiasm are communicated to the students. High standards have been maintained in English Literature, and the department has successfully introduced English Language and Literature. Standards are rising in this subject, and its addition has proved popular with students and encouraged more boys to continue with English in the sixth form. The department has also introduced a Cultural Enrichment course at the end of Year 12 that is valued highly by students. Overall the improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
155. More flexible entry requirements to both courses require a more structured approach to monitoring teaching and learning than in previous years. As a result of staff turnover, many are teaching the A Level for the first time. Internal analysis of performance and results has already identified the need for greater consistency to ensure standards are maintained. There is a shared commitment amongst staff new to the department to improve quickly.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

156. The approach to teaching English language and literacy through other subjects in the sixth form is an extension of the very good provision in Years 7 to 11. Effective work was seen in subjects such as communication studies, chemistry, French, sport, economics and health and social care where teachers expect students to acquire and use a high level of technical vocabulary. Students' skills of critical analysis are developed very well in English, history, philosophy and psychology. The monitoring of students' responses in class and regular, constructive marking of work develops students' thinking skills so they apply the ideas they are learning. Written work in art and theatre studies shows limited use of technical vocabulary and research.

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The provision in communication studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards have risen significantly and are well above average.
- Teaching is very good showing knowledge, quality planning and challenge.
- Strong and relevant schemes of work reflect very good leadership and management.
- Students are enthusiastic and committed to the course.
- Some teaching of theory is too teacher led and students lose valuable opportunities to probe ideas and link them to their own experience.

Commentary

157. The standards achieved in A Level results in communication studies in 2002 were at the national average. The picture of the previous two years, when girls underperformed, was not repeated. 2003 results were considerably higher, being amongst the best in the school. Over two thirds of candidates gained grades A and B, and the average progress made on the course by students was very good.
158. Standards of work of the students at present in Year 13 are well above national averages. They have views and beliefs but are interested in, and tolerant of, those of others. Almost all can see

an alternative interpretation, and higher attaining students are quick to assess to what extent it can be justified. In project work all show skilled use of ICT. Achievement is very good, not least given the wide range of student interests and abilities on entry to the course. Higher attaining students make exemplary use of specialist vocabulary without being pretentious or obscure. Average attaining students work very hard and essays show the ability to think around issues. They have very good knowledge which, however, is sometimes insufficiently linked into the essay topic. The work of lower attaining students shows clarity. Abstract ideas pose difficulty but in most essays the range of ideas presented is appropriate and expression shows understanding of them.

159. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers enthuse about the subject and go to great lengths to ensure that they keep up to date both in terms of subject knowledge and the relevance of the materials they use. A Year 12 class studying non-verbal communication considered what messages a photograph of Yasser Arafat conveyed, and to what extent they were posed by the subject or the photographer, or a true representation. They then went on to analyse the messages in a digital photograph of a pupil ("She shows confidence and defiance. Look at the way she has edited her uniform!") and to discuss how teachers give messages, deliberate or unintentional, in lessons. Students enjoy learning theory and principles which they can then exemplify, illustrate and criticise. They are presented with demanding ideas and language which stimulate quality thinking and discussion. In a Year 13 lesson, the teacher saw the opportunity to pose the question 'Is Christianity still the state religion in Britain?' Dimensions of politics, religious apathy and the multi-faith/cultural nature of the country were skilfully drawn in, students learning the complexity behind what seemed a straightforward idea.
160. A weakness in lessons is lengthy introductions to theory when teachers give too much information and specialist vocabulary. Students then got too little chance to think around the information, find their own examples and confirm their understanding of the new concepts and phrases. Regular detailed marking of written work gives students very clear guidance which helps both awareness and confidence. Entry requirements for the course are less rigid than on some courses. The range of student interests and abilities is very well planned for by teachers, who use task, topic and questioning levels thoughtfully. In a Year 12 lesson, the teacher countered orthodox views by asking students to find an alternative interpretation, and offering the words 'ironic' and 'offensive' to generate discussion.
161. This is a very well-led department so that teachers and students alike value the course for its relevance, and for the way it demands that ideas be expressed and justified. The course is very well managed. The scheme of work is stimulating and creates a good balance between theory and examining what happens in real life, and why. Resources and debate make appropriate use of topical issues and students are taught to approach contentious issues with sensitivity and open-mindedness. They much appreciate this philosophy and show strong commitment to a subject and teaching style which probes and respects a wide range of ideas.
162. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen, course organisation is now very good, and numbers opting for the course are very high, as are retention rates.

French

The provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers' linguistic skills and subject knowledge are very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- Some students need more support to improve their basic skills.

Commentary

163. Results in French AS and A Level in 2002 were above the national average and matched departmental predictions. Results in 2003 are broadly comparable with the previous year. There was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in either year. Current standards are also similar to examination results.
164. Year 12 students have very good listening skills and can understand lessons conducted entirely in French at normal speed. In one Year 12 lesson, students coped with a very demanding text containing higher numbers and in another lesson they answered questions on an authentic text with fluency and accuracy. They also role played confidently on family relationships. In a Year 13 lesson, many students had a good knowledge of general and specialist vocabulary relating to the German occupation of France during the Second World War. Whilst most students communicated very well on this topic and used appropriate structures and vocabulary, a few were more hesitant and made several basic errors. Their awareness of grammar is variable, ranging from excellent to quite weak. All Year 13 students had good listening skills and could follow a lesson on French history entirely in French.
165. The achievement of most students is good. In Year 12, students fill in the gaps in their knowledge of basic grammar and build up their vocabulary base. By Year 13 higher attaining students are quite fluent and communicate accurately and with confidence. There is a wide gap, however, between the attainment of the higher and lower-attainers. Grammar is presented and practised well, but some students need more support to improve their basic skills.
166. The teaching of French in the sixth form is good. Teachers' subject knowledge and linguistic skills are very good. The teachers work well together and adopt a common teaching approach. Their marking of students' work is of a high standard and teachers set clear targets which help students improve the standard of their work. Teachers prepare lessons very well and clarify lesson aims. Teachers speak almost all the time in French which enhances students' listening skills. The scheme of work is sound and the topics are motivating for students. Lessons contain lots of variety and students work independently. Very good use is made of a wide range of teaching resources. Lessons are challenging and have a clear structure. They are conducted at a brisk pace with the result that most students work effectively and with enthusiasm. Relationships are very good and teachers praise students for their efforts and correct errors sensitively. Leadership and management are good and progress since the last report has been good.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths:

- Examination results are well above the national average and the percentage of grades A and B is increasing.
- As a result of good teaching, students develop a high level of understanding and successfully apply this in new situations.
- The early entry policy in Year 10 is enabling students to start A Level courses with increased confidence and knowledge.
- The very good relationships with staff results in highly motivated students who achieve well.
- The department is well led and managed.

Commentary

167. Results at A Level have been consistently well above the national average for the three years up to 2002. The most recent results for 2003 have shown further improvement with a significant increase in the percentage of students achieving grades A and B. Results at AS level have remained close to the national average. More boys take the subject than girls, and there is no general difference in the results which can be attributed to gender alone.
168. The standards of work seen in lessons and in the limited number of student work files which were available for inspection, were good. Students had been given considerable encouragement through the school policy of entering students for mathematics GCSE in Year 10. Most students starting A Level had the advantage of either an additional Statistics GCSE or for students in Year 13, of starting and taking some AS modules in Year 11.
169. A small number of students in Year 12 were less fluent in algebraic manipulation because they had not gained the extensive practice in Year 11. The department is planning to ensure that in the future, the students in Year 11 continue with algebra practice alongside their work in statistics. The lack of fluency in algebra was not universal. For example, some very effective teaching enabled Year 12 high attaining students to successfully deduce the formula for solving quadratic equations. This requires good skills in algebra.
170. The students are very motivated through the skilful teaching and the work of the staff in encouraging and developing mathematical skills and thinking. Work is well marked and assessed. The students appreciate this guidance and the work and support of the staff. As a result student achievement is good.
171. Teaching and learning are good and in the lessons seen were based around the development of the students' thinking skills so that they could deduce solutions to problems. For example, a Year 13 class had worked on the centres of mass of lamina. Skilful teaching led the class to deduce how to apply these ideas to find the centres of mass of frameworks. This was very effective and produced high quality learning. Similarly, the Year 12 class working on the derivation of the quadratic formula were not simply told the method but were led to derive the formula for themselves. This overall approach was leading the students to develop real mathematical understanding and contributes to the high attainment of most of the students.
172. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a constant drive to develop and improve and a desire to modify courses and approaches as necessary to get the best from the students. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

173. Some subjects in the sixth form make extensive use of numeracy and the approach is an extension of the work in Years 7 to 11. The application of the policy is not as widely spread but effective work was seen in physics, where log-log graphs were being plotted, in biology where statistical methods are used and in PE for measurement and recording data.

SCIENCE

The main focus for the inspection was chemistry, but work in physics and biology was sampled. Physics is well taught and students are stimulated and interested in the subject because of the approach used. The topic observed on particle physics and relating it to studies of the origins and future of the universe, was particularly effective in motivating and improving student understanding. In the biology lesson seen, students learnt well because the teacher provided a stimulating set of activities to challenge their thinking. The teacher had very good subject knowledge making the exchange of ideas fast and thought provoking.

CHEMISTRY

The provision for chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good subject knowledge of staff leading to stimulating lessons and very good course work assessment.
- Excellent relationships in teaching groups leading to a very good learning environment.
- Student attitudes to their learning.
- Good teaching.
- Clarity of vision of the new leadership.
- Although teaching is largely good, some lessons were too teacher led.
- Data analysis is not yet rigorous enough.

Commentary

174. Only four students sat the examination in 2002, an unusually small group for the department. All students performed as expected. In 2003, the group size increased. Some students had health/home problems during the final year causing them to achieve less well than expected. The remaining students had above average point scores.
175. Standards in Year 13 lessons seen were above average. Students tackled practical work with confidence. They were businesslike and efficient in the laboratory and took good health and safety precautions. Their written work showed very good literacy skills and they had sufficient numeracy skills to tackle the demands of the course. In lessons, they asked searching questions and engaged in debate, sometimes at a good philosophical level. Year 12 students were very near the beginning of their course, but they were confident and eager to learn.
176. Relationships are excellent between both students and teachers. Students discuss their work freely with each other and are prepared to identify problems openly. Teachers respond to difficulties with individual explanations helping students to make good progress. They offer their time outside lessons so that students can approach them with any remaining difficulties with work set.
177. Students have very positive attitudes towards the subject. They found the adjustment from GCSE difficult, but have enjoyed the intellectual challenge that chemistry presents. They like the subject and very much appreciate the quality of the teaching and support that they receive.
178. The teaching and learning are good. The four chemistry teachers work closely as a team to ensure all students have a similar experience. They all have very good subject knowledge that allows them to deliver good lessons at a pace that enables all students to progress well. They expect students to acquire and use a high level of technical vocabulary and to apply the ideas they are learning. Occasionally, lessons are too teacher led, so that students are not encouraged to explore their own understanding of the topic being taught. Homework is integrated into the course and is discussed in lessons to promote the next stage of learning. The subject leadership is good and because of staffing changes, has focused successfully on ensuring that the teachers works consistently as a team. Data analysis is not yet rigorous enough to ensure best use is made of the information available.
179. Learning is supported well by the technical team and by enrichment activities such as visits to lectures and links with Universities and Industry. There was little specific reference to A Level chemistry in the last report, but improvement has been satisfactory as teaching is good and results have remained above average.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in ICT was not a main focus in the sixth form inspection. In the work sampled competent teaching was leading to sound progress. Standards are above the national average and students respond well to the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum:

180. The improvements in ICT provision in the main school have yet to impact on students in Years 12 and 13. However, many students have very good ICT skills and there are examples of subjects such as communications studies making effective use of equipment. For example, in one Year 12 communication studies class students used digital images of staff and students to analyse chosen memories. In religious education, a Year 12 student had used ICT to produce an excellent plan and another had developed timetables and charts to assist their learning. In PE in Years 12 and 13, there was excellent use of ICT including PowerPoint presentations and internet searches. However, there was also some indiscriminate copying of pages from the World Wide Web. While there are many isolated examples of good practice by students and subject areas, the development of ICT skills in the sixth form lacks coherence

HUMANITIES

The school offers a number of humanities subjects. History, philosophy, and psychology were inspected in depth and work in geography, sociology and government and politics was sampled. Standards in geography are well above average and in the lesson observed in Year 12. In sociology, the work seen was very good. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff challenge students and motivate them to achieve high standards. In government and politics, standards are good and in a lesson seen in Year 13 the lively teaching drew out students' knowledge and stimulated their interest in an essential, but not intrinsically exciting, aspect of constitutional history.

HISTORY

The provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good subject knowledge and support from enthusiastic teachers.
- Very good relationships with students.
- Share and extend good practice in using a range of effective teaching strategies to challenge and involve all students.

Commentary

181. Results in the GCE examination for 2002 were below the national average. Though results have fluctuated from year to year, students generally achieve results which are consistent with their prior attainment.

182. Standards at the time of the inspection indicated that standards were better than the previous year's examination results. Students in Year 13 are working at national expectations. For example, in work seen from their Year 12 study of Nazi Germany, students were seen to have effectively used a range of texts to build up their knowledge and understanding of the main narrative of developments and issues in foreign policy. In a set essay central to this study, on Hitler's intentions in foreign policy, higher attaining students showed a confident grasp of both the sequence of events, and recent debate and scholarship on this topic. In a Year 12 class studying the health of the people in nineteenth century Britain, students readily absorbed the implications of the different population statistics and other sources presented by the teacher. Higher attaining students asked pertinent questions of some of the conclusions being drawn, and demonstrated a perceptive understanding of the limitations and strength of different types of historical evidence. They were taking on the attributes of young historians.

183. Overall, teaching and learning seen throughout the inspection were good. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subject was apparent. Lessons were appropriately planned, and teachers were careful to emphasise the expected lesson outcomes. Students in Year 13 were seen steadily building up their knowledge of the Treaty of Versailles. Prompted by the class teacher, they included evaluation of the significance of each clause. In all lessons seen through the inspection, however, while the teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject clearly had a motivating effect on the students, the lessons were overly teacher led. Students made progress, but might have advanced further had they had the opportunity to apply themselves more to the texts and sources studied, the opportunity to work with and share observations and questions with other students, and time to reflect on what they felt they had learned through the lesson. Teachers' care for their students' work and development was seen in the detailed and thorough marking of set pieces of work in the files. Students clearly valued their teachers' expertise and support. Many students had been sufficiently inspired to declare their intentions of applying to read history at university.
184. The department is well led. Resources are good, and include the use of the library, ICT and extra-curricular enrichment, for example the trip to Berlin. Students would benefit greatly from more involvement in their own learning. Since the last inspection, the department has maintained its quality of teaching, learning, and enthusiasm, through changing cohorts of students.

PHILOSOPHY and ETHICS

The provision in philosophy and ethics is **good**.

Main strengths:

- Standards are good.
- Teaching is good.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- The subject makes a strong contribution to key skills of communication.

Commentary

185. Standards are above average and all students are being challenged to achieve. The standards reached by students as seen in the current inspection are good and retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 are good with some students in Year 12 opting for the AS level as an enrichment course.
186. Students achieve well; they demonstrate knowledge and understanding through presentations, discussions and the quality of their questions. Some lower attaining students have difficulties with the complexity of a new subject but these are given individual support, detailed booklets and summaries to help them.
187. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teaching is good. They have high expectations of their students. They challenge and enthuse them with well-planned activities through using characters and examples that students know well from the Harry Potter books to support and encourage them as they grapple with complex philosophical concepts. Lessons have clear objectives and carefully timed activities. Assessments enable teachers to match lessons to students' needs and set realistic challenges. Independent learning and the pooling of information are encouraged as students are given opportunities to discuss key theories, relate this to their own world views and apply previous knowledge. A well-structured Year 12 lesson on the "real self" built up the students' understanding of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. A well chosen paired activity provided ample opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding and to ask searching questions. A homework task further extended and developed this.

188. As a result of the high quality of teaching, students enjoy philosophy. They are eager to learn and grateful for the support they are given. Relationships in the department are very good. Students consider the teachers know them well and care about their work and there is an overall sense of shared purpose. Students work well alone or with others, organise their note taking well and write fluently. They also develop independent learning skills and notebooks contain some detailed and well-researched work.
189. Strong subject leadership and management and the improved image of religious education in Years 10 and 11 have raised philosophy's profile and recruitment is growing. Teachers meet weekly to clarify individual targets based on assessment of students' progress. These targets are shared with students who appreciate the clear advice given on how to improve their work. A good range of books is available to support students in the department and in the library and ICT and the internet are used as research tools. The subject was not reported on at the last inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about how it has improved.
190. This challenging course contributes well to students' thinking and communication skills and enriches the sixth form provision for students' spiritual and moral development.

PSYCHOLOGY

The provision in psychology is **very good**.

Main strengths:

- Continuing very high standards and achievement.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Students' very positive attitudes.

Commentary

191. This is an increasingly popular subject in the sixth form and standards have been rising over the past five years. During this period, 85% of students who enter the exam have achieved grades A-C, with 20% achieving grade A. These standards are due to the very good, sometimes excellent teaching, and the very positive attitudes of students to the subject, which they find very relevant and meaningful. All students achieve well.
192. Students' knowledge and understanding in psychology are developed through very good teaching using a wide range of well-structured learning experiences. The early emphasis in Year 12 on practical experience in carrying out psychological investigation is a key feature. As a result, students have a greater understanding of psychological principles and concepts when they read published research, and a more rigorous approach to judging evidence. It is good preparation for those students who plan to study psychology at university, or, later on, to follow a career in applied psychology. Teachers' enthusiasm contributes to the very positive attitudes the students have to psychology. Lessons are characterised by lively and intellectually challenging debate. Students become used to defending what they say through reasoned argument.
193. The marking of students' work is another very good aspect of the teaching. It reflects the very high expectations of teachers. It is another key factor in the very good learning and standards achieved in psychology. Students know the grade level they have achieved for their written work, and precisely what they need to do to improve. Students write comments on the accuracy of the teachers' comments. This approach supports students' personal development. Students increasingly become self-directed learners, acquiring a reflective and self-critical approach to study.
194. The leadership of the department shows a very clear understanding of the value of psychology and clear improvement since the last inspection when standards were reported to be above average.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

This area was not a focus for inspection, but work in A Level electronics and food technology was sampled. Teaching in the electronics lesson observed was good. Some students already have good theoretical knowledge and work co-operatively with others happily sharing their ideas about construction. This ensures that all students make good progress and achieve well. All students used a computer programme to test their viability before construction begins. This ensures that all students embark on making with confidence and achieve standards in line with their capabilities. The teaching in the food technology lesson observed was good. The lesson was well planned and the teacher demonstrated excellent knowledge of proteins and essential amino acids. Good questions elicited what students already knew. Students had poor recall of facts at the outset, but by the end had a reasonable grasp of some of the complex technical vocabulary and were beginning to understand how different methods of classification for proteins might be used. Overall they made good progress and achieved standards in line with their capabilities.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The main focus for the inspection was A Level art and theatre studies, but work in music was sampled. Standards in music are well above average and students achieve well.

ART

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students' attitudes are excellent.
- AS level students engage in a broad range of practical work. Individual study journals show students apply much intellectual and creative effort to their research.
- The sixth form art curriculum provides insufficient coverage of critical study.
- There are insufficient specialist resources to support work at the highest level.

Commentary

195. Results at AS level are close to the national average at all levels and have been improved. Results at A Level in recent years show that all students have achieved an A to E pass, which is better than the national average. However, the number of students achieving A and B grades has declined and is now below the national average. Students have done less well in art than they have in other subjects. Girls have outperformed boys in recent years. Overall results at the highest grades are not as good as they were and the improvement at AS level has not yet been carried on to A2.
196. Current AS Level work is generally satisfactory and sometimes better. In one lesson, Year 12 students created good quality tonal drawings using the drawing medium effectively in order to establish the forms. At A2, outcomes are too dependent on the quality of students' independent study. For example, in a Year 13 photography lesson students worked on their individual projects with confidence and demonstrated a very good knowledge of the technical processes used. In general, though, students' work in sketchbook-journals indicates a limited range of strategies used for both critical analysis and technical research. Too often work appears to stop short of deeper analytical study or extended technical research and application. This is limiting their ability to achieve the higher grades. In group seminar work, students appear reluctant to explore the ideas discussed. However in individual tutorials the better teaching presses the students to extend and develop their ideas with a degree of rigour, challenging limiting preconceptions.

197. The teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. The best teaching in the sixth form supports students' independent work. In photography, the teaching guides individual students to research technical and aesthetic concerns. However, teaching strategies for broadening students' skills of critical analysis are limited and in some specialist areas there is insufficient challenge or rigour at the highest level.
198. The curriculum offers a suitable range of opportunities for specialisation though the limited critical and analytical study is a weakness at A2 and the range of specialist resources needs to be extended. This leaves students with too narrow a range of working methods. There is insufficient coverage of the more technically demanding work within specialist areas of study. However the provision outside formal lessons is very good and helps to counteract the relative weaknesses in other aspects. The department organises art study trips to foreign countries. Informal art workshops are available each day. Students' attitudes are excellent. They show a high sense of responsibility, work well independently and demonstrate enthusiasm for their studies. Some sixth form art students take on specific responsibilities for organising and running younger students' art workshops. Art clubs are run by the sixth form 'art captains'.
199. The overall standards are not as good as they were at the last inspection. Provision in art has, however, been affected in recent years by staffing difficulties and the main challenge for the subject management has been to maintain the quality of the courses in Years 7 to 11. The sixth form is now more of a priority and staff are working to improve the quality of work and remedy the resource deficiencies.

THEATRE STUDIES

The provision in theatre studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good achievement results in well above average standards.
- Students respond very well to the expert teaching.
- Leadership is very good, and courses are very well organised and managed.
- Levels of independence and mutual support are unusually high.
- Students are offered, and help run, an excellent range of enrichment activities.
- Understanding of technical theatre and its vocabulary is a relative weakness, affecting essay quality.

Commentary

200. Results in the 2002 theatre studies A Level examinations were well above national average, girls doing better than boys. In 2003 there was a decline, but results remained very good because of the number of students achieving higher grades. The performance of both boys and girls reflected very good progress for their ability. Over several years only one student has not passed A Level.
201. The standards of students currently in the sixth form are well above average, notably in their performance and interpretation skills. Achievement is very good. High levels of support and cooperation in both group work and its planning result in portrayals which are impressive. All students can sustain and switch character effectively. Atmosphere, emotion and humour are very well and appropriately conveyed. Performance is unusually smooth because rehearsal time is used to consider impact and improvement. Lunchtime devised pieces by Year 12 students were excellent. Using physical theatre to present traditional fairy stories to a peer audience, students transformed themselves skilfully into clocks, doors, tables, trees and telephones!
202. Students are aware of the potential of parallel and symbolism, and how context influences both writers' work and the audience's perception of it. However, in both discussion and writing, students show a more limited understanding of technical theatre and its vocabulary. All but the

most talented therefore miss some significance, or do not explain it sufficiently well. This results in essays which could be better expressed. Lower attaining students too often lapse into a predictable style of issue leading to explanation leading to example, which limits their marks, and their understanding.

203. Learning is very good because of student response to expert and challenging teaching, which is very good. All lessons seen were characterised by pace and energy. Students' commitment is apparent in the high levels of attendance and punctuality. They readily accept advice and appreciate the excellent guidance as to how to improve given by teachers. A Year 12 group were improvising a scene with an argument between director and actors. Teacher questioning enabled students to realise the importance of physically and verbally giving the argument a clear definition from the surrounding action.
204. Tasks set are both intellectually and dramatically demanding. Probing questioning by teachers helps students to explore and understand their ideas. One group considered the difference in purpose, and therefore style, between parody and satire and how this would affect their interpretation. However aspects of staging work, and the specialist language relevant to it, are not sufficiently explored. Teachers miss some opportunities to briefly link practice with theory. Students work diligently and with a high level of independence. They learn both to express themselves and to value what others can contribute, because of the encouragement teachers give them. All show a mature ability to reflect on their own and others' performance. They have learnt, as a Year 13 student explained when questioned about a role interpretation: "As a character, you have to devise a past which has influenced you."
205. There has been good improvement since the last inspection: well above average standards have been sustained. Very good leadership has resulted in a committed and well-informed team of teachers who share a vision of high academic standards for students alongside strong development of them as individuals. As a result a pupil dropping the course is a very rare occurrence. The department is very well managed. The scheme of work is cohesive and very well planned. The range of enrichment activities – numerous theatre visits, professional groups and workshops in school – is excellent. It is supplemented by students taking major responsibility for ambitious annual productions and for running drama clubs for younger year groups.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The main focus in this area was on PE. Work in Travel and Tourism was sampled. In the lesson observed, standards were good and students worked at a level appropriate for the early stage in their Advanced Vocational Certificate course. Teaching and learning were very good. The teacher's very good subject knowledge, varied teaching techniques, careful lesson planning and encouraging style made the lesson interesting. Students were well motivated and understood the application of their knowledge and skills to employment in the travel business.

SPORT (Physical Education)

The provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students achieve very well.
- The very good teaching and learning.
- Very good opportunities are provided for students to become independent learners.
- Very good vibrant environment in which learning progresses very well.
- Target setting needs to be better developed in order to raise the standards of the few who fail to achieve their potential on the course.

Commentary

206. GCE A Level results in 2002 were in line with national averages. Results in the four previous years were well above the national average. 3 of the 8 candidates gained A-B grades and all 8 gained at least a pass grade. GCE AS candidates in 2002 were in line with the national average. However six candidates failed to gain a pass.
207. Standards of attainment of the present Year 13 GCE A Level candidates are above average. They have very good practical skills. Scrutiny of their work, discussion with them and observation of theory lessons confirm that they have very good understanding of the theory of performance. Standards in the present Year 12 AS level are above average. Scrutiny of their GCSE coursework, observation of their work in lesson and discussion with them verify this. Students enter the AS course with a minimum of grade C at GCSE. Indications are that those in the present Year 13 groups are generally working towards grades A-B. Overall, their achievement is very good, given that several began the course at the minimum entry level.
208. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have created a very good environment to enhance students' learning. Imaginative approaches and very good use of ICT in their GCE work allow students to take control of their own learning. In a very good lesson on analysis of performance, students learned very well because they were challenged to organise themselves. They took video and digital camera shots of long jumping and were able to analyse performance very well as a consequence. Students tackle complex concepts relating to anatomy and physiology with considerable success, because of the challenges presented through imaginative teaching approaches. One such practical lesson on the chemistry of activity, enabled students to distinguish aerobic and anaerobic activities and explain the Krebs' Cycle competently.
209. Those taking a Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) learn very well. By taking charge of their own programme of work in which they train their fellow students, they develop their coaching expertise to a high level.
210. Leadership and management are good. Good planning of the GCE and CSLA courses gives students a very wide choice of activities, which engage and challenge them. Very good opportunities to work with younger students to develop coaching and refereeing skills are built into students' work. The students commented on how they enjoyed this particular challenge. The very small numbers of students who under-achieve need much clearer subject-specific targets to guide their progress. Improvement since the last inspection, particularly in A Level results, has been good.

BUSINESS

The focus was on A and AS economics, but A Level business studies and GNVQ (intermediate) business were also sampled. In the business studies lesson observed, most students made good progress due to good teaching. Time was used effectively with a balance of teacher explanation, independent work by students and one-to-one feedback discussions between students and their teacher. In the GNVQ business lesson, students who were well supported made very good progress with clear guidance in developing basic skills. The teacher's clear explanation quickly led to students applying their new learning in a context relevant to the world of work.

ECONOMICS

The provision in economics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good subject teaching.
- Very good examination preparation.
- Students' attitudes to the subject.
- Continue to increase the range of learning styles to ensure that all students maximise their potential.

Commentary

211. Standards in the subject are normally above average though in 2002, results in the A2 examination dipped below the national average. Most students begin the subject with GCSE results suggesting potential to do well and they go on to fulfil their potential with around half the entry gaining the highest grades of A and B. Indeed, in the 2003 AS examination over half of the entry gained an A grade. Students achieve good results and make very good progress through a combination of hard work, very good teaching which makes the subject enjoyable and assessment which focuses on examination requirements and enables students to improve their performance throughout the course.
212. The quality of teaching is very good. In all the lessons observed there was a clear structure and positive working atmosphere throughout. Very secure and deep subject knowledge and understanding is communicated confidently allowing students to make progress by feeling confident. Clear teaching of fundamental concepts in Year 12 allows students to work independently at a sophisticated level in Year 13. Oral feedback is constant and assists rapid learning and this complements the detailed written feedback. This prepares students very well for examinations. The range of learning styles has improved and this could be developed further to ensure that all students on the course gain maximum benefit from the course.
213. The subject teacher heads a large department and has responded to staff illness by taking on all teaching of the subject. The systems for regular monitoring and target setting for students are effective. Opportunities for staff development are available and have recently been aimed at supporting the introduction of the AS and A2 courses. Performance management systems are in place but their effectiveness in such a broad department is limited by the heavy and specialised teaching commitment of its leader.
214. Students' response to the subject is very good. Students value and respect their teacher enormously and relationships are very good. They appreciate the efforts made to keep them on track, and they attend and participate well in lessons. In one Year 13 class, students responded very well to opportunities to apply concepts at a quite sophisticated level to analyse wage differentials in the labour market between groups of workers such as those between nurses and footballers, different ethnic groups and between men and women. The outcome was seen in impressive presentations by the students. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection but the general trend of results over recent years has been upwards.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The subject is offered as an AVCE (advanced vocational certificate of education) in the sixth form. Several of the 14 students (all female) in Year 12 and 4 in Year 13 have taken child development as a GCSE, and all take at least one additional a level subject.

The provision in health and social care is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students achieve well due to good and very good teaching.
- Students have very good attitudes to their work.
- The leadership and management of the curriculum are good.
- Students' use of work placements to enrich learning is limited by the timetable structure.
- The planned development of students' key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT is limited.

Commentary

215. Standards are well in line with national averages. Results in 2002 for the first AVCE examination (single award) were well above national averages with over a half of students gaining the top A/B grades. In 2003 unconfirmed results were lower than expected with a third of students gaining a C grade. Results were consistent with those in the students' other subjects and indicated good achievement from relatively low starting points at GCSE, and about a third of students achieved slightly better than expected.
216. Inspection evidence in lessons and work shows the standards attained by students currently in Years 12 and 13 are satisfactory in relation to national course expectations, and students of a fairly wide range of ability have made good progress. In the small sample of lessons seen, Year 12 students displayed an above-average level of oral communication skill in giving short individual talks to the class on a topic of interest to them, and, in written work, have made a good start by producing glossaries of key terms, clear diagrams and notes on historical developments in the NHS, well in line with national expectations.
217. Year 13 students showed very good team work and communication skills, in written assignments where they reported on visits to local care settings and interactions with selected clients. In lessons and work seen, students' standards of ICT were sound, with full word-processed descriptions, though sometimes evaluations were too brief, and the range of ICT software used to present work was limited, particularly regarding graphs and modelling health statistics using spreadsheets.
218. Students' attitudes and commitment to AVCE are very good, helped by very supportive teaching that fully involves students of all attainment levels, including, in 2003, a dyslexic student who made very good progress. In discussion, students are very appreciative of teachers' continual efforts to engage them in practical activities, both within school and in the local community.
219. The overall quality of teaching and learning are good. Lessons were interesting and enjoyable, and were well matched to students' needs, so they made very good progress, working very productively. Students were encouraged to offer their own opinions without inhibition, and this helped them remain fully involved in written and oral tasks. Teachers' examples showed considerable expertise and experience, for example where they used anecdotes from their own family life. Teachers helped students to express theory in their own words by supporting literacy both through monitoring their responses in class, and through regularly marking and reviewing students' written tasks, giving students, individually, constructive targets to improve the quality of their work. This often involved individual tutorials in class to check progress on achieving the examining board's requirements for each unit of work. Teachers are skilful in developing students' ability to conduct individual research and, particularly through the optional unit on complementary therapies, plan their own projects using recommended internet computer sites and very good contacts in the local community, including students' own families and friends..

220. Curriculum leadership and management of the subject are good: routines and schemes of work are well established, and staff work as an enthusiastic, well-knit team, well matched to their subject specialisms and AVCE requirements. The timetable only provides four hours a week, and there is insufficient flexibility to extend the currently limited work placements, though they are based on very good links with local care settings. Staff plan to integrate more key skill development into some units to enrich the quality of students' work. This might include more use of ICT by students in lessons for presentation and also numeracy skills for example, relating to diet monitoring. The subject, which was not reported on in the last inspection, has very good capacity for further improvement.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

221. The school offers an AS and A2 general studies course and also a wide range of enrichment and extension activities which include community service, the sports leadership award, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and many opportunities to work with younger students through the house structure. Because the inspection took place early in the autumn term a number of courses and activities were not yet underway and it was not possible to observe teaching in these areas. However sixth formers spoke highly of the choices available to them. The school also participates in the Surrey Graduation Scheme. This enables sixth formers to record and gain credit for community service, individual achievement and applied skills.

222. General studies is a compulsory course in Year 12 and optional in Year 13. From this year it includes the school's provision for religious education in the sixth form. This broadly meets the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. All students take the AS level examination in general studies and the results are slightly better than the national average overall. Inspectors were not able to observe any teaching of this course during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make secure judgements about standards or the overall quality of teaching. A few students take the A2 examination in Year 13 and here results have in the past been disappointing. It is clear that students have not valued the course in the same way as they have their other A Level subjects or the other extension and enrichment activities available to them. The school is very aware of this and has made significant improvements to the structure and content of the course.

CAREERS EDUCATION

The provision in careers education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The high quality of information about higher education and vocational pathways.
- Very well led and managed provision.
- A small number of students do not take enough advantage of the careers guidance and support.

Commentary

223. Prior to entry, and throughout the sixth form, students are well supported in the careers information and guidance available to them. These are provided in partnership with the Surrey Connexions Careers Service and cover access to information on academic and vocational routes. A member of staff from the Connexions partnership is in school one day a week and most but not all sixth form students take up this opportunity for careers advice and guidance. Work-related learning is integrated into academic and vocational courses as appropriate, for example in travel and tourism and sociology and the Young Enterprise is a feature of the wider school curriculum.

224. Leadership and management of careers in the sixth form are very good. Resources for careers in the sixth form are very good. Students have access to a wide variety of these in the main school library where current information on higher and further education, vocational pathways including modern apprenticeships and training opportunities are kept. In addition, the Careers

room and a member of staff are available for students every lunchtime. The very good provision of careers in the sixth form has contributed to the school gaining the Excellence in Careers Award.

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

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