

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHARLES DARWIN SCHOOL**

Biggin Hill, Kent

London Borough of Bromley

Unique reference number: 101675

Headteacher: Rob Higgins

Lead inspector: Liz Barthaud

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 259340

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11-18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,294
School address:	Jail Lane Biggin Hill Kent
Postcode:	TN16 3AU
Telephone number:	01959 574043
Fax number:	01959 540036
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mervin Sharp
Date of previous inspection:	10-14 November 1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Charles Darwin School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-18 in Biggin Hill, Kent. It is a specialist arts college. The sports facilities on the school site are jointly used by the school and the local community. The school is situated within the London Borough of Bromley where students in Year 6 can, if they pass a selection test, transfer to local grammar schools. There are 1,294 students on roll, making the school larger than average. A high proportion of students live locally but a significant number travel to the school by bus from both the Bromley and Croydon areas. Students have attended over 39 primary schools. Attainment of students on entry to the school, as measured by tests at the end of Year 6, is broadly in line with the national average. Charles Darwin School is a member of the Specialist Schools most improved schools club (2003). The school has also been successful in gaining a gold Artsmark award (2001), the Sportsmark Award (2001) and a Department for Education and Skills School Achievement award (2003). The school is very popular and heavily over-subscribed. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average at just over 10 per cent and indicates the average socio-economic circumstances of families whose children attend the school. Around 6 per cent of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds, though very few have English as an additional language. The number of students with special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Need, is broadly in line with the national average. During the last school year 29 students joined the school and 43 left. In comparison with the national average, this figure is low. At the end of Year 11 around 75 per cent of students continue with their studies either at the school, local grammar schools or the further education college.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30317	Liz Barthaud	Lead inspector	
15181	Meg Hackney	Lay inspector	
3162	Philip O'Neill	Team inspector	English Post 16 Leisure and Tourism
32305	Matthew Pike	Team inspector	Mathematics
10140	Ravinder Johal	Team inspector	Science
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology English as an additional language
31525	Sue O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages - French
8632	Derrick Beer	Team inspector	Geography
19983	Haydn Webb	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
11021	Leonora Davies	Team inspector	Music
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
32996	Alison Walker-Fraser	Team inspector	Business education
15485	Roger Butler	Team inspector	Religious education
21906	John Scottow	Team inspector	Post 16 Physics
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs
33173	Malcolm Doolin	Team inspector	History

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS</b>	<b>11</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>16</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>50</b>

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

Charles Darwin School is a **very good** school with some outstanding aspects. Standards are **above average** because teaching and learning are **very good** with some excellent features. Students achieve well, building on their prior attainment levels as a result of the very good teaching and learning they receive. Leadership and management of the school are **very good** and the school gives **very good** value for money. The greatest aids to achievement are the vision of the headteacher and the creativeness and dedication of all staff, who are excellent role-models for students.

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

- The outstanding clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirations of the headteacher ensure that the quality of what the school provides is very good and constantly improving.
- Standards are good as a result of very good leadership and management at all levels throughout the school.
- The achievement of all students in Years 7 to 9 is good and very good in Years 10 and 11 as a result of the very good and stimulating teaching they receive which meets their learning needs.
- Students' competency in information communication technology (ICT) is excellent and improves their learning in all subject areas.
- The very good care, support, advice and guidance provided by the school enable students to learn in a happy and relaxed atmosphere.
- The school has developed excellent links with parents which contribute to the good attitudes and behaviour of students within the school.
- The development of writing skills across departments, particularly in Years 7 to 9, is variable.
- Systems for assessing how well students progress are good. Specific learning strategies to raise standards for individual students are not yet sufficiently developed.
- The lack of planning and monitoring of the citizenship programme is adversely affecting achievement in this area in Years 7 to 11.
- The governing body provides a high level of both challenge and support to the school and is fully involved in shaping future developments.

Overall, progress since the last report has been very good. The school has improved the range and number of courses offered to students throughout the school. Punctuality to school and to lessons has greatly improved as a result of the rigorous monitoring systems in place. The multi-cultural aspect of the curriculum has been greatly improved which has strengthened the contribution made by the school to the students' overall cultural development.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

When students join the school in Year 7 their attainment, based on the results at the end of Year 6, is variable. A high proportion of students join the school with low levels of literacy. Attainment overall is satisfactory with very few students having achieved high national curriculum levels at the end of Year 6. Results at the end of Year 9 in the national tests in 2003 were in line with the national average in mathematics, below the national average in science and well below the national average in English. Performance within these areas has fluctuated each of the last three years as more students join the school with weak literacy skills. Another factor has been that, in line with many other schools within the area, the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting experienced staff in these subject areas. Results in the national tests in 2003 for English were challenged by the school. Samples of papers were returned to the examination board for remarking and in each case students were awarded a higher level. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were very high in comparison with schools in similar contexts and above average when compared with all schools nationally. GCSE results have been improving faster than the national average in recent years and students' achievement is very high. Overall boys achieve as well as girls with some variations between subjects. In 2002, sixth form students gained below national average results in the AS and GCE A level courses and the yet to be validated results for 2003 indicate a similar picture. However, this

represents good achievement as attainment on entry into the sixth form, based on average GCSE point scores, was below average.

### Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	B	B	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	D	Not available	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained at the end of Year 9*

Students currently in Years 7 to 9 are working at above average standards and achieving well. Students in Years 10 and 11 build well on previous study and achieve very well. Students currently in the sixth-form are working at above average standards and achieving well, although standards between subjects can vary. Throughout the school the achievement of students with special educational needs is very good. The achievement of students identified as gifted and talented or with English as an additional language is good.

Charles Darwin School is a very inclusive school and one where the personal and academic development of all students is at the forefront of all thinking, planning and initiatives. As a result, relationships between students and teachers are **very good**. Students' personal development is **good** because the school actively seeks values and acts on the views of the students. Students in the main school adopt **good** attitudes to all aspects of school life and their behaviour is **good**. In the sixth form attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school is good.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are very good, both in the main school and the sixth form. There are examples of very good teaching in all departments. The highest proportion of excellent teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9 but there were examples in all year groups including the sixth form. Students learn very successfully because a high proportion of the teaching they receive is exciting and challenging, so that their interest is captured quickly. Teachers know their students well and use data to monitor the progress they are making and to set targets for improvement. Lesson planning is good and designed to meet the needs of the students within the teaching groups. Occasionally teaching in the main school is unsatisfactory and learning is slower in these lessons. Whilst teaching and learning is very good overall and achievement good overall, standards currently in Year 9 are satisfactory. The two main reasons for this are the weaknesses in the writing skills of the students and the use made by teachers of performance data to devise individual learning strategies for students.

The curriculum offered is good, both in the main school and in the sixth form. Opportunities for students to be involved in a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities are good, although lunch-time arrangements limit the range of activities that can be offered during this time. Other aspects of the overall educational provision are strengths within the school. They are the outstanding learning opportunities in information communication technology (ICT) and music and the very good provision for students with special educational needs. The current planning and monitoring arrangements for the delivery of both the citizenship and personal, social and health education programmes are not having a strong enough impact on the achievement of students in these areas. The arrangements for the care, support and welfare of all students are very good. Students are actively involved in the life and work of the school and their views are taken into account and acted upon very well. The school has excellent links with parents, and very good links with other schools and colleges and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Significant strengths are the outstanding self-evaluation systems that are in place throughout the school, and the creativity, vision and focus on continuous improvement provided by the headteacher. Regular self-evaluation enables the school to build on its many strengths while finding solutions to barriers to success as the problems arise. All members of the leadership group have a very clear vision for the school's future, which is reflected in their work. They operate as an effective team and, as a result, leadership and management of subject areas are now good with some strong features. Governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are actively involved in shaping its vision and direction. Financial management is very good. Governance of the school is good with governors fulfilling their roles well, except that they do not ensure that all students take part in a daily act of collective worship.

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are very positive about the work of the school. They believe their children are taught and supported well. They value what the school provides for their children through the range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities on offer. Attendance at parents' evenings is regularly over 90 per cent and parents are very happy with the information provided for them to support their children in their learning. Parents believe the school has high expectations of the students and they recognise that it is very well led and managed. Students hold very positive views about their school and are very clear that their views are taken into account and that they are very well supported in their learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve the standards of writing in Years 7 to 9;
- enhance the use made of performance data to set students precise strategies to raise standards;
- improve the planning and monitoring of the citizenship programme in Years 7 to 11;

and to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.



## SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The sixth form is effective.** It is cost effective and provides very good value for money. At the end of Year 11 students who wish to continue with their studies have the option of applying for places in the local grammar schools and local colleges. Attainment on entry to the sixth form based on GCSE point scores is below average. Although examination results for 2003 and 2002 were below average, this represents good achievement for the majority of students. Achievement is good as a result of very good teaching. Leadership and management are very good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching results in very good learning and good achievement.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour displayed by the students make them very good role models.
- Procedures for assessing and tracking student performance are good. However, the use made of performance data to establish strategies for individual students to improve their performance is not sufficiently developed in all subjects.
- Sixth-form students receive very good support, guidance and advice.

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

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in both <b>English</b> and <b>French</b> is <b>very good</b> . Standards in English are well above average and in French they are average. In both subjects students achieve well as a result of the very good teaching they receive.
Mathematics	Provision in <b>mathematics</b> is <b>good</b> . Results at the end of Year 13 show that the majority of students make good progress from their GCSE grades. Teaching is good and relationships between staff and students are good.
Science	
<b>Physics</b>	Provision in <b>physics</b> is <b>good</b> . Standards are in line with those nationally. Teaching and learning are good.
Humanities	
<b>Geography</b>	Provision in <b>geography</b> is <b>good</b> . Standards are in line with those nationally. Teaching and learning are very good.
<b>Leisure and tourism</b>	Provision in <b>leisure and tourism</b> is <b>good</b> . Standards are high with an above average proportion of students achieving a distinction or merit. Teaching is good.
Business	Provision in <b>business studies</b> is <b>good</b> . Standards are above the national average. Teaching and learning are good.

*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 provision of support, advice and guidance for sixth-form students is **very good**. The very good personal support they receive makes a positive contribution to their achievement. Relationships with

staff are very good and this results in very good behaviour and attitudes to work. The use of performance data to assess learning is good. However, the use of assessment to devise individual learning strategies for all students is at an early stage of development. Opportunities for students to give their views and contribute to the life and development of the school are very good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. Senior managers and governors have a strong sense of purpose in promoting high standards. The range of courses offered in the sixth form is reviewed annually to meet the needs of the students. The head of sixth form ensures that students are provided with up-to-date guidance on managing the demands of A-level courses. The sixth form is cost effective.

### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students are very satisfied with their sixth form. They speak very highly of the support they receive from their tutors. They particularly value the regular one-to-one sessions with their subject tutors to discuss their work. They are very happy with the range of opportunities they have to work with students in the main school. They take a firm lead in the work of the school council and have many avenues through which they can influence the future shape and direction of the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

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

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were variable between subjects but **satisfactory** overall when compared with schools nationally. This has been a consistent picture for the last three years. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were **above the national average** as they were in the previous year. GCSE results in 2003 were very high in comparison with similar schools. Students achieve **well** as they move through the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently very good teaching results in good achievement for all students in Years 7 to 9 and very good achievement for all students in Years 10 and 11.
- Special educational needs students make very good progress throughout the school.
- Standards in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 in English fell significantly and were well below those for all schools nationally.
- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in science have been below those for all schools nationally for the last three years.
- Results in GCSE examinations have been improving faster than the national trend and are very high when compared with similar schools.

#### Commentary

1. When students enter the school, they do so with standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly in line with the national average. However, their levels of literacy are below national expectations. Standards in English at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the national average, but in 2003 standards were well below. The school asked for a sample of the test papers to be remarked by the examination board. The standards achieved by all students whose papers were remarked improved by at least one level. The school considered having all papers remarked but decided this course of action would put too much additional pressure on teaching staff. In most other subjects, attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average except in art and design technology where it was below. Students make good progress during their first three years which results in satisfactory standards overall in national tests and teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. Details of results are given in the table below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.0 (34.7)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	35.9 (35.3)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.9 (32.4)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 224 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Taking the performance of students over the last three years in the national tests at the end of Year 9 together, performance in English and mathematics is close to the national average and below in science. The performance of boys during the same period has been close to the national average in English and science and above in mathematics. The performance of girls has been close to the national average in mathematics and below in English and science. This is in line with the picture nationally. The greatest barrier to raising standards further has been the school's inability to recruit qualified and experienced teachers to various curriculum areas, including the core subject areas.

- Teachers work hard to plan and teach lessons to successfully meet the needs of all learners, including those for whom English is an additional language, gifted and talented and special needs students. As a result, in the work seen during the inspection week, standards reached by all students in Year 9 were outstanding in ICT, above average in art, design technology, mathematics and music and below in English. In all other subjects standards were in line with national expectations. All students make good progress because the teaching they receive is exciting and challenging.
- Teaching in the first three years lays firm foundations for learning in Years 10 and 11. As a result of very good teaching in Years 10 and 11, all students make very good progress and the additional value added between the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is very high. In 2003 GCSE examination results were above the national average and very high when compared with schools with similar intakes. The trend in the school's average GCSE/GNVQ average point score per student has been above the national trend for the last three years. Details of GCSE results are set out in the table below.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	59 (58)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	90 (90)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94 (95)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.5 (34.7)	35.5 (34.7)

*There were 199 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- Results in English, mathematics and double science were above the national average. Over the last three years the results of girls and boys have been above the national average. In 2003 results for girls fell slightly and were in line with the national average. As part of its strategy for raising standards, the school holds a series of progress review meetings which involve parents and students. At these meetings targets for improvement are set on an individual basis, based on progress data. These targets are linked to the challenging targets set by the governing body. The GCSE targets set for 2003 were exceeded. The targets set for 2004 are achievable because students in Year 11 are achieving at least average standards in all subjects.

**Sixth form**

Results in the sixth form are **below** average. Achievement in the sixth form is **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in the sixth form are below the national average.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form is good because they receive very good teaching.
- Attitudes to work in the sixth form are very good.

**Commentary**

- At the end of Year 11 students can apply for places at local grammar schools and the further education college. Charles Darwin School's entry policy for the sixth form is an inclusive one. This enables students to return to study at the school with a GCSE point score average lower than would be the case in other local schools. Sixth-form results in GCE A-level examinations in 2003 and for the previous two years were below the national average overall. Achievement in Years 12 and 13 when measured against GCSE performance at the end of Year 11 is good. Results vary from subject to subject and from year to year. This reflects differences in attainment on entry to the course rather than different rates of progress.

7. The work of students currently in the sixth form is above national expectations, suggesting that the consistently very good teaching they have received is having a positive impact on raising standards. Students are keen to learn and are active participants in lessons. They have developed effective independent learning skills which enable them to complete extended pieces of work to a good standard.
8. Teachers monitor the progress of individual students very carefully and discuss their work with them on a regular basis. Careful analysis of the performance of students enables teachers to successfully set meaningful targets, directly linked to current performance. This system is having a positive impact on the raising of standards.

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

Students' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Relationships are **very good**. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**, but too many students take holidays during term time.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The students' good attitudes make strong contributions to the standards they attain and their achievements.
- Excellent opportunity is provided through the school council system for students to have a strong voice in the management of the school.
- Students are encouraged to develop good independent skills of learning.
- The school's very positive ethos and good range of arts and sports activities enrich students' moral, social and cultural development.
- Students have friendly and constructive relationships with the staff which enable them to gain confidence and self-esteem.
- The procedures for the prompt monitoring, recording and follow-up of absence are very good.

### **Commentary**

9. Students throughout the school have a good attitude towards school. Many students are developing good independent learning skills and gaining confidence and self-esteem through the many exciting opportunities provided by the school. Relationships are very good between students and the staff. The majority of students relate very well to each other, although there is a small group whose general attitude is at odds with the ethos of the school. These students are carefully monitored by pastoral leaders and leadership team members. Students are confident to ask for help with their academic work or with personal problems. Behaviour overall is good and students know what is expected of them. The majority are very polite and helpful and they are courteous and respectful to visitors and other adults in the school. However, during some lessons behaviour begins to deteriorate when the quality of teaching does not fully engage the students' interest or where classroom management and support for students are weak. Throughout the school there is a consistent approach to promoting good behaviour and self-discipline, and the school deals very effectively with all forms of bullying or harassment.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of students*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1,212	96	3
White – any other White background	27	5	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	1	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	2	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	2	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	4	

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

10. The number of permanent exclusions is low and fixed term exclusions are below the national average. The school does all it can to support disaffected students within the school and only excludes them when there is no alternative. The apparently high number of fixed period exclusions for students in the three Asian categories or black or black British category relate to a total of four students.
11. Students' personal development is good and the school very positively encourages those of all abilities to become mature and responsible young people. Students in all year groups speak very enthusiastically about the school and their enjoyment of all it has to offer. The excellent school council ensures that students have the opportunity to make a very strong contribution to decisions affecting the life of the school. Students take their responsibilities seriously and a large number of them are appointed as form captains, members of the house and sports councils and the school council. Students in Year 8 confidently help as receptionists at the main entrance to the school. During their time at the school the majority of students enjoy the opportunity to join a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Young Enterprise, sports, drama and musical productions. All students have the chance to take part in a range of residential visits in this country and abroad. During lessons, students work well together with partners and in small groups, developing their social skills and ability to co-operate and share their knowledge and ideas with others. Students with special educational needs, physical disabilities and English as an additional language are very well integrated into all activities.
12. Overall students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social education is closely linked to the school's very caring and friendly ethos and the very positive system of commendation and reward. Personal and social education is developed effectively through areas of the curriculum and students also discuss a range of issues with their tutors during form time. However, insufficient time is planned to ensure that students receive a full and formal programme of topics to develop this area of learning. With some support from outside agencies, the school makes good provision for sex education and drugs awareness. Students' spiritual development and experience is enriched through areas of the curriculum such as religious education, music, art, drama and dance. Where opportunities are provided for reflection and discussion of spiritual ideas, students clearly respect the views and beliefs of others and are willing to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	8.4%	School data:	0.5%
National data:	8.3%	National data:	1.1%

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

13. Attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is low. The majority of students are punctual in the morning and arrive at lessons on time. The school is working hard to overcome the current problems caused by the late arrival of buses which means that a small number of students regularly arrive after registration. The school has very good procedures to monitor and promote good attendance and parents are reminded regularly of its effect on students' progress. A significant number of students take holidays during term time and this results in their missing important parts of their education.

## Sixth form

The development of students' attitudes is **very good**. Sixth form students are very good role models for main school students.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes to work displayed by all students make them very good role models.
- Students respond willingly to the additional opportunities and responsibilities offered to them.
- The very good and constructive relationships formed between students and teachers leads to a very positive environment for learning.

### Commentary

14. Students enjoy their life in the sixth form and find it rewarding. They work hard with very good attitudes and behave in a mature and responsible manner. They collaborate very well with respect for the values, attitudes and beliefs of each other. They take their responsibilities as senior students very seriously and they make a very good contribution to the calm and caring atmosphere in the school. Attendance and punctuality in the sixth form are satisfactory and well monitored.
15. Students respond willingly to the many opportunities the school offers. During lessons they show commitment and take pride in their work in order to achieve the best possible results. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities which widen their horizons and help them to become responsible citizens. Sixth formers make a strong contribution to the life of the school by, for example, leading the school council, organising a system of peer mentoring with students in Year 7 and undertaking community service either within the school or in the local community. The opportunity for senior students to liaise closely with members of the governing body on issues raised by the school council is a significant strength of the school.
16. Students form very good and constructive relationships with their teachers and with one another. They are very aware of the impact their actions can have on others and they provide very good role models for younger students. Students show a clear trust and confidence in the school and in their teachers, and they have a good knowledge and understanding of what is expected of them in the sixth form.
17. As in the main school, students' moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Spiritual development is satisfactory, and students' experience is enriched through their involvement with the arts. The general studies syllabus provides some opportunities for students to consider

a range of spiritual issues, but planned opportunities in other subjects to enhance this feature of personal development are limited. The school's unsatisfactory provision for collective worship does not contribute to students' spiritual development. The school's improved provision for multicultural awareness provides students with greater opportunity to appreciate the rich variety of different cultures and traditions and prepares them to live in an increasingly multicultural society.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided in the main school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good**, and the curriculum is **good**. Enrichment activities are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in the main school are **very good**. The assessment of students' work and the use made of assessment information to set progress targets are both **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding use of ICT in all lessons is having a very positive impact on learning.
- The wide range of activities planned by teachers stimulates an interest in learning in all students.
- Very good teaching with many excellent features means students make very good progress overall and achieve above average standards at the end of Year 11.
- Teaching of students with special educational needs is very good.
- The use made of assessment data to devise strategies to improve learning varies between departments.

### Commentary

18. Teaching and learning are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Governors have invested heavily in ICT to ensure that since September 2003 all teachers and students have ready access to a wide range of equipment both inside and outside lessons. As a result, teachers use a very wide range of multi-media equipment to stimulate the interest of all students and this is having a positive impact on achievement. Details of the teaching observed during the inspection are given in the table below.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 114 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
11 (10%)	33 (30%)	38 (33%)	28 (25%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	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.*

19. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, together with a very good understanding of the requirements of the various examination syllabuses. As a result, lessons are well planned. Teachers are very hard working and use resources well. In the majority of lessons students successfully develop and apply their good listening and speaking skills and, as a result, they develop the confidence to express and explain themselves well. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching occurs where this is not the case. In most lessons, teaching challenges students' thinking. Students are asked questions which are very focused. This enables them to both consolidate what they have previously learned and extend their subject knowledge. In these lessons students make faster progress.
20. Students who have English as an additional language are not withdrawn for individual support, because none are at an early stage in language acquisition. In lessons, when they receive support, it is targeted to their specific needs. The teaching and learning of students with special



educational needs is very good. They receive very good levels of support from their teachers, aided very well by support assistants.

## Assessment

21. Overall, the use made of assessment data to monitor the progress students make is good. The school has developed a very good system for assessing and monitoring the progress of all students and for setting targets carefully matched to national curriculum levels of attainment. These targets are agreed between the teacher, student and parents and they are incorporated into a biannual record for every student to keep. However, the effectiveness of this strategy varies in practice between faculties or departments. The use of data to devise teaching strategies which have a clear focus on improving learning is at an early development stage.
22. Assessment practice is good in geography and music and excellent in ICT. In these subjects there are very good procedures for assessing the students' standards to national curriculum levels of attainment. Students' progress is very effectively monitored and shared with them so they can clearly see how they can improve. This happens in other subjects too but not to such an effective level.
23. In many subjects students are taught in ability sets and this enables teachers to set and adjust work according to their needs. Work is marked to a good standard in most subjects and students are informed of their progress. They are given very helpful written advice on the ways through which they can improve. However, assessment in citizenship and physical education is unsatisfactory. Feedback given to students about how they can improve their work is good but inconsistent between subjects.

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good**. The opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision are **good**. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in music and ICT is outstanding and for art and design, history, and English in Years 10 and 11, it is very good.
- The provision for students with special educational needs is very good and supports their very good achievement.
- The provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation for physical education is excellent and for music and ICT it is very good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- The school seeks to develop its curriculum in innovative ways.

## Commentary

24. Overall, the curriculum successfully meets the needs and aspirations of the students. It is very good in the range and quality of provision, and in the resources to support learning, in music and ICT. In art and design and history across the school, and in English in Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is particularly effective in providing very well for the needs and interests of all students. Students with special educational needs, including those with a physical disability, are given full access to the curriculum and as a result they achieve very well. Provision for the small number of students for whom English is an additional language is good.
25. The school has a keen interest in innovation across the curriculum. It has introduced a pilot curriculum in Years 8 and 9 to enable all students to take a GCSE in a modern foreign language at the end of Year 9 from this summer. It has implemented several initiatives to increase the range of courses in Years 10 and 11 to meet the needs of all students, including those with a particular gift or talent and those who have been identified as having a particular special learning need. These include the formation of a group where students follow a range of courses

to develop their general skills alongside their academic ones. Courses leading to vocational qualifications and employment have also been incorporated into the curriculum. The school has also improved its management of the curriculum so that students have a wider range of course combinations in Years 10 and 11. The provision for multi-cultural awareness is now satisfactory. The improvement on these two key issues since the previous inspection (1997) has been good.

26. The school does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship, as was noted at the previous inspection. There is now satisfactory provision for religious education in Years 7 to 11. Provision for citizenship is currently unsatisfactory because there is no planned programme for the delivery of the subject throughout Years 7 to 11.
27. Students who have English as an additional language have full access to the whole curriculum, both in the taught day, and in the activities that take place outside that time. The school does not have dictionaries in the home language of these students, the provision of which assists students in their understanding of English.
28. There are good opportunities for enrichment. There is a wide variety of experiences on offer, both inside and outside the school day. These include many sporting, music and drama activities, along with residential opportunities. Activities are carefully planned to support subjects, through visits, visitors, specific subject support and the Easter school, which is very well attended. Students are enthusiastic about the provision.
29. Overall, the curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is very good. It is well planned and resourced to provide a broad range of opportunities carefully adapted to meet students' well discerned needs. Very good support is given by the head of learning development and the learning support staff to teachers.
30. The accommodation is good overall. In particular, the accommodation for physical education, music and for information and communication technology have benefited greatly with the provision of new buildings which have created high quality specialist accommodation. The school has done very well in creating full access for students with a physical disability.
31. The resources for the curriculum are good and are well chosen to support learning. Subjects such as information and communication technology and modern foreign languages have a very good range of resources. Further resources are needed to support the personal, social and health education programme and for the further development of the citizenship programme. The library is well stocked and other books and learning materials are well spread around the various teaching departments. These well support the very good teaching and learning of the students.
32. The school benefits from well qualified staff who are well matched to the delivery of the curriculum. There is well targeted support by teaching assistants in lessons and flexible arrangements for the withdrawal of students for specialist help.

## **Sixth form**

The overall quality of education in the sixth form is **very good**. Teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum offered is **good**.

## **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning in the sixth form are **very good**. The assessment of students' work and the use made of assessment information to monitor progress is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and their high expectations contribute to the good achievement of all students.
- Students' and teachers' use of ICT to support learning is outstanding.
- Very good attitudes and behaviour of the students have a positive impact on the progress they make in Years 12 and 13.

### Commentary

33. Teaching and learning have improved and are now very good. This is an improvement on the last inspection as there is now a greater proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Students consider the teaching they receive is both supportive and challenging and evidence from the lesson observed during the inspection would support this view. The main strength of the teaching is the teachers' subject knowledge coupled with their very good knowledge of the requirements of the various examination syllabi. The commitment and hard work of staff and their willingness to offer additional study support sessions is a further important factor.
34. Most students have high expectations of themselves and very good attitudes to their learning. They are stimulated by the range of learning opportunities available to them, particularly through the outstanding use made of ICT both inside and outside lessons. As a result, they apply themselves fully, develop very good independent and collaborative learning skills and these factors are contributing the rise in standards seen in lessons during the inspection week.
35. Valuable feedback is provided to students on how well they are doing and how to improve. Students in the sixth form are involved in progress review days during which, in conjunction with their parents and tutors, they review their strengths and identify areas for further development. Targets for improvement are agreed which focus on raising individual student performance.

The very good overall pattern of teaching in the sixth form is shown in the table below.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	16 (42%)	17 (45%)	4 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	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.*

### Curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision in the sixth form is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides well for students to progress from GCSE to AS and A Level courses in a good range of subjects, and in vocational courses in Performing Arts.
- The curriculum for music is outstanding; for art, history and physical education it is very good.
- The curriculum for some GNVQ courses in the sixth form does not adequately meet students' needs.
- There are very good opportunities for students' personal development.
- Students' programmes of work are coherent and are monitored effectively.

### Commentary

36. The school now provides a good range of academic and vocational courses in order to serve the needs of students who wish to continue their education at the school. In music provision is excellent and it is very good in art, physical education and history. It is inclusive in the flexibility it

exercises over entry requirements which allows students to benefit from further study before entering employment. There is some duplication in the vocational courses offered in Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form, in health and social care and in leisure and tourism.

37. The school works well with students, starting in Year 11, to help them to create a programme of sixth form study that meets their needs. Their progress and the balance of their programmes are regularly monitored, and advice and guidance given, to ensure that they use their study as well as possible and can progress to higher education or employment. There are very good opportunities for students to play a part in the school and to take responsibility, for example as head boy or girl, as senior prefects and as mentors to younger students. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are good, especially in sport. The programme of outside speakers and the activities provided on enrichment days are satisfactory and it is through this programme that the school delivers its religious education programme.
38. Accommodation is good and students have access to quiet areas for independent study as well as common areas for social interaction. They have good access to the extra-curricular activities available, especially in sport. Staffing is well matched to the curriculum and resources are good, especially in the provision of computers.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Standards of care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Students receive **very good** support, advice and guidance from their teachers. There are **very good** procedures for involving students in the school's work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students readily relate to their teachers with whom they have a very good and trusting relationship.
- The school is very good at providing individual support for students and takes prompt action to deal with any issues of bullying, racism or inappropriate behaviour.
- Form tutors are very aware of students' interests and achievements and they provide them with well-informed support and advice about options and careers.

### **Commentary**

39. The school has very good procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of students. The statutory requirements for health and safety are met in full. Procedures to promote good behaviour are well established and students clearly understand the school's high expectations of self-discipline. Child protection procedures meet requirements and are well known to all staff and followed appropriately. There are effective arrangements, including efficient filters, to ensure the safety of students when using the Internet. The very good relationships and the school's positive and supportive ethos help to raise students' self-esteem and confidence, and this makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
40. Students feel secure that the staff, and especially their form tutors and heads of house, know them well and that their progress and achievements are well monitored. They understand the school's good system of target setting and they are involved well in deciding their own targets through discussion with their teachers. The progress review days are used well to monitor and review the set targets. Students with personal problems, including those who have lost interest in school, are very well supported through counselling and alternative activities such as the Education to Employment programme organised by the Student Support Adviser.
41. There are very good induction arrangements for Year 7 students including the sharing of information between staff and a series of visits. Students in Year 9 are well advised when making their choices of subjects to study for GCSE examinations with the involvement of parents and one-to-one consultations between students and teachers. A large number of

students attend the Easter revision classes provided by the school and this has a very positive effect on the standards they achieve.

42. Very good support is provided for those students with special educational needs through well organised individual education plans which are well monitored. Students with physical disabilities are very well integrated and staff and other students provide high quality support to enable them to take part in all activities.
43. The school cares very well for students who have English as an additional language. It is aware of the demands on these students. The school works hard to help students to socialise and to be accepted, being fully aware of the cultural differences. When students enter the school, other students ensure that they provide support to enable them to rapidly adjust to the new situation.
44. The special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and learning support staff make very good contact with primary schools and the available supportive agencies to determine students' needs and attainments. There is very good provision to ensure that each student has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.

### **Sixth form**

In the sixth form students receive **very good** support, advice and guidance and the procedures for involving them in the work of the school are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students in the sixth form are very well supported and advised by their teachers.
- The views of students have a significant impact on the ethos of the school.
- Sixth form students provide a very good system of peer mentoring for younger students.

### **Commentary**

45. The very good relationships which students establish with their teachers in Year 12 are maintained throughout their time in the sixth form. Students receive a good induction into their sixth form studies and they appreciate the well-informed advice and guidance they receive for individual courses and for their choice of higher education. The head of the sixth form ensures that students are provided with up-to-date guidance on managing the demands of A-level courses, including personal and academic targets which are reviewed regularly. The form tutors know their groups of students very well and they provide very good pastoral support and encouragement for them. Students speak highly about the support they receive and they value the regular one-to-one sessions with their subject tutors to discuss their work.
46. Through the very effective house and prefect system, students have a strong voice in determining the support for charities which is a regular feature in the school. Students in the sixth form take a firm lead in the work of the school council and undertake a range of community service within the school, local primary schools and the community. They very willingly organise regular peer mentoring activities for students in Year 7 and this makes a strong contribution to developing good relationships and student support for each other. These levels of involvement and responsibility help students in the sixth form to become self-assured and confident young people.

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

There is an **excellent** partnership with parents who hold the school in high regard. The **very good** community links and partnership with other schools enrich the curriculum.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive and have considerable confidence in the school.

- The school works hard to encourage parental involvement and is very open and welcoming.
- Parents are provided regularly with an excellent range of friendly newsletters and very helpful information about the curriculum, organisation and activities.
- Reports to parents are very good and provide clear information about targets and progress.
- Very good links with the community provide the school with an additional range of learning opportunities.
- The school has developed close curricular and pastoral links with a number of other educational establishments.

### Commentary

47. The school, and particularly the headteacher, has worked very hard to achieve its current level of parental support for the work of the school. The contribution which parents now make to support their children's studies is very good with a very high attendance rate at all consultation evenings and progress review meetings. The quality of information which the school provides regularly for parents is excellent. The headteacher is readily available to parents and holds a weekly 'drop-in' session to meet those with concerns or queries. The school has very good links with the community and has worked hard to establish itself within the confines of a relatively limited area. The well established partnership with other schools is very good and includes joint activities such as sports, music, art and drama projects with local primary schools, Orpington College and an independent school.

<b>Example of outstanding practice</b>
--

<p>'The Link', a weekly bulletin, is an exciting and very well presented newsletter giving a wide range of information about current and planned activities, students' successes, course work and diary dates. Parents also receive a very good range of curriculum description booklets for all years and a laminated copy of their child's independent study timetable. Regular parents' evenings, including the GCSE and post-16 information evenings, are held when parents are able to discuss their child's work with individual subject teachers. Work reviews and progress review days are very well attended by parents who join their children to talk to staff about progress and to set targets for future achievement. The school encourages parents to make use of students' planners as a means of communication. Parents of students with special educational needs are very well informed and involved regularly in reviews and assessments.</p>
---

<b>Example of outstanding practice</b>
--

<p>The support from the community includes local businesses who provide work placements for students in Year 10 and organise a series of job applications and mock interviews for students in Year 11. Dual use of the school's sports and drama facilities in partnership with Bromley Leisure Services provides a good opportunity for students to work with members of the community. A wide range of visitors from the community, including some parents, provides practical support for students' work and experience in many areas of the curriculum, A level courses and other activities. The school has very good links with other educational establishments such as local primary schools and Orpington College. A joint music, art and drama project for students was recently organised in conjunction with an independent school. The school has joined with a nearby junior school for a world of work day and organises a Saturday morning theatre school for students in Year 6 and students in Years 7 and 8 to work together.</p>
--

48. There are effective links with parents of students who have English as an additional language through parents' evenings. They are supportive and committed to their children's learning. This shows in parents' determination to understand teachers by bringing in their own interpreters, although the school provides them when necessary.
49. Parents are very well informed about the progress of their children with special educational needs through regular reviews and at other times when they wish.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school by the headteacher is **outstanding** and the leadership of key staff is **very good**. Management of the school is **very good**. Governance of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirations of the headteacher ensure the quality of what the school provides is very good.
- The very effective leadership team provides effective support to the headteacher, staff and students across the school.
- The school regularly uses self-evaluation systems and outside agencies to effectively monitor its performance.
- Effective induction and performance management systems, linked to high quality training opportunities, are in place for all staff.
- The very robust financial management systems in place enable the school to achieve its educational priorities.
- Governors are effective in helping to shape the future of the school but do not meet all their statutory duties.

### Commentary

50. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding. He has created a series of very cohesive and effective teams throughout the school, including at senior management and governor level. He is very well supported by his leadership team, all of whom constantly strive to improve on the already very successful practice. The headteacher attributes the school's success to all the teachers and staff working in the school and he supports them fully in taking on new initiatives and developments that will provide students with the widest range of educational opportunities. The headteacher has a very visible presence around the school and is very accessible to parents, students and staff.
51. The quality of leadership throughout the school is very good. Heads of departments, heads of year and the director of sport effectively undertake all aspects of their roles. The teacher responsible for the provision of support for students who have English as an additional language has only recently been appointed, so it is not possible to judge the quality of leadership and management in this area. She is very well qualified and is committed to this area of provision. She has a very clear development plan, which will provide a good structure to meet all possible future needs. The governor for special educational needs has established very close and effective links with the school and the staff who work with students with special educational needs. The management and leadership of the head of learning development are very good. There is excellent team work between him and the support assistants and with teachers.
52. All managers are ably supported in their work by experienced administrative staff who provide very strong support for both students and teachers. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and based on an excellent system of regular subject reviews which includes lesson observations, interviews and analysis of students' work. The school has consulted an outside agency to evaluate the work and effectiveness of the senior management team.
53. The governing body is hardworking and committed. Members bring a valuable range of expertise to the school. The governors are rightly proud of the school and are very supportive. They have an excellent relationship with the headteacher and senior managers. There are appropriate committees with delegated powers and governors visit the school regularly. They are regularly briefed by staff after faculty reviews and on the progress of initiatives. Decisions about curriculum developments, for example, arts college status, reflect their desire to get the very best for the students in terms of facilities and funding. Governors have not fulfilled their legal obligations in ensuring that the school holds a daily act of collective worship.

54. The principles of best value are used very well and shrewd planning has enabled an extensive increase and investment in ICT provision without cutting budget allocations to other areas. The finance officer has considerable personal strengths and has introduced effective and robust procedures. Channels of communication between governors, senior managers, budget holders and administrative staff are very good. Morale among all staff is high.
55. The school has a strong commitment to staff development. There is very good provision for the induction of new staff and a programme of meetings and professional discussions that are well received by staff. There is a broad range of training opportunities for all staff and a clear link to the school's priorities. Whole school in-service sessions relate closely to those issues that have most impact on students' achievement: for example, behaviour management, ICT and literacy. The school's performance management procedures are very effective, and contribute well to improvements. There is a strong involvement in the training of new teachers. Initial teacher training and graduate teacher programmes are particularly effective. The school manages the recruitment and retention of staff very well. They are ahead with plans to introduce changes in September 2004 as a result of the remodelling of the work force national agreement, by employing invigilators, an exams officer and data analysts. This provides staff with effective support and they appreciate this.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,852,267
Total expenditure	3,813,709
Expenditure per student	2,947

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	198,016
Balance carried forward to the next	38,558

## Sixth form

Leadership and management of the sixth form are both **very good**. Governance of the sixth form is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- The governing body provides a good level of both challenge and support to the head of sixth form.
- All staff promote high standards in the sixth form.
- The sixth form is cost effective.

### Commentary

56. The quality of the leadership and management of the sixth stems from the clarity of vision and purpose that informs the overall life of the school. The high standards reached result from the good relationship that exists between the sixth form and the rest of the school. Subjects are generally well led in supporting the persistent drive for excellence. The school's commitment to the inclusion of all students to the full extent of their competence shows itself in the range of courses on offer. High proportions of students transfer from the main school at the end of Year 11 into the sixth form to continue their studies. Retention rates from the end of Year 12 to Year 13 are good.
57. The governors take an active role in determining the future of the sixth form and are diligent in holding the school to account for the quality of what is provided. The director of the sixth form works effectively with colleagues in establishing a clear sense of common purpose and commitment to the good of the students. This is achieved through systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Teaching is continually strengthened by the effort the



school makes to recruit and retain teachers of the right calibre for sixth form studies. There are acknowledged weaknesses in writing which are not addressed well enough in the planning or practice of all departments.

# PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The above average standards reached by students in the GCSE examinations represent very good achievement in relation to students' levels of attainment on joining Year 10.
- A great strength of the department is the sharing of good practice.
- Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent.
- Teaching occasionally fails to develop students' skills well enough in writing, particularly creative writing.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Good teaching in drama supports the development of students' confidence in expressing their ideas.

#### Commentary

58. Standards of speaking, listening and reading are below nationally expected levels for Year 9. Standards of writing are well below expectations. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were low. These results do not reflect the improved standards in the current Year 9 as revealed in lessons and in current work. Additionally, these results do not match the rising standards across the previous years. All ten assessments sent to appeal were raised by at least one level. In relation to their below average levels of literacy, particularly in writing, students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching. Boys and girls reach comparable standards. The very good support given to students with special educational needs ensures that they build well on their earlier attainment.
59. In Year 9, the highest-attaining students often discuss texts using a very good range of language. For example, in their work on the leadership qualities of Henry V, they explore the relevant scenes in Shakespeare's play with a secure critical vocabulary. The library is used well to support students' reading. A good proportion of students read both fiction and non-fiction books for pleasure. When invited to read in lessons, most students do so fluently, confidently and with expression.
60. Standards for Year 11 students in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average. This represents good achievement in relation to the attainment of these students on joining their courses. Boys' attainment in the GCSE examination is lower than that of girls, as is found nationally. The standards in the current Year 11 students' work broadly reflect the higher standards reached in the previous year. In lessons, students often engage in lively and informed discussion. The quality of discussion, however, is not always reflected in their writing. Some otherwise good work is spoiled by inaccuracies in spelling and syntax.
61. A key to the success of this department is the very good and sometimes excellent teaching experienced by the students. Teachers have a very good knowledge of what they teach. Their enthusiasm for their subject communicates itself readily to the students and they, in turn, work hard to succeed. They are eager to know how they are achieving and how to improve, using drafting and redrafting very well to improve their work. Teaching in the least successful lessons does not do enough to encourage creative writing. In the best lessons the teaching of poetry is a strength. This was particularly evident in one excellent Year 7 lesson when students used their own deepest thoughts to create an impressive poem about what they considered most precious.

62. Good teaching in drama gives students greater confidence with their own ideas. It also helps them to work well in groups. This is evident in their rehearsals of their examination pieces. Some very good work in media education also underpins work in English, providing students with the vocabulary they need for the media element in their courses. The few students who are at an early stage of learning English are supported well in steadily getting more involved in discussion. Those students with special educational needs get the support they need to overcome their difficulties in writing and in recognising unfamiliar words.
63. The department is well led and managed. The head of department has worked hard to establish a cohesive team driven by the desire for excellence. The department adopted the National Literacy Strategy in Years 7 to 9 to good effect. As a result, teaching has improved. Teachers have begun some more focused work in these years to raise standards of writing further. Both standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have improved well since the last inspection through the effective sharing of good practice. The library is used well to support students' reading through the imaginative use of a progressively demanding reading scheme.

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

64. Standards of literacy across the school are below average but improving rapidly, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Writing is the weakest aspect of the students' work. The policy for the development of literacy is not implemented in all departments with the same rigour. In ICT and in physical education there are some very good examples of the use of language in writing and in discussion. In these departments there is a strong emphasis on using the technical vocabulary of the subjects and on accuracy in writing. Not all departments place enough emphasis on extending students' skills in writing. Additionally, discussion is not used well enough to stimulate writing across the curriculum.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in GCSE in French and German by the end of Year 11 in 2003 were well above national averages.
- The pilot curriculum in Years 8 and 9 is an imaginative innovation that is motivating students well.
- The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not provide well enough for students to develop independence in acquiring and using language skills.
- Standards in speaking are below average by Year 9 and Year 11.
- Leadership and management are good.

### **Commentary**

65. In 2003, standards in French and German by the end of Year 11 were well above average. In Spanish they were well below. The standards assessed by teachers of work in French and German at the end of Year 9 were well above average. Inspection evidence shows that standards are in line with expectations for this point in their courses in Year 9 and Year 11, except in speaking where they are below average at both stages. The school attributes the differences in performance to differences between cohorts, particularly in Year 11, and to the fact that the Year 9 groups are the first to take their GCSE examination early in a curriculum pilot scheme. Students in both years have yet to take the final part of their modular examination.
66. Students' achievement is satisfactory at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The achievement of students with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. Students in Year 8 and Year 9, who are the first to take GCSE after three years instead of five, show good attitudes to learning and are motivated well by the acceleration of learning and the opportunity for all students to obtain a GCSE qualification in one foreign language.

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teaching of the requirements of the GCSE examination syllabus in Years 8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is generally good. Teachers focus well on the specific requirements of each module and help students to prepare well for assessed tasks. This contributes to their achievement in the examination. Teachers use a good range of strategies to help students learn and students' response is satisfactory. Attitudes to learning are better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Teaching does not focus enough on developing students' independence in using language in a wide range of contexts. As a result, students' ability to retain what they learn and to use it at an increasingly higher level as they progress up the school is limited. This limitation contributes to the below average standards in speaking. Assessment, in terms of the requirements of the examination syllabus, is thorough. The lack of assessment against National Curriculum criteria means that teachers and students are not clear enough on their standards and progress in relation to the expectations of the National Curriculum. The scheme of work and related assessment in Years 7 to 9 are restricted to the requirements of the examination syllabus which does not cover as wide a range as is expected in the National Curriculum. This limits achievement.
68. Leadership and management are good. The head of faculty has created a strong team of teachers with expertise in three languages, who are deeply committed to curriculum innovation. Good leadership within the faculty ensures that teachers evaluate their work and that there is regular monitoring of students' progress towards examination targets. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the head of faculty is good.
- A wide range of visual images supports students' learning in Years 7 to 9.
- There is inconsistent use of teachers' questioning to improve students' understanding.

### **Commentary**

69. The attainment of students when they enter the school, shown by national tests at the end of Year 6, are in line with national averages, although the number of students with higher levels of attainment is below average. By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with the national average, and the number of students achieving Level 5 or higher is greater than expected. The results at the end of Year 9 have risen each year since 1999. GCSE results have shown an upward trend since the last inspection and in 2003 the percentage of students achieving a GCSE grade A\* - C in mathematics was 51 per cent, very close to the national figure. Eight students also sat a GCSE in statistics and all achieved a grade B or higher.
70. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good as a result of well structured lessons that meet the needs of the students within each ability group. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is also good. The GCSE results achieved in 2003 showed very good progress from the Year 9 results in 2001.
71. Teaching is good overall. It is stronger in Years 7 to 9. Students' attitudes to learning are predominantly positive and no poor behaviour was seen. The best lessons make good use of practical activities to engage students in their learning. Many teachers use clear visual images to support students' learning, including practical demonstrations involving students. Teachers use resources well. In good lessons teachers use time targets and frequently change the activity to maintain the pace of the lesson. As a result, students make good gains in knowledge and understanding. In lessons where learning is insecure teachers miss opportunities either to draw together students' skills or extend their learning, by failing to ask questions that require more detailed responses.

72. Leadership and management of the faculty are good. The improvement in examination results is a direct result of the strategies implemented by the head of faculty. The head of faculty has worked hard to improve the consistency of teaching and has implemented very good systems for monitoring student performance. The targets set by teachers with students were not referred to in the lessons seen.
73. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The quality of teaching is now more consistent and examination results have risen. The faculty has incorporated a wider range of opportunities for students to use and apply their mathematical skills, including quick puzzles at the start of lessons as well as a more formal piece of coursework towards the end of Year 9. The behaviour of students in the lower sets has improved and no longer hinders learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

74. Staff training has taken place in line with national expectations and a common approach to teaching methods has been agreed. The post of a co-ordinator has recently been refilled. Standards in numeracy are not holding back progress in other areas of the school. The faculty works closely with the ICT department to deliver lessons on spreadsheets and databases. Students in Year 8 showed very good mental arithmetic skills when calculating the volume of blood flow in science.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above the national average at the end of Year 11.
- High quality staff-student relationships create an environment where teaching and learning are good.
- The department is well resourced and uses ICT very well to support students' learning.
- Lessons are well-structured to challenge and maintain students' interest, although not all teachers manage this consistently well.
- Leadership and management are good and promote effective teamwork.
- Teaching and learning approaches are not always well suited to support the achievement of all students in all lessons.
- The information gathered from marking is not used to devise short-term specialised targets to help improve students' progress in their scientific knowledge.

### **Commentary**

75. In 2003, standards at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average for those attaining Level 5 and above. However, the number of those attaining the higher levels is below the national average. Many students in Years 7 and 9 have under-developed language skills, particularly in writing, that limit their learning and achievement. Knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts are developed well in Years 7 to 9 across all sets, although many students experience difficulty in talking about their ideas and explaining their thinking clearly. In higher sets, students' literacy skills are well developed and they use correct scientific terminology when linking cause and effect. They write clear notes and keep good records of work and their achievement is very good. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is good.
76. In 2003, standards achieved in Year 11 were well above those achieved nationally. Students make very good progress in their GCSE work overall in relation to their standards on entry to the course. This builds on good progress made by students from the time they join the school in Year 7, due in part to their very good attitudes to learning and the good teaching they receive.

77. The quality of teaching and learning of science is good overall. Most lessons start swiftly with starter activities to check and consolidate students' learning and to engage interest. Students remain focused for the duration of the lesson and enjoy science as teachers make very good use of their specialist subject knowledge by referring skilfully to background examples that make the subject relevant and more interesting. In the best teaching, students are challenged and their concentration is engaged by enthusiastic presentations using interactive whiteboards, material downloaded from the Internet and a variety of other methods that require students' active involvement. Clear explanations by teachers improve students' understanding and tackle their misconceptions. Less effective lessons contained weaknesses such as mundane, time-consuming and undemanding practical activities that did not advance higher attaining students' learning or teachers 'telling' facts rather than guiding the students with middle/lower ability, including those with special education needs, to learn for themselves.
78. This year, the department has incorporated many ideas from the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, such as the three-part lesson, use of drama and questioning to promote discussion and develop students' ideas and note taking skills into lessons. There are good examples of taking and recording measurements, using these for calculations or to plot graphs. This enhances their numeracy skills. Students are encouraged to learn from each other's ideas. Teachers ensure that facts are restated and reinforced in a variety of ways, including use of demonstrations and short practicals conducted by students to deepen and consolidate learning. This is starting to have a good impact on learning and achievement in Years 7 and 8.
79. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of faculty has a clear vision and strong commitment of his team to improve provision and raise standards further. The department's self-evaluation systems are developing well. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored and is used to plan for targeted improvements such as sharing of good practice and developing strategies for minimising inconsistencies across the department. Records of students' performance are comprehensive and good use is made of data and assessment information for setting and monitoring students' individual targets. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of marking to raise standards of work and presentation. There are examples of good presentation and very well marked books. However, there is a lack of consistency across the department. Students are not always provided with feedback and guidance to improve their work further. The department is well served by a reliable and supportive technician team.
80. The department has made good improvements since the last inspection. The department provides additional support from subject specialists for revision classes for Year 9 and Year 11 to enable more students to achieve higher grades.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision for ICT is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Outstanding leadership and teaching result in excellent achievement throughout Years 7 to 11.
- Teachers work very well as a team and have high expectations of all students.
- Excellent teaching ensures a very high number of students achieve at least a pass on the GNVQ Intermediate ICT course.
- The exemplary corporate approach for teaching ICT enables students to develop and use their ICT skills in all subjects.
- The tracking and monitoring systems in place to monitor students' progress are exemplary.

### **Commentary**

81. Many students start in Year 7 with an average set of skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT. Consequently, their achievement by the end of Year 9 is outstanding. This progress is maintained and achievement in Years 10 and 11, particularly where students are working

towards a GNVQ in ICT, is also outstanding. Fifty per cent of Year 11 students achieve a GNVQ intermediate award in ICT. Excellent teaching and lesson planning ensure that higher attaining students, students with special needs and boys and girls achieve equally well.

82. The quality of teaching is outstanding throughout the school. All teachers have very high expectations of each student and plan activities which are challenging and exciting. In lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and encouragement hold the attention of the students and in return they all work to their very best of their abilities. All teachers are good communicators and students quickly learn difficult skills and concepts with ease while enjoying the tasks they are set. Consequently, the quality of learning is extremely effective in this subject throughout the school.
83. There are exemplary procedures for assessing the students' standards to national curriculum levels of attainment and every student's progress is very effectively monitored. They are always informed of their achievements and they are given very helpful written advice on the ways through which they can improve. The scheme of work is of exceptional quality, offering a very broad and inspiring course. It is specifically designed to meet the needs of students of all interests, abilities and needs.
84. A dedicated and enthusiastic specialist leads the faculty to an excellent standard. All the teachers, instructors and support staff work very well as a team to ensure consistency and continuity in standards. The facilities are very good and organised so there is open access to the computers out of formal lesson times. A network manager provides high calibre support in maintaining the network, laptop and tablet personal computers.
85. Independent learning is particularly encouraged and the school has an effective intranet system in place so students can access independent learning modules at any time. Further enrichment comes through ICT clubs and extra curricular activities. Four students were presented with an award at the House of Commons. The award included an educational visit to Pakistan for their web site design to promote understanding between the UK and Pakistan.
86. Since the last inspection there has been a highly commendable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning for Year 7 to Year 9.

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

87. The school has made a heavy financial commitment to ICT, particularly over the current and last financial year. Throughout the school ICT is used extensively by students and staff. Students' skills are developed to advanced standards as they use computers in the majority of their subjects to research, record and present information. In many subject areas, teachers work together to produce a joint strategy that very effectively incorporates the teaching and learning of ICT skills within their curriculum area. Students use ICT particularly effectively in art and design, geography, mathematics and music.

<b>Example of outstanding practice</b>
In art in Year 7 students use a computer to design and publish a poster to advertise a Sean Scully exhibition to be held at the school. The ICT and art teacher were working together so effectively that understanding and skills development in both subjects were enhanced. By the end of the lesson students could use the colour combinations of the artist in their designs and they knew how the artist used layering to achieve his individual abstract creations. They could compare this to the technique of layering and the use of texture in computer graphics. They could explain the meaning of 'white space' and 'focal point', along with 'bitmap' and 'pixel'.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

The provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching stimulates students to do their best.
- Very good leadership and management are raising standards.
- Good assessment and marking procedures help students to improve their work.
- Good use is made of ICT in lessons to enable students to develop their skills through the subject.
- Display work is not used sufficiently in teaching especially to develop students' skills in literacy.
- There are few opportunities for students to demonstrate and develop their skills in numeracy.

#### Commentary

88. Students enter the school from a large number of primary schools, displaying widely ranging levels of skill in geography. Overall the standard on entry is in line with national expectations. At the end of year 9, standards are above national expectations. The results at GCSE in 2003 were well above the national average.
89. Achievement in geography is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students who enter the school with levels of attainment in line with national expectations are above expectations by the end of Year 9 and sustain this improvement through to the end of Year 11. Students achieved significantly better results in geography in comparison with other subjects in which they were examined and there was very little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The trend of improvement in the last five years has been faster than that seen nationally.
90. Teaching and learning are very good overall with no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. All the teaching was good or very good. High expectations, a brisk pace of work and a wide range of activities were all features of successful lessons in which learning objectives were clear and careful consideration was given to the range of learning needs in the classes. Year 8 students studying long shore drift were able to show their understanding of the process gained through imaginative teaching using a combination of video, data projection and whiteboard. A Year 10 class that contained a wide range of learning needs was able to develop a good understanding of service provision in cities through careful selection of activities, technically correct yet challenging use of vocabulary and very good deployment of teaching assistants to support and monitor learning.

Example of outstanding practice
An excellent year 9 lesson on the impact of world trade enabled a class of less-able students to grasp, explain and discuss complex ideas with enthusiasm and confidence. Students were provided with examples of processed and unprocessed goods and asked to volunteer views on which would yield the largest profit and why. Expectations of what would be achieved in the lesson were high and the enthusiasm of the teacher, effective use of body language, praise and humour ensured that all students were fully engaged. Detailed knowledge of the learning needs of each individual enabled the teacher to set tasks that set realistic goals for all, and teaching assistants were used effectively in supporting those with the greatest needs. Video was used skilfully to illustrate key ideas, the management of students was excellent and the inspirational teaching allowed all students to display excellent achievement.

91. Marking and assessment are good, with teachers offering constructive comments to enable students to improve as well as relating the standard of work to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Although display work in classrooms is good, it is not used sufficiently to support and illustrate teaching points. Key words are displayed but are not used to develop skills in literacy and opportunities for students to use numeracy in geography are insufficient. Use of ICT by teachers is very good and good examples of the use of ICT were seen in students' work.



92. Leadership and management of the department are very good. A comprehensive and up-to-date faculty handbook is in place and schemes of work are clear and adapted to meet the range of students' needs. There are clear priorities for development and self-assessment, peer observation and audit procedures are good. Field work opportunities that are local and accessible to all are provided and there is a programme of activities in which students can use and develop their ICT skills. Strategies to develop skills in literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently developed. There are sufficient teaching rooms with adjacent storage space and the department is adequately resourced although some of the text books are well worn.
93. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The teacher assessments at the end of year 9 and the GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend and student performance at GCSE is now particularly good.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Results are below average but standards are rising.
- Student target setting is proving very effective in raising achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good and effective monitoring is in place.
- Accommodation is good and displays are excellent.
- Detailed formative comments in teachers' marking of students' work are good but need to be consistently applied.
- Excellent enrichment activities provide students with additional opportunities to improve their knowledge.

### **Commentary**

94. Although results at GCSE are still below national averages, partly because of staff absence over the last school year, there is clear evidence of good progress and achievement and standards are improving. History is very popular in Years 10 and 11 and at A-level, reflecting students' interest and enjoyment based on the quality of teaching and the teachers' enthusiasm. Standards and achievement in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
95. Teaching overall is good and very good with examination classes. Teachers have high aspirations for their students, who are expected to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers provide challenging opportunities using a variety of activities, including paired and group activities as well as individual work, which results in impressive work orally, diagrammatically and in writing. Students show a good grasp of historical issues and good subject knowledge and are developing good historical and thinking skills. Very good examples were seen of students' research in all years. Lessons usually include clear aims and a sound review at the end to test they have been achieved. Students respond positively to teachers and actively participate in and enjoy the lessons.
96. The head of department shows very good leadership and management skills and has dealt with issues from the previous inspection. There are well-prepared differentiated materials and tasks for students with special educational needs and for gifted and talented students.
97. The new target-setting approach, involving the students, is rigorous and proving to be very effective. A structured approach to each separate assignment ensures students know exactly what is required to achieve higher levels. Formative comments are used but, at present, lack consistency across the department. Homework is set regularly, building on learning in lessons and is planned to meet the students' learning needs.

98. Accommodation is good with teaching rooms located near each other. Common areas have very good displays and classrooms are welcoming with excellent, imaginative displays that both support learning and reflect the high quality of the students' work. Resources are very good, well produced and well used. Good examples were seen with all ages of challenging materials, which extended the students' learning. The use of ICT by both teachers and students is very well developed and students are expected to word process their assessments.
99. There is an excellent range of enrichment opportunities including a history club, an ICT group developing the history website and various trips including one to the Great War battlefields and, every two years, a trip to Eastern Europe including visiting a concentration camp.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good, very good and excellent teaching in this subject area.
- All lessons are extremely well planned, in line with the high quality and comprehensive documentation provided for this subject by those who manage it.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are below the national average.
- Some teaching is less good than it might otherwise be because of a lack of specialist teaching.

### **Commentary**

100. Results in recent years in the GCSE examinations have been well below the average results of schools nationally. However, it is unfair to compare these results with the national picture as all students are entered for a full GCSE, having had a maximum of one hour a week teaching time during Years 10 and 11. When students enter the school in Year 7 they do so with standards below those expected of students by the Bromley Agreed Syllabus. Currently, standards are still below expectations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. During the inspection, achievement in lessons was always satisfactory and often better.
101. The main contributory factor to the low standards is that over the last few years many classes have been taught by non-specialist supply teachers at a time when there was no subject specialist in the school to guide their work, no scheme of work for them to follow and inadequate teaching resources available to them. During this period the achievement of most students was unsatisfactory. The school successfully appointed a specialist teacher of religious education in September 2003 and since that time the achievement of all students has risen and they are catching up quickly on developing the key skills and concepts they need to raise their individual standards.
102. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Only one teacher is a subject specialist, and one other has long experience of teaching the subject. Lessons seen taught by these teachers were all at least good with some very good and excellent features. Lessons taught by non-specialist staff sometimes suffered from the teachers' lack of subject specialist knowledge. This led to an uncertainty regarding the ways in which it is appropriate to introduce and develop material to develop students' learning. However, high levels of general teaching skills, coupled with good planning, ensured that all lessons were at least satisfactory.
103. Assessment of students' attainment is very systematic and thorough and done in ways that support the learning of individual students. Currently teachers lack familiarity and confidence with the criteria for assigning different levels to students' work and this is, to some extent, undermining the effectiveness of assessment.
104. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. In the absence of a subject specialist to lead the subject, the head of the humanities faculty, who is also the head of geography, has taken charge of the examination work in religious education. The head of

history has taken charge of work for students in Years 7 to 9. Since September 2003, a recently qualified subject specialist has been working very closely with these two able and experienced managers to put provision for the subject on a secure footing. External advice has been sought, good quality resources have been purchased, and a considerable amount of highly effective team work has led to the production of a good scheme of work and detailed lesson plans. Good planning makes good provision for students of different levels of attainment in each class. Monitoring of teaching and learning is now effective and this is contributing to the satisfactory progress made by all students in each class.

105. Whilst standards remain low, there has been satisfactory improvement in this subject since the last inspection report as all other concerns raised have been successfully addressed.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Very good teaching results in students' high level of motivation and very good achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good, and teamwork is strong.
- National Curriculum requirements are not met in full in Years 7 to 9 which limits the opportunities the students have to work with a range of materials.
- Students do not know how to improve because they are not given specific targets.
- Single lessons prevent good progress.

#### **Commentary**

106. When students enter the school they have standards that are below expected levels because they have had very little experience of the subject. Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above national expectations. This represents very good achievement for all students.

107. Standards at the end of Year 11 in the 2003 GCSE subjects taught within this department were below the national averages and have declined over the last two years. The exception to this is within the area of textiles, where standards were high and have been rising. The variance in standards of students entering the school in Year 7 and problems in recruiting specialist staff, resulting in graphical skills not being taught until Year 8, have been the main contributory factors to low standards. The 2003 teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate standards are now above national expectations. Standards of work seen during the inspection for students currently in Years 9 and 11 support the judgement of staff that standards are above national expectations.

108. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and has resulted in very good achievement for all students. Lessons are well planned to include a variety of activities which maintain high levels of student motivation. Teachers use questions effectively to make students think and this extends their learning by broadening their knowledge of the subject. Very good relationships encourage students to attempt challenging tasks, so that they achieve very well. Students enjoy the subject and have positive attitudes, which contribute to their learning.

109. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of faculty has created an effective team of teachers who work very well together. All teaching takes place within single lessons, which is unsuitable for a practical subject, and relies upon the goodwill of teachers and students to extend lessons into their own time to complete tasks. As result of this effective teamwork, the achievement of all students is very good. The head of department has introduced some innovative strategies to raise standards. For example, students in Year 9 now select the courses they want to take from a variety of options and, as a result, are more motivated towards success. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 includes limited opportunities

for working with metal and this restricts the range of learning opportunities for students. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is currently unsatisfactory. A new system is currently being trialed with Year 9 but, as yet, students in Years 7 to 9 do not know how to improve their work.

110. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards and achievement have risen, the standard of teaching across the department has improved, the attitude to work and behaviour of students in lessons have improved and expectations of all staff working within the department have risen.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Music**

Provision for music is **very good**.

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

- The department is very well managed.
- Students make good progress and reach good standards in practical work.
- Teaching is very good with some excellent practice.
- Large numbers of students enjoy instrumental tuition.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good.

#### **Commentary**

111. When they start the school, students' standards of attainment in music are variable but below expected levels. By the end of Year 9, most students are currently working at or beyond expected levels. Standards in practical work are good at the end of Year 9 and 11 and higher than those achieved through written work. There has been a continuous improvement in standards since the previous inspection. GCSE examination results have been rising and in 2003 were above the national average in the A\*-C category.
112. All students enjoy a wide range of individual and whole class activities. Attitudes to work in the lessons are good and students work with purpose and commitment. Given the broad range of abilities represented in all teaching groups, all students make good progress. The department is involved in an innovative project with feeder primary schools which involves younger pupils receiving music lessons at Charles Darwin. There is already evidence that this is having an impact on achievement on the current Year 7 classes. The school makes a heavy investment to support instrumental provision, particularly for those taking examinations, to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by cost.
113. The quality of teaching is very good with examples of excellent practice. In the best practice, classroom management skills are impressive, with questioning skills which not only probe for understanding but are very well targeted to ensure that the wide range of abilities are catered for within the sessions. Assessment procedures are clearly understood and valued by students. Students are encouraged to make critical judgements about their own and others' work. The ethos in the department is focused on enabling students to continually improve the standards of their work. ICT is used regularly by teachers and students in lessons to improve composing and performance skills.
114. The department is a very dynamic and effective musical community, which sets and expects high standards from both staff and students. The leadership of staff is very good and results in effective teamwork. The management of this curriculum area is very good with roles and responsibilities of all members of staff clearly defined. The joint subject leaders are very effective practitioners and their skills are readily and enthusiastically shared with students.

115. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The recent addition of a GNVQ in Performing Arts into Year 10 and Music Technology at GCE A-level has increased the examination options. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

## **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall, students attain above average standards.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Teaching is very good overall, as students learn and achieve very well.
- The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is excellent. Students attain very high standards with their use of ICT.
- The very good procedures and use of assessment are having a positive effect on students' achievements.
- Opportunities to apply aspects of citizenship and to mark students' written work are unevenly developed.
- The improvement since the last inspection is very good.

### **Commentary**

116. Under the very good leadership of the head of department, there is an excellent team approach amongst staff and students. This has supported the very good improvements since the last inspection. Standards have risen across the school and the quality of teaching, students' achievements and the use of ICT have also improved. On entry to the school students have a very varied experience of art and design and standards are below average. Overall, by the end of Years 9 and 11 standards are above average and students achieve very well. GCSE results over time show that an increasing number of students attain the higher grades and in 2003 they were above average. Students are given excellent opportunities to use ICT to enhance their work in art and design. During the period of inspection Years 7 and 8 were team taught by an art and design teacher and a teacher of ICT. Here, supported by excellent teaching, they attained very high standards. For example, Year 8, using their own designs arising from their studies of the work of William Morris, very successfully used the ICT software to further develop their designs to an excellent standard. The subject is one of the highest performing subjects in the school.

117. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. Through the very good procedures and use of assessment information, the students are given targets and suggestions for improvements. Their work is well marked and they are told what to do to improve their standards. They monitor and evaluate their own progress well. There is a good development of the students' literacy skills concerning the use and understanding of the terms used in art and design. Students provide very detailed written justification and evaluations of their work, linking it to the work of artists they have studied. Teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to correct the written English when mistakes occur. They plan for the application of citizenship to the subject but do not always thoroughly deliver enough of what they have planned.

118. Overall, accommodation and resources are good. ICT resources are excellent. High quality displays around the school are used to celebrate well the students' successes. Good attention is given to their spiritual development through their work on religious artists. Students' social development is very good with a good range of opportunities to examine art across a wide range of cultures, supported by outside visits. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well to reach the expected standard for their age.
- Students' attainment at GCSE is well above average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Accommodation is excellent and has a positive effect on learning.
- Assessment in practical activities does not inform students how to improve their work.
- The range and number of extra-curricular activities are good.

### Commentary

119. Students have different experiences before joining the school but their overall standards are below average, particularly in movement activities. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, students attain average standards in most activities and their achievement is good. Boys in Year 9 have reliable passing skills in football and girls in Year 8 have a good sense of rhythm in dance. Boys and girls in Year 7 quickly learn new skills when playing badminton and hockey for the first time. A few girls in Year 9 have below average standards in netball because they lack concentration and their passing skills are poor. Students know the reasons for warming up and can name the main muscle groups but are not given sufficient opportunities to lead these preliminary activities. Boys and girls have the added benefit of improving their creative skills by participating in dance lessons.
120. The attainment of the majority of students in core physical education in Years 10 and 11 is average. A few students attain above this level in trampolining, football and fitness.
121. GCSE results have been improving year by year and were very high in 2003. Present GCSE students have high standards and their achievement is very good. The notebooks of higher attaining students are very well organised with many good quality diagrams. A few lower attaining students have poor handwriting and spelling and do not fully understand sports specific vocabulary. However, teachers use a variety of excellent teaching methods to help these students who take the short GCSE course which is better suited to their needs.
122. Individual students and teams achieve high standards in district and regional competitions in dance, football, cricket, rugby, netball and athletics. The attainment of these talented boys and girls is above the national average and they benefit considerably from the opportunities provided by their teachers as part of the good extra-curricular programme. This programme focuses mostly on after school competitive games because the organisation of the school lunch time gives no opportunity for clubs and practices to take place.
123. The quality of teaching is good. Students of all abilities make progress and their learning is good. Relationships with students are very good. This helps teachers to manage the behaviour of some difficult students, especially boys and girls in the lower ability groups. Students improve their level of performance in physical education because teaching focuses well on helping them to build their practical skills. However, students are not given sufficient opportunities to build analytical skills which are not as well developed as their performance skills. Lesson objectives are shared with the students at the start of each lesson and revisited at the end of the lesson. In these parts of the lessons teachers focus well on developing literacy skills by discussing key words and objectives.
124. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The director of sport is very experienced and is beginning to act on the department's development plan. He has monitored the teaching of all teachers in the department. Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Teachers assess students at the end of each practical unit but students are not sure about how to improve their work. The director of sport recognises the

need to review the curriculum programme to ensure it is suited to the needs and interests of all students. The indoor accommodation is extensive and of excellent quality.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

Provision in business education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- New vocational courses have been introduced to meet the learning needs of students.
- Teaching is good and supports effective learning by catering for individual needs.
- Students demonstrate positive work attitudes and achievements are good.
- Accommodation is well resourced, with open access to computers.
- Recruitment and retention of students to business is a departmental priority to ensure long term viability of provision.

### **Commentary**

125. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were well below the national average. In line with a whole school curriculum development, the business department replaced the GCSE course with a new vocational course in September 2003. This provides a better focus on students' needs than a more traditional course and is well placed to support student transition into sixth form vocational options. Students in Year 10 business have made a good start to their course and their progress is in line with expectation.
126. Students beginning this course in Year 10 do so without any prior knowledge of the subject. The good teaching they receive results in satisfactory achievement for all students. Teaching is knowledgeable, challenging and supportive and makes a significant contribution to the good progress all students make. Clarity of learning and assessment objectives inform student progress. Work is consistently of a good standard, demonstrating sound levels of knowledge and understanding.
127. Students have a positive and mature attitude to work. They respond well to the challenges and are developing skills in supportive self-study and research, owing to effective teaching and resource availability. There are high levels of student interest and engagement. Students work collaboratively and independently, in a caring and responsive environment.
128. A well resourced learning environment has been established. By harnessing the resources of the local business community, for example the use of external speakers, visits, business simulation exercises, the department has enriched the learning experience for students. Access to computers is good and makes a positive contribution to teaching and learning. This contribution will be advanced when more business resources are made available on the intranet, thereby supporting the development of students' independent study skills.
129. The department is well led with a clear sense of direction. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in terms of vocational course provision. Information technology is developing as an effective resource for learning, with action planning to further develop intranet resources. Recruitment in this first year of vocational provision is low and the department plans to develop effective promotional strategies to raise recruitment levels.

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

### **Citizenship**

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and Year 11 are low.

- There is no planned programme for the delivery of citizenship through Years 7 to 11.
- There are very good opportunities for students to take responsibility within the school.
- There is no provision for the monitoring of citizenship.

### **Commentary**

130. Provision for citizenship is not sufficiently integrated into planning in all subject areas. In some subjects, such as art, science, geography and religious education, strands of citizenship are taught. However, the majority of students in the school are unaware they are studying aspects of citizenship because explicit links between individual subject material and citizenship are not made.
131. Overall, standards are low, but students do take an active part in school life and understand elements of the democratic process through involvement in elections for school and house councils. The school also provides a very good range of opportunities in which students are actively encouraged to take responsibility. All Year 8 students work in the school reception, students from various years provide support for Year 6 students, and students organise activities that raise money for charities. Students in Years 8 and 9 who have a dedicated citizenship lesson, as part of a pilot initiative this school year, have developed an understanding of the juvenile crime system. The cultural development of students in Years 7 and 8 is enhanced through curriculum enrichment days when outside agencies work with students to raise their awareness of disability, race and gender. The majority of students in the school, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is a second language, are not provided with sufficient opportunities to discuss and evaluate topical issues and to appreciate the role of the media in presenting information. There are individual examples of good achievement in citizenship, but formal recording and monitoring systems are yet to be developed and achievement overall is unsatisfactory.
132. Teaching and learning is satisfactory where it occurs within the dedicated citizenship lessons. In some lessons, teachers plan to cover citizenship, but students are not made sufficiently aware of the citizenship aspect of the subject. Teachers have not received enough training to help them match their subject teaching to the citizenship programmes of study.
133. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because there is no coherent, whole school planned programme. The current post holder has been recently appointed and has made a very good start with a thorough audit that shows where in the curriculum citizenship aspects are to be addressed. Not enough detailed planning has followed this audit. All strands of delivery have not been drawn together to identify what is to be taught, when and where, in order to provide a balanced programme for each year group on which to base assessment.



## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, seven 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, which is 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
English /English language	9	88.9	92.0	22.2	29.9	28.9	35.7
French	8	62.5	85.4	0.0	35.2	16.3	34.9
German	6	50.0	87.6	0.0	34.7	13.3	35.6
Chemistry	5	60.0	84.8	0.0	36.9	16.0	35.2
Art and Design	19	84.2	90.0	15.8	42.7	30.5	39.0
Drama	8	87.5	94.6	12.5	37.6	23.8	39.1
Communication Studies	6	100	94.2	33.3	36.1	40.0	38.5
Information Technology	18	77.8	78.2	5.6	20.6	23.9	28.5

### 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	22	100	96.1	50.0	48.7	90.9	85.1
Biology	10	100	91.6	10.0	36.3	62.0	74.1
Business Studies	13	100	96.4	0.0	32.8	60.0	76.5
Communication Studies	8	100	98.3	12.5	36.8	72.5	81.1
Drama	6	100	98.1	0.0	41.5	56.7	82.9
English/English language	20	100	98.3	25	36.5	79	80.1
Design and Technology	8	100	95.3	50.0	35.5	85.0	76.5
General Studies	10	90.0	90.1	0.0	29.1	44.0	69.3
Geography	7	100	97.1	57.1	40.5	82.9	80.9
History	12	100	97.1	16.7	41.0	70.0	81.2
Information Technology	19	100	89.1	26.3	22.4	72.6	64.1
Music	6	100	97.7	16.7	41.8	70.0	82.2
Other Social Studies	9	100	94.3	22.2	38.9	82.2	77.7
Physics	5	100	92.8	20.0	42.8	76.0	78.6

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the A Level courses have been steadily improving and were well above average in the most recent examinations.
- Students' achievement is very good: they write very well and use the language of literary criticism confidently.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers know and respond very well to the needs of individual students.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not extend students' language enough by asking more demanding questions.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

#### Commentary

134. Students begin their sixth form studies in English with levels of attainment that are overall below average as the school loses some of its highest attainers to the local selective schools. As a result of very good teaching, students build very rapidly on this modest start, reaching average attainment at AS level and well above average results at A Level. The students' success comes from their own commitment and dedication to their studies and the teachers' expert support in drafting and redrafting their writing. The proportion of students that persists in their studies to the end of sixth form is high, with many intending to study English at college or university.
135. The students' very good achievement begins to show itself in Year 12 in current work and is clearly evident in work in Year 13. Higher-attaining Year 12 students compare and contrast texts with a good level of critical language. Most lower and middle-attaining students are confident in relating one text to another, but their work is occasionally weakened by a limited range of analytical language. Work in Year 13 shows considerable advance on AS level study. For example, when students transform literary texts into their own version in a different genre, they show a high level of imagination. The range and quality of this work reveal very high achievement in almost all cases.
136. At the heart of the success of English in the sixth form lies the very good quality of teaching. Teachers have a refined sense of students' individual needs. Lessons are dynamic and stimulating. The students are challenged but not threatened by the teachers' questioning. They are all at ease with their work and are eager to improve it. In the least successful lessons, questioning does not always build well enough on students' ideas, occasionally allowing the lower-attaining students to settle for unproven assertions. However, the overall climate for learning established by the teachers encourages scholarship and thoughtful analysis.
137. The subject is very well led and managed. Good practice is shared across the department to good effect. The teachers work very constructively as a group and are supported very well by the head of department. The department has moved on in leaps and bounds since the last inspection and is clearly set to improve further.

## Modern foreign languages

Provision in French is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement by Year 13 is very good.
- Teaching by specialists in each language is very good.
- The use of ICT makes a very significant contribution to students' learning.
- Standards in 2003 in the AS and A- level examinations were well below national averages.
- Leadership and management are good.

### Commentary

138. In 2003, eight students took the AS examination in Year 12 and six took A2 in Year 13. Standards in both examinations were well below average. Girls' standards in AS were higher, although still below average. The standards of the four students taking A2 in 2004 are in line with national expectations at this stage of their course. Each student's predicted grade shows significant progress from their performance at AS. Their achievement is very good. Students attribute this improvement to very good teaching and better management of their time-table this year.
139. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. Teachers are well qualified in the language they teach and this enables them to balance challenge and support very well. Students' attitudes show a high level of motivation and enjoyment. Teaching over the two years is very effective at bridging the gap between performance at GCSE and A-level work, particularly in reinforcing students' knowledge of grammar, syntax and in developing a wider vocabulary. Students' willingness to discuss and debate topics in the foreign language is contributing very well to their achievement. Assessment of students' work is very thorough and meets the needs of each student well. As a result, students' confidence is developing very well. Teachers' use of the excellent ICT facilities makes a very significant contribution to students' enjoyment and learning.
140. Leadership and management in French are good. There is a strong team approach to teaching at this level that draws well on teaching strengths. The monitoring of students' progress is good. Although examination results in A-Level were lower in 2003, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because teaching and achievement have improved.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Small groups facilitate good teaching and effective support for students.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject.
- There are missed opportunities to place learning in real contexts.
- The number of students studying A-level mathematics is increasing.

### Commentary

141. The standards of students on entry to the course vary considerably when all their GCSE grades are considered. The number of students is too small for national comparison but final results are in line with school predicted grades. Achievement in the sixth form is good.
142. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques to confirm that students have gained a secure understanding. Some teachers use paired work so that students can help each other learn. Lessons that have short structured activities maintain the best pace. In some lessons teachers miss opportunities to use real life contexts to clarify

concepts and this means the pace of learning is slowed. Teachers enjoy their teaching and their good relationships with students are evident.

143. Students' attitudes to mathematics are good. They work well with their teachers to make good progress. In the lessons seen some students were reluctant to articulate their findings but when required to contribute they showed a good understanding of the concept being studied.
144. Leadership and management are good. Regular monitoring, evaluation and review of provision means that students are now offered a choice of modules to study. The GCSE statistics course has improved recruitment into A-level mathematics classes.
145. Since the last inspection the faculty has maintained good standards of teaching. Standards achieved by students are well above the levels predicted by national systems.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

146. Students are able to use and apply their GCSE mathematical knowledge and understanding in their sixth form courses. Good understanding and interpretation of graphs was seen in accountancy and business studies. In physics more able students show good mathematical skills and the physics teaching scheme has been adapted to support those with weaker mathematical understanding.

## **SCIENCE**

The focus was on physics, but biology and chemistry were also sampled.

147. In **biology**, A-level and AS level results in 2002 and 2003 were in line with expectations, and all students entered for A-level achieved pass grades. Results were above national averages in 2001, but in other years have been below the national pass rate because some students have low prior attainment. Standards were good in the work seen in the lesson observed. Enthusiastic teaching, brisk pace and a good range of activities encourage good responses from the students so they achieve well. Students are well supported by detailed worksheets, good questioning and very clear explanations of what they need to learn.
148. In **chemistry**, results at A-level and AS level have been variable in comparison with national averages. Only small numbers of students have taken the subject between 1999 and 2002, but there are more in the current Year12. Examination results have been in line with expectations and the majority of students achieve pass grades. The lesson seen in the inspection was satisfactory and standards were in line with national expectations. The teacher showed good subject knowledge in the tasks set, and in questioning and explanations. In part of the lesson students assessed their own responses to questions on rates of reaction using the teacher's mark scheme and effective discussions with the teacher produced good learning. Students are attentive and prepare well for lessons.

### **Physics**

Provision in physics is **good**.

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

- Teachers have good knowledge and experience of the subject.
- Courses are well planned to closely follow the subject specifications.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Marking is effective and information from assessments is used well.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in some lessons.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- Some students do not take an active part in class discussions.

## **Commentary**

149. Over the last three years A-level results have been at or above the national average, and all students entered have achieved a pass grade. Results were especially good in 2003 when the three students entered achieved two grade As and one C grade. At AS level, most students achieve pass grades and each year the higher achievers gain a grade A. The majority of students perform better than predicted from their prior attainment. Numbers taking the subject have remained small with few girls, but they do as well as boys. Retention of students within the year is very good and most students who succeed at AS level continue into Year 13.
150. Standards in the current Years 12 and 13 are in line with national expectations and students work well in lessons so that achievement is good. In Year 12, the transition from GCSE was well managed and, as a result, students have made good progress. Students in Year 13 have good practical skills. All students produce good notes and those of the higher ability students are excellent, with many of their own annotations, corrections and extensions to clarify understanding. The best students achieve very high standards in written answers to questions and assignments, and almost all students show good numerical skills in calculations.
151. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers show good knowledge of the subject and the assessment requirements of the examining body, which they use to plan lessons that cover the requirements of the specifications well. They explain very clearly, using good examples to relate difficult theories to practical applications. In two of the lessons seen the teacher made good use of the tablet personal computer and projector to engage the interest of students by showing diagrams, animations and examples as well as producing notes by discussion with the students. Teachers check that students understand by frequent questioning in whole-class discussions but a few students tend to dominate in these circumstances, leaving others quite passive. Homework that effectively extends the learning in lessons is marked thoroughly, annotated with helpful comments and followed up with individual students.
152. Students are very positive about the subject and enjoy its challenge. Relationships with their teachers are good and they receive help outside lessons if they experience difficulties with their work; for example, students not studying mathematics are given good extra support. Practical work is developed carefully through the use of regular practice in examination exercises but there is insufficient use of computers for recording data from experiments. Students make good use of their own computers or those available in school out of lessons for research at several points in the course to produce essays or presentations. Students are encouraged to assess their own work in some lessons, under the guidance of their teachers, so that they know the standards they need to achieve. Results of regular testing using examination questions are monitored and used to show where improvement is needed.
153. Leadership in the subject is good and there is a clear commitment to improvement. Teachers undertake joint planning of the courses, and there is good teamwork. The head of science provides strong overall leadership and support for the head of department and has been active in ensuring continuing professional development within the department. Management is good. Students' performance is monitored against their targets and the department analyses the results of assessments to inform planning. There are good textbooks, some good revision guides and other resources to support learning. Laboratory provision is good overall, although one laboratory has poor furniture. There are adequate resources for most practical work and there is very good technician support.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

154. There is excellent and seamlessly integrated use and development of ICT in all subjects to enhance learning. Students use PowerPoint to prepare presentations. Spreadsheets are used in business studies to investigate cash flows. In art, students digitally combine and manipulate images and in physics data logging enables the students to verify the laws of motion and

gravity. The students are very confident in using the computer as an effective tool wherever it will enhance and extend their studies.

## HUMANITIES

155. Sixth form work was sampled in **history**. The subject is growing in popularity, which reflects students' interest and enthusiasm for the subject, based on their experience in Year 11 where the quality of teaching is very good. Lessons observed and work seen indicated very good teaching, which constantly engaged and challenged the students. An excellent *PowerPoint* presentation to their peers by A-level students studying Russian history was especially impressive. A-level students have the opportunity of a range of enrichment activities, including a trip to Eastern Europe and visiting a concentration camp, organised by the teacher of Russian history.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in very good learning.
- Very good assessment procedures give clear guidance on standards and promote further improvement.
- Retention of students from Year 12 to Year 13 is very good.
- The use of ICT is not sufficiently developed.

#### Commentary

156. Standards on entry to the sixth form are below national average. Although attainment in geography at the end of Year 11 is above national expectations, many of the higher attaining students choose to pursue their education elsewhere. The performance of students at AS and A level is in line with national expectations. All students passed the examinations in 2002 and 2003. Achievement is good. Students who have started their GCSE course with modest grade predictions do well at AS and A-level, aided by the support given by teachers.

157. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a very good relationship with their students who contribute readily to discussions and so further their own understanding. Teachers effectively encourage students to develop their geographical vocabulary by organising group activities requiring students of all abilities to work together. They work hard to ensure that the students' learning is put into a context that they can understand which is particularly helpful for lower attaining students. Teacher support for students is very good, especially through clear and focused assessment procedures that indicate strategies for improving chances of obtaining higher grades. There are too few opportunities for students to carry out independent study or to use ICT in lessons, although good examples were seen in students' work.

158. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Particular consideration is given to strategies for supporting students through the A level course, especially those for whom the step up from GCSE to AS level presents great challenge. The resources of the department are satisfactory and teachers make very effective use of the school's very good ICT provision to enhance the quality of their teaching. ICT is used by students but greater access to computer suites would allow more group activities in sixth form lessons.

159. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

160. **Design and technology** was sampled in the sixth form. In 2002, results were high in the GCE A-level examination compared with those nationally. In 2003, only the AS level examination was taken, and the few entered obtained average levels. There is a small group of Year 12 students who are taking the GCE A-level examination, whose standards are average, but they achieve very well. This is the result of very good teaching.

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

### **Art and design**

161. Work in art and design and photography was sampled in the sixth form. Standards in the art and design course are above average. Teaching and learning are very good and the students achieve very well. In the photography course the teacher supports the students very well to become independent learners. Here, due to the difficulty some Year 13 students find in organising their time to finish their course work, standards are average. However, an increasing number of students do attain the higher grades, supported by the high quality of teaching. Overall, students are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners and many go on successfully to study aspects of art and design in colleges of higher education. Accommodation and resources are good. Leadership and management of both the courses are very good.

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

### **Leisure and tourism**

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

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

- Standards are high, with an above average proportion of students achieving a distinction or merit.
- Students achieve well in relation to their below average attainment on joining the course.
- Students show a high level of commitment to their work as a result of good support and guidance.
- Teachers relate the students' studies well to their lives and interests.
- There are limited opportunities for students to engage in work-based studies.

#### **Commentary**

162. Students reach consistently high standards of attainment. In 2003, an above-average proportion of students attained a merit or a distinction in their final assessments. These high standards are not fully reflected in the current cohort of students as their attainment on joining the course was lower than that of the previous cohort. Standards have been improving steadily since the last inspection. In work seen, students reach around average standards. They show a sound level of awareness of the importance of customer satisfaction. They conduct a well-devised questionnaire as a result of good support from teachers who ensure that students are aware of the pitfalls that give rise to weak research. In the exploration of how companies judge the effectiveness of their campaigns for the promotion of leisure products, almost all students reveal a good knowledge of the world of commerce. A few lower-attaining students have to work hard to overcome difficulties in writing, but are supported diligently by their teachers. Almost all students complete the course successfully, with many intending to extend their studies through similar courses at college or university. All students achieve very well in relation to the standards of attainment they bring to the course. They show an increasing independence of thought in their work.

163. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. A striking feature is the extent to which teachers support students in their work. In the best lessons, teachers strike a good balance between providing essential help and developing independence of thought. These lessons are invariably

well planned and include a variety of stimulating activities. In all lessons ICT is used well to extend students' learning through efficient use of the Internet and to enhance the presentation of their work. In less successful lessons there are missed opportunities to extend students' language by insisting on the use of more analysis and rational defence of personal views.

164. The course benefits from very good leadership and management. The subject is informed by a clear sense of the real world of leisure and tourism. Those who teach the course are well informed about current developments in the field through regular relevant training. The course has improved considerably since the last inspection through careful planning in relation to the other courses on offer in the sixth form.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus in this curriculum area was on business education but work in accountancy was sampled.

This new AS accountancy course has been well planned and monitoring procedures are already in place to ensure the course is meeting the needs of the students. Teaching and learning are good.

### **Business education**

Provision in business education is **good**.

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

- Teaching is knowledgeable and supports effective learning through challenging expectations, rigour and good use of resources.
- Students have positive attitudes and there very good relationships between students and staff.
- Learning is inclusive, catering for individual needs.
- Recruitment and retention of students onto the GNVQ course to ensure long term viability of provision.

#### **Commentary**

165. All students gained a pass grade at A-level in 2003. This was an improvement on the previous year of 8 per cent. Standards are above the national average. Over the last three years all students in Year 12 entered for the GNVQ intermediate examination have gained at least a pass grade.

166. Standards in the current Years 12 and 13 are in line with national expectations. Work produced by all students is consistently of a good standard, demonstrating sound levels of knowledge and understanding and good levels of independent study. Progress is good as a result of effective resourcing and teacher planning. Good teaching, supported by good assessment practice and very positive student attitudes, contributes to student success. Students respond enthusiastically to the challenges provided and both teachers and students enjoy the positive relationships that contribute to an effective learning environment. All students, irrespective of ability, are fully supported by the vocational programmes on offer.

167. With the introduction of the GNVQ ICT course in 2001, the numbers of students choosing to take GNVQ business studies in Year 12 has fallen. As part of the department development plan, the head of department is considering offering alternative courses to students at the end of Year 11.

168. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are good. The head of department provides a clear sense of direction. A good team has been created and, as a result, staff regularly share ideas and best practice.

169. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.



## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

There was no focus subject in this curriculum area. Work was sampled in health and social care and psychology.

### **Health and social care**

170. In the two lessons sampled, teaching is well structured, knowledgeable and supportive of the individual needs of the learner. Questions are used well in class discussion and students understand the needs of client groups. Lessons are clearly linked to previous work on health and care issues. As a result of good teaching strategies, students are developing independent learning skills. They demonstrate positive work attitudes and are appreciative of the quality of the learning environment created. Resources are well produced, accessible and effective for learning. They are enthusiastic about the subject and have a clear understanding of the assessment processes that support their learning. Achievements are in line with expectations.

### **Psychology**

171. All students begin this course without any prior knowledge in this subject, but they make good progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive. The level of interest and commitment displayed by students in lessons are good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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