

INSPECTION REPORT

CRANFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Cranford

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102540

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Prunty

Lead inspector: Brian Rowe

Dates of inspection: 15 – 19 September 2003

Inspection number: 259341

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Language college status
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11-18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1439
School address:	High Street Cranford Hounslow Middlesex
Postcode:	TW5 9PD
Telephone number:	020 8897 2001
Fax number:	020 8759 8073
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Kad
Date of previous inspection:	12 January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cranford Community College is a large mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11-18 years, situated in Cranford, which is on the north-western edge of the London Borough of Hounslow. The school has language college status and serves the local area as a community centre. The majority of the students live in the immediate area. The school has been successful in gaining a number of awards for high-quality provision. These include: The Schools Curriculum Award 2002; The Sportsmark Award and Investors in People status. It has also established close and successful relationships with a number of large local businesses. Currently, the school is at full capacity and is regularly over-subscribed. Many of the children live in an area that is economically disadvantaged, but students come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Overall, unemployment in the area is average. There are currently 1439 students on roll, of which nearly 400 attend the sixth form, making the school much larger than an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of boys (744) is similar to girls (695), but varies between years. About 90 per cent of students come from minority ethnic groups, a very much higher proportion than average. A higher proportion than average are not fluent in the English language. There are 116 refugees and 12 students from a traveller background, a much higher proportion than is usual in schools. About 23 per cent of students receive free school meals and this proportion is above the national average. Students' attainment on entry is below the national average. About 32 per cent of the students have special educational needs, of whom 34 have been assessed to have a high level of learning difficulty and receive additional support from outside agencies. These proportions are above average when compared to other secondary schools. Thirty six students have statements for special educational needs, well above the national average; of these, 15 are in a unit for dyslexia. The level of pupil mobility is high and many of the students do not start and continue their education from Year 7 to the end of Year 11 in the school. The school has suffered from both a shortage and high turnover of teachers over the last few years. The cost of recruitment has been high, diverting funds away from learning resources. The school has mostly resolved these difficulties and is now fully staffed with specialist teachers.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1695	Brian Rowe	Lead inspector	
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector	
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	English
8044	Roger Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics
30433	Chris Corp	Team inspector	Science
13085	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Design and Technology
12110	Roger Bailess	Team inspector	French
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	History
20189	Jagat Nagra	Team inspector	Community Languages
20767	Jeremy Royle	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology Music
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical Education
23137	Ron Fewtrell	Team inspector	Business Education
18261	Tony Hill	Team inspector	Art
3162	Philip O'Neill	Team inspector	Religious Education Psychology
33015	Richard Winter	Team inspector	Citizenship Geography
32582	Stephen Manning	Team inspector	Biology
3266	Peter Baker	Team inspector	Drama Media Studies
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Sociology
28067	Clive Robson	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs
23588	Charanjit AjitSingh	Team inspector	English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
 Head Office
 102 Bath Road
 Cheltenham
 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).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	22
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES –	25
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	58

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cranford Community College is an **effective and improving school that provides good value for money**. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has the determination to strive for excellence in all aspects of school life. Management strategies ensure that teaching, learning and students' achievements are improving through high expectations and rigorous self-evaluation that identifies the strengths and areas for development.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is a very harmonious and vibrant community where students and sixth-form students are happy and want to learn.
- The headteacher and senior managers have a clear vision of future developments and provide very effective and dynamic leadership. All staff are trained and supported very well.
- Starting at a below average level of attainment on entry to the school, students make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 11.
- Standards are not high enough in the sixth form, but there are signs of recent improvements.
- Rigorous self-evaluation has identified the strengths and weaknesses and is focused on raising standards and providing a wide range of curriculum courses and out-of-school activities.
- The overall provision for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- The school does not meet the full range of requirements of Language College status.
- Students are fully involved in the life of the school and appreciate the care and support they are given by teachers and staff. They hold very positive views about the school.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure all students make progress.
- The school has excellent links with the local and wider community.

After the last inspection, the school went through a period of decline, but has improved significantly during the last four terms. Overall, improvements have been satisfactory. The school is now making rapid progress and is in a strong position to make substantial further improvements. Many of the issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed, with the exception of improving the provision for special educational needs, matching work more closely to students' needs and promoting the development of students' English language skills.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 11 and 13 results

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

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

During the last few years, the results from national tests taken at the end of Year 9 indicate standards have been **below average**. Recent results are above average compared to similar schools and students **make good progress and achieve well**. Results in GCSE examinations have shown a marked improvement over the last three years and are now close to average. Students in Years 10 and 11 **achieve well and make good progress**. Examination results in the sixth form have declined slightly over the last three years and are **below average**, but the achievement of most students is **satisfactory**. Throughout the school, students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily and students with English as an additional language achieve well, but they make the most rapid progress in Years 7-9 and achieve particularly well. Students achieve well in most subjects, but are significantly underachieving in French, Panjabi and

Urdu. There has been considerable underachievement in business education at post-16, but there is recent evidence of rising standards.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, throughout the school is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are good in Years 7–11, but until recently have been unsatisfactory in the sixth form. Students have good attitudes to school. They behave well and develop very good relationships with each other and school staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessing students' work is **satisfactory** in each of these aspects. Teaching and learning are improving because of an improved staffing context and the provision of good quality training. Teaching is strongest in the sixth form and less so in Years 7–9. There are examples of good teaching to be seen in many departments, but teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in French and community languages.

Several aspects of the overall educational provision are significant strengths within the school. These include: the breadth of the curriculum; the level of care given to students, the support and guidance given to students; taking account of students' views; the links with the community and other schools and institutions. There are no significant weaknesses and the school has a determination to improve all aspects of the education it provides.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality and effectiveness of leadership and management throughout the school is **good**. The overall quality of governance is **good**. A significant strength is the excellent leadership, commitment, energy and vision of the headteacher, which inspires students and school staff to aim high and to do their best. Leadership and management are effectively raising standards and improving teaching.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views. The school's image in the local community is strong and more parents than ever choose it. Students hold very positive views about school. They say that there is a safe environment where everyone is respected and treated fairly. They feel that their opinions are heard, valued and acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and achievement in the sixth form
- Improve the overall quality of provision for students with special educational needs
- Improve the teaching of languages and meet the full range of requirements of Language College status
- Make better use of assessment information to ensure all students make progress

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

THE SIXTH FORM AT CRANFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The school has a large and expanding sixth form of 400 students. Several students join in Year 12 from local schools. The school offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is **satisfactory and it is cost-effective**. The quality of teaching and learning has improved recently because of concerted action by senior staff, and is now **good**. Although previous examination results have been below average, **standards are now rising** as the school has overcome severe staffing difficulties and raised student and teacher expectations. The sixth form is in a good position to make further improvements.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The sixth form is an expanding and popular choice for Year 11 students.
- The management of the sixth form has not ensured sufficient monitoring of teaching, learning and performance data to raise students' standards, until recently.
- There has been insufficient academic support and guidance to ensure that all students reach their maximum potential, but this is now improving.
- Students' views are highly valued and are used to plan future developments.
- Students' attitudes are very positive and they contribute fully to school life.

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
<u>English & modern languages</u> English French	Provision is good . Current standards are in line with expectations with students achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Students benefit from good teaching and well-focused leadership and management. Provision is unsatisfactory . Small numbers of students take this subject because leadership, management and teaching are weak. In Year 12, there is a wide range of achievement and standards are below average.
Mathematics	Provision is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are sound and students' achievement is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory, but leadership has weaknesses. Relationships between staff and students are good.
<u>Science</u> Biology Chemistry	Provision is satisfactory . The difficulties in provision over the past two years are now being addressed through strong leadership from the head of science. Teaching and learning are now good. Provision is good . Standards are close to the national average at A-level. The good teaching by an enthusiastic team ensures that students achieve well. There are good relationships leading to a very supportive learning environment.
<u>Information and communication technology</u>	Provision is satisfactory . Standards for AVCE are in line with expectations. Standards in A-level computing are below average. Recent staffing problems have been resolved and students are now achieving at the levels expected.

<u>Humanities</u> History Psychology Sociology	Provision is good . Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Teachers use their subject expertise very well to promote students' progress. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Provision is good . Teaching ranges from good to very good and engages the interest and enthusiasm of the students, who achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and reach average standards. Provision is satisfactory . Previous results show improvement, but remain below the national average. Current students are working to average standards and their achievement is sound. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good focus on individual support.
<u>Visual and performing arts</u> Art Drama Media Studies	Provision is good . Examination results have been well below average, but standards are now rising steadily because of good teaching and learning. Leadership and management are very good. Provision is good . A-level results were below average last year. Current students achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good relationships with students. Provision is good . A-level results were below average last year. Good teaching and learning have raised standards this year and students' achievement is good.
<u>Business</u>	Provision is unsatisfactory . Students underachieved in their 2002 and 2003 examinations because of unsatisfactory teaching and leadership. However, teaching and learning are now satisfactory and relationships between students and teachers are good.
<i>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 school reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.</i>	

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students have **good** access to well-informed personal support and guidance, although the monitoring of how well individual students progress is inconsistent. There are very good opportunities for students to give their views and to contribute to school life. Students are provided with good-quality guidance on further study and career opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are now **satisfactory**. There is an effective leadership group backed by excellent administrative support, which is now clearly focused on raising standards. Until recently, there has been insufficient monitoring of teaching, learning, assessment information and the level of support given to students and, as a result, examination results have declined.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are **very positive and supportive of the school**. They say that their teachers know and support them well. They feel that they are maturing well because they are given more opportunities to accept responsibility and to work and research independently. They appreciate the new social and study facilities that have been provided for them this year.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

During the last few years, the results from national tests taken at the end of Year 9 indicate standards have been **below average**. Recent results show that when compared to similar schools, students make **good progress** and **achieve well**. Results in GCSE examinations have shown a marked improvement over the last three years and are now close to the national average. Students in Years 10 and 11 **achieve well** and make **good progress**. Examination results in the sixth form have declined slightly over the last three years and are **below average**, but for most students their achievement is **satisfactory**. Throughout the school, students with special educational needs achieve **satisfactorily** and students with English as an additional language achieve well, but in Years 7–9 they make the most rapid progress and achieve **particularly well**.

Years 7–9

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although overall standards are below average, the school has improved its results in line with national trends of improvement.
- Achievement in French, Panjabi and Urdu is unsatisfactory.
- The most recent 2003 test results in English indicate that standards have risen and will be close to the national average.
- Students enter school with below average literacy and numeracy skills and make good progress in the majority of subjects they follow.
- The low level of literacy skills on entry to school and the high proportion of students with special educational needs significantly affect the progress students make.
- The quality and overall provision of teaching have a positive impact on students' achievement.

Commentary

1. The table below indicates that students reach standards that are below the national average. However, given that on entry to school many have literacy skills that are below average, students are achieving well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.6 (33.8)	33.3 (33.0)
mathematics	31.6 (31.8)	34.7 (34.4)
science	32.1 (31.6)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 208 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school has found it difficult to raise standards for the reasons outlined in paragraphs 15 and 47. Despite the barriers to raise achievement, the school is making good progress in raising standards and the unconfirmed 2003 test results show an improvement to previous years. In particular, the English results have improved because of good teaching and very good leadership and management of the department. Students with English as an additional language attain well overall, but, for many, their achievement is curtailed by a lack of more advanced literacy skills. The school has made improving teaching and learning a priority for development and recent initiatives are beginning to improve students' learning and achievement. In some departments, the staffing changes and improved teaching have not yet had time to affect test and examination results.

- Students at the early stages of learning English make good progress in relation to their prior learning and achieve well, particularly in Years 7-9. Those on the next stages of learning English language, who do not get this additional support, make slower progress in developing the more complex literacy skills. Most students, who use English as an additional language, demonstrate that they have acquired sufficient English language skills to function well and they are well integrated into the mainstream classes. They continue to develop skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily overall and make especially good progress in art, history and physical education. Students achieve well in most subjects, but are significantly underachieving in French, Panjabi and Urdu because of unsatisfactory teaching and leadership of the subjects.

Years 10 and 11

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are in line with the national average and students achieve at a much higher level than their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 would indicate.
- In the 2003 examinations, the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades improved significantly.
- The proportion of students gaining some examination success is much higher than average.
- The school has improved its results at the same rate as the national trend.
- High student mobility and underdeveloped language skills are still barriers to learning and raising achievement.

Commentary

- The table below indicates that students reach standards that are in line with the national average. The proportion of students gaining A*-G grades is very high and a testament to the school's determination to provide a relevant and worthwhile experience for every student.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	44 (37)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (89)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.6 (n/a)	39.8 (n/a)

There were 195 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The students continue to make good progress overall, and their level of achievement is above average compared to similar schools. Considering the high level of pupil mobility and the underdevelopment of literacy skills of many students, these results represent good achievement by the end of Year 11. However, too few students gain the very highest examination grades because their literacy skills restrict their progress in the more challenging work. Despite the impact on learning that high student mobility and low literacy skills may have, the school has kept pace with national trends of improvement. This is because of the positive attitudes of the students, their determination to do well at school and more recent improvements to teaching and learning.

Sixth form

Standards in post-16 examinations have been below average, but students have achieved **satisfactorily** overall. There is a wide variation in subject examination results, but evidence of considerable underachievement in business education.

Commentary

6. Sixth-form students have not achieved as well as in Years 7–11 during the last few years. The school is aware of the reasons, outlined elsewhere in this report, and has made the improvement of standards its top priority. Already, standards are improving and most students are achieving well in lessons. During the last four years, females out-performed males in the examinations, but there was no evidence of this during the inspection. Students are confident about their current progress.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance overall is **satisfactory**. Students have **good attitudes** to school. They **behave well** and have **very good relationships** with each other and with staff. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have very positive views, they enjoy school and have good attitudes to their work and activities.
- Attendance rates for students in Years 7-11 are above the national average, although they are below average in the sixth form.
- Students behave well around the school and in lessons, although a few are disruptive if they are not managed well.
- Relationships are very good throughout the whole school community and students respect each other's values, cultures and traditions.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because there is a caring and positive ethos throughout the school.
- The school does not provide all students with a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

Attendance

7. Students' attendance and punctuality in Years 7-11 are good because they enjoy school and are encouraged by their parents. Attendance in the sixth form, however, has been low with high levels of unauthorised absence, mainly because there were insufficiently rigorous monitoring systems. This is now improving and attendance so far this term has been satisfactory as a result. Students are punctual to lessons and this is a recently improved aspect of learning in the sixth form.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 / 3

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.2
National data:	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	1.4
National data:	1.2

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

Exclusions

8. The school makes sensible use of its sanctions and exclusions are used as a last resort when other support has not worked. Students and staff are very clear about when exclusions are used.

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	131	12	1
White – any other White background	15	3	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	812	14	2
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	185	8	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	14	4	1
Black or Black British – African	84	5	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	11	2	0

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

9. Students have good attitudes to their work and to school life. They have a desire to learn and approach their lessons and activities with enthusiasm. Although some lack attention when teachers do not manage them well, the majority remain on task in lessons and concentrate well. Students are keen to participate in lunchtime and after-school clubs and most complete their homework regularly. They are keen to take responsibility and to make decisions about the running of the school through their tutor groups and year and school councils.
10. Students who have English as an additional language, have positive attitudes to learning. They respond well as they gain confidence and feel secure. They collaborate well with each other as a diverse and multi-lingual group and they are happy to share their experiences and learning with each other. Those who have been at school a lot longer than the most recent arrivals, help their peers by interpreting and translating for them. They also relate well to their language support and other teachers and classroom assistants. They show a lot of interest in school life and participate fully in all activities.
11. There are very good relationships between staff and students in the Learning Development Department. Staff are sensitive to the needs of students, who in turn appreciate the support they are given. The Learning Development Department runs a helpful lunchtime club for students with a range of activities to support their social and educational development.
12. Students' behaviour is good in all areas of the school. When behaviour is unacceptable, they respond well to the school's systems of sanctions. Most students report that they have not encountered any bullying behaviour, although the school is quick to act if there are any incidents. Students' personal development is good due to the very good relationships in the school and the way that the staff promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Levels of respect for one another are high and all students are valued whatever their background. Students with special educational needs behave very well when withdrawn for intensive work. They develop good relationships with specialist staff and with each other. Students welcome the support they are given and value it. The school is a calm and racially harmonious place in which students mature well and are encouraged to take responsibility. The lack of a daily assembly restricts students' opportunities to reflect collectively and personally on their own and others' lives and achievements.

13. Students say that behaviour in the school has improved during the last four terms and that there is now a safe environment where everyone is respected and treated fairly. They are clear that respect for other cultures is taught well. They feel that their opinions are heard, valued and acted upon and they particularly appreciate the celebration of their achievements in end-of-term assemblies.

Sixth form

Attendance has been **unsatisfactory**, but is improving, following new measures taken this year. The attitudes of the sixth-form students are **very good**. They behave well, conform to school rules and readily accept responsibility.

Commentary

14. Students are remaining at school in the sixth form in increasing numbers, which reflects how much they value the opportunities offered to them. Sixth-form students play a full role in the life and work of the school and set good role-models for their younger peers to follow. They say that the expectations for work and attendance have been made clear to them and that they feel well supported both academically and personally. The school has made it a priority to improve attendance and punctuality in the sixth form and the early results of new measures are very encouraging.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of the different aspects of this provision varies. Several of the aspects are **significant strengths** within the school. These include: the breadth of the curriculum; the level of care and support and guidance given to students; taking account of students' views, and the links with the community and other schools and institutions. There are no significant weaknesses and the school is determined to improve all aspects of the education it provides.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in Years 11–16 is **satisfactory**.
The quality of students' learning in Years 11–16 is **satisfactory**.
The quality of assessing students' work is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works successfully to overcome the barriers that prevent students' learning.
- Regular whole-school and departmental reviews ensure that the senior staff are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Teaching promotes positive student attitudes and personal development.
- There is insufficient attention to matching the work to meet the needs of students with different abilities in lessons.
- Students with English as an additional language are not provided with sufficient support to acquire the more complex literacy skills in Years 10 and 11.
- Students with special educational needs do not have enough opportunity to work in small groups.

Commentary

15. Cranford Community College provides both a challenging and rewarding environment for teachers to work in. There are several barriers to raising students' achievement, which include:
- The level of student mobility is high and many of them do not start and continue their education from Year 7 to the end of Year 11 in the school.
 - Several students have had serious disruptions to their education, such as being in care, refugees and asylum seekers.
 - Many students use English as an additional language and do not speak English at home, consequently, their levels of literacy are well below average when they start school.
 - Several students are at the early stages of learning English and need much support.
 - A high proportion of students have learning and behavioural difficulties.
 - The school has suffered from both a shortage and high turnover of teachers over the last few years. The cost of recruitment has been high, diverting funds away from other learning resources.
16. The school is working effectively to overcome these barriers to learning and has recently been successful in appointing a full complement of specialist staff. It has also successfully acquired funding from a number of different sources to enhance the provision of teaching and non-teaching staff and learning resources. Shortly after his appointment, the headteacher and senior staff conducted a rigorous in-depth review of teaching and learning and identified the main strengths and weaknesses throughout the school. As a result of good leadership, important strategic decisions were made to improve teaching and this became a main focus for staff development. Effective management has ensured that improvements to teaching and learning have been rapid and in many examination courses the recent past results do not reflect the current better quality of teaching. The students are positive about the school and the teaching they receive. They are mostly well behaved and have good attitudes to their work; teaching makes a positive contribution to their personal development.
17. Inspectors judge the quality of teaching and learning from a wide range of evidence that includes observing lessons, an analysis of past test and examination results, a scrutiny of students' work, talking to students about their work and analysing school data and documentation. During the inspection, 147 lessons were observed. The observations confirmed the school's own self-evaluation that overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. A summary of the teaching is shown in the table below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 147 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	28 (19%)	51 (35%)	50 (34%)	14 (9%)	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 were seen.

18. During the inspection, the most effective teaching was observed in the sixth form where both teaching and learning were consistently good. Teaching was satisfactory in Years 7 to 11, but more effective in the examination Years 10 and 11. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Years 7 to 9, often related to teachers, who were new to the school and meeting students very early in the term, before class conventions had been established. Some of the unsatisfactory teaching was because inexperienced teachers had not yet fully developed their skills for managing students' behaviour. There are examples of good teaching to be seen in many departments, but teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in modern foreign and community languages.
19. The quality of teaching has a direct bearing on how well students learn. The school is fully aware of this and finding ways to support teachers and improve the quality of teaching through

a system of mentors, regular reviews and in-service training opportunities. Most aspects of teaching are satisfactory, but frequently, even in lessons where most students still make sound progress, teachers had not prepared work to meet the needs of all the students. This was most noticeable in the mixed-ability classes in Years 7-9. In these lessons, the students with special education needs and the lower attainers were not well enough supported, and the more able students were not sufficiently challenged. Consequently, not all students made the best progress and the highest level of achievement was not reached.

20. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching ensures students achieve the national averages for GCSE A*-C grades. A very high proportion of students achieve some success in examinations, indicating the determination of the school to ensure that every student is taught effectively. Many of the students use English as an additional language and the teaching ensures they make good progress. However, insufficient support is given to develop the more complex language skills in Years 10 and 11 and this prevents some students from achieving the very highest GCSE examination grades. The quality of teaching provided by the specialist staff for students, who use English as an additional language, is good. Learning is particularly effective in the small groups taken out of classes. The teachers, who provide specific language support, are very effective because two of them speak some of the community languages such as Farsi and Spanish. Although support is mostly effective, it is not consistent across the school. This is because subject teachers and specialist language teachers rarely plan lessons together. As yet there is too little liaison to improve coverage of key and advanced language skills in most subjects. The support provided by the specialist teachers of English as an additional language is highly valued by the students and staff in school.
21. The teaching of students with special educational needs in individual withdrawal sessions is satisfactory overall. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to be supported and taught in groups, either in lessons or outside of the classroom. While the matching of work to the needs of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory in many lessons, work has begun to address this weakness, led by the special needs co-ordinator.

Sixth form

The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is now **good**.

The quality of students' learning in Years 12 and 13 is now **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In a high proportion of lessons, teaching and learning are now good or very good.
- Teaching, learning and standards are improving in many departments.
- Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has identified weaknesses that are being systematically addressed.
- Expectations are now much higher and students welcome the drive to raise standards.

Commentary

22. During the inspection, all sixth-form lessons observed were satisfactory, two-thirds were good and over one-third very good. A scrutiny of students' work and talking with students confirmed this good level of teaching and learning. Teaching has improved considerably recently because of the intervention of the senior management team, who now monitor the quality of teaching and learning and the support given to students on a regular basis. There is now more rigour and higher expectation of students' attendance, punctuality and effort. Departments have specialist teachers in place and there is a greater sense of purpose because the school has made improving standards in the sixth form their most urgent priority.
23. During the past few years, achievement in the sixth form has not been high enough because of:
 - Inadequate preparation of students for examinations;
 - difficulties over providing competent staff to teach examination courses;

- insufficient expectation and a lack of support for students to develop more sophisticated language and study skills;
- insufficient support and monitoring of progress.

24. The school has recognised this and these weaknesses have been addressed in most departments. This improved teaching is having a direct impact on students' achievement and standards of work. Evidence from work scrutiny indicates that current standards are much better than for the previous examination results. Students are very appreciative of this drive to raise standards.

Assessment

The quality of assessing students' work in Years 11–16 and the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

25. The quality of everyday assessment of students' work and the constructive use of assessment data to improve learning are satisfactory, but are having only a limited impact on students' progress and raising standards. Although the school has a common assessment policy, it is applied inconsistently both within subject areas and between them. Assessment is used well in some subjects like history and art, in which marking is thorough, involves student input and leads to the setting of learning targets, which are regularly reviewed. In several other subject areas, assessment does not result in targets, the marking is inconsistent, and students do not always know how well they are doing. This also applies to the sixth form. At the level of both subject area and whole school, a considerable amount of assessment data is collected, but limited use is made of it to track students' progress and set targets for different groups, and, therefore, assessment does not have a significant impact on learning.

26. Particularly serious is the unsatisfactory assessment for students with special educational needs. Although a number of initial assessments take place, the practice is disparate and does not readily identify all of the needs of the students. In addition, existing data is insufficiently used to monitor students' progress, set them realistic targets, allocate support and plan strategically to use all resources to their full potential. The assessments do not inform subject teachers and help them plan lessons to match work to meet the needs of the students with special educational needs.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum to meet the needs of students in Years 7–11 is **very good**.

The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities, is **good**.

The quality and quantity of accommodation is **satisfactory** and for resources it is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curricular opportunities are very broad and provide a good range of activities for all students.
- The school is very innovative in meeting students' needs and aspirations.
- Students with English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are very well supported.
- Students with special educational needs are not always supported well with their learning.
- There is a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- There is no daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

27. Curricular opportunities for all students are very broad and include a good choice of vocational courses. This wide range of courses on offer positively contributes to the students achieving well by the end of Year 11. However, the curriculum does not comply with the statutory

requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. The school manages the curriculum very well and has been very innovative. For example, two courses have just started that typify a curriculum that meets learners' needs and aspirations very well. In Years 7-9, all students participate in a very stimulating one period per week enrichment course that enables teachers to provide input beyond the National Curriculum. In Year 10, a small group of students experience an alternative vocationally-based curriculum much better suited to their needs. All Year 10 and 11 students take part in a vocational GNVQ course so that their 14-19 programme has appropriate continuity and relevance to their future learning or career choice. Enrichment through extra-curricular provision is good generally and very good for sporting activities. Recent changes to the structure of the school day has ensured a high proportion of students can take part in the extra-curriculum provision. Students were very positive about the quality and range of the curriculum courses and extra-curricular activities on offer.

28. Students who have English as an additional language, have full access to the whole curriculum. Those, who are at the initial stages of acquiring English language skills, are withdrawn from classes and some also receive support in classes. Some students in Years 10 and 11 are given an option to follow an alternative, more work-related curriculum. The school organises lunchtime clubs for students to help with their English and also offers additional sessions to help with examination preparation. Last year, the Excellence in Cities and Ethnic Minorities Achievement project enabled students with English as an additional language to make good progress by catching up with national standards. Specialist teaching takes place in an attractive and well-organised suite of rooms where students feel secure and very well supported. There are enough resources for teaching students with English as an additional language.
29. Students with special educational needs have good access to the school's broad curriculum. However, there is not enough teaching support given for students with special educational needs in classes. There are insufficient educational resources used in class to meet the needs of the very high number of students with special educational needs. Teaching support staff work with too few students. Their work is almost exclusively on a one-to-one basis. This is an inefficient use of their skills and potential teaching time. Many of the special educational needs statements recommend small group specialist teaching, and this requirement is not being sufficiently met, as generally there is insufficient structured group work. Students make good progress in the groups that exist. The specialist special educational needs teaching staff do not give enough support to other teachers to help them meet the needs of students with special education needs. Overall, the deployment of the specialist support teachers is unsatisfactory.
30. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and allows the school to teach its planned curriculum. The buildings are kept in good order by an efficient maintenance team. The accommodation for English, in particular, is unsatisfactory as some lessons take place in unsuitable temporary huts. However, the school is full and has, as yet, despite their best efforts, failed to obtain funding for new building. The school has full disability access.
31. The resources for the curriculum are good. Subjects such as drama and media have an excellent range of equipment. The resources for Urdu and AS level chemistry are unsatisfactory at present, but this is being addressed. The learning resource centre is very well managed and resourced and is central to the learning of the school. There are a large number of computers in the school and these are accessible to all students and well used.

Sixth form

The overall quality of the curriculum to meet the needs of students in Years 12 and 13 is **good**. The opportunity in the sixth form for enrichment, including out-of-school activities, is **good**. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the sixth-form curriculum are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have access to a wide range of examination courses.
- Curricular and enrichment opportunities are very broad and this is appreciated by the students.
- There is no daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

32. Curricular opportunities are very broad and students can choose from a wide range of academic and vocational courses to meet their needs and aspirations. The school does not comply with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for sixth-form students. Although the provision for religious education has not met statutory requirements in the past, the school has planned two conferences to do so later this year. Enrichment through extra-curricular provision is good and the students appreciate the efforts made by their teachers to provide them with worthwhile activities both at school and in the wider community. The unexpectedly large number of students returning to Year 12 has caused some very large classes in some subjects. However, the school is addressing this issue by providing more resources to match the increase of students in the course.

Care, guidance and support

The overall effectiveness to ensure students' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The quality of providing support, advice and guidance for students is **good**. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students are very good.
- All students are very well supported through an established structure of pastoral support, although tutorial time is not always used as well as it could be.
- Good support for students with English as an additional language.
- There are very good induction and support arrangements for students entering in Year 7.
- Students are given good-quality advice on further study and career opportunities.
- Sixth-form students are supported well, but individual monitoring of their progress and attendance, is inconsistent.

Commentary

33. The school makes very good provision for students' care and welfare, including their health and safety. Students from all backgrounds have very good and trusting relationships with staff and know who to go to if they have concerns. There is very good awareness of child-protection procedures and those relating to children in public care. The student support referral panel is highly effective in monitoring the impact on students' progress of, for example, the learning support unit and learning mentors, and ensuring that support strategies are well planned and clearly focused on improvement. Liaison with outside agencies and support for parents of individual students result in most students being successfully re-integrated into school life. This very good support given to all students has a positive impact on their progress and standards achieved. Students feel valued and have confidence that the school listens to their views and any concerns.
34. Students are provided with very good-quality pastoral support through an established year group structure. Leadership and management of the pastoral system are very effective. Heads of year, their deputies and pastoral assistants know the students well, monitor their behaviour, attendance and progress and provide continuity of care and support for students and their families. Tutors also support students' personal development well, although registration periods often lack meaningful activity. There are very good arrangements for inducting new students to the school, who are very positive about how they have been helped to settle in. Students with English as an additional language, especially those new to the school, have access to a safe and friendly base out of lesson time. They benefit from very

good support from the specialist staff. Students have good access to well-organised and impartial guidance on career and work opportunities and there are good opportunities for work experience in Years 10 and 11.

35. The school has a learning support unit funded through the Excellence in Cities initiative to provide support for students with additional behaviour and social needs. Following an unsuccessful period, the unit has been re-established with a clearer and carefully thought through rationale. The new referral system is more closely tied to other support networks. A new manager with relevant expertise has been appointed. The revised provision is now well-placed to work effectively with the targeted students. The Excellence in Cities initiative has also helped the school to provide effective learning mentors and a high level of support for gifted and talented students in a wide range of subjects and activities.

Sixth form

The quality of providing support, advice and guidance for sixth-form students is **satisfactory**. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

Commentary

36. The quality of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of students' personal development is satisfactory. The strength of the support is the knowledge that teachers have of students and their families, but there are inconsistencies in the way in which individual students' attendance, behaviour and progress are monitored. Students say that this is improving and that the expectations for their time in the sixth form have been made very clear and that they feel well supported. There is good provision to guide students on further career or study opportunities, although some Year 13 students would like more advice on university entrance. Students are very clear that their views are valued and listened to well and are very positive about their involvement in, for example, the design of the new sixth-form enrichment centre.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents, who are satisfied with what the school has to offer. There are **very good** links with other schools and colleges. **Excellent** use is made of the wider community and partnerships outside the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are provided with good-quality information about the school and about students' standards and progress.
- Parents support students' learning well.
- There is good support for the parents of students, who use English as an additional language.
- The school acts positively and deals effectively with any parental concerns.
- Parents' views are important to the school, although more could be done to seek their views on a regular basis.
- There are very good educational links with other schools and other institutions.
- The school uses every opportunity to widen its partnerships in the local area and further afield.

Commentary

37. The school's image in the local community is strong and more parents than ever choose it, demonstrating confidence in the quality of education provided. While not all are actively involved in the daily life of the school, they support students' learning well by monitoring homework diaries, attending regular meetings to discuss progress and supporting community activities taking place in school. The school places a strong emphasis on a positive partnership with parents and values their opinions. It recognises that more can be done to regularly seek their views on whole-school issues. For example, only four parents attended a

meeting and 12 completed a questionnaire to express their views about the school to the inspectors.

38. The department for English as an additional language maintains a good liaison with families and carers. Staff make arrangements for other support to become available, especially refugee support with other agencies, that provides effective help for students and their families. The department helps in the organisation of parent consultation meetings by acquiring interpreters to assist parents in making choices about future study. The number of parents who attend annual reviews for students with special educational needs is lower than usual. Individual education plans do not record a parental contribution and their involvement is not sufficient or effective.
39. Parents receive good-quality information about school activities and students' achievement through weekly newsletters. Year group teams place high emphasis on regular and positive liaison with parents and are pro-active in contacting them when problems arise. Parents are positive about reward and incentive schemes, which help students to work, behave and achieve well, although a few are concerned that not all behaviour is dealt with effectively. The school strives to provide parents with detailed information about students' academic and personal progress through easily accessible data in termly reports.
40. The school has very good links with a wide range of schools and colleges. It makes the best possible use of projects, initiatives and business partnerships, locally, nationally and abroad, to enrich the curriculum and to provide a wide range of learning experiences outside the school environment for both students and staff. Very good links exist with local primary schools and the school is leading a project to develop sixth-form provision in the area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management throughout the school is **good**.

The headteacher has provided **outstanding** leadership since his appointment four terms ago.

Other key staff with responsibility provide **good** leadership.

The effectiveness of management is **good** throughout the school.

The overall quality of governance is **good**.

The school has achieved a considerable amount to overcome the students' barriers to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The commitment, energy and vision of the headteacher to inspire students and all school staff to aim high and to do their best.
- The school uses self-evaluation very effectively to monitor its performance.
- Performance management and induction procedures for new teachers and in-service training for all staff are very well organised and effective.
- Very clear links are established between the school development plan and departmental and year group action plans.
- Management at departmental level is variable in quality. It is very good in science, humanities, physical education, art and drama, but ineffective in modern foreign languages.
- The school uses financial planning effectively and applies principles of best value well.
- The governing body is organised well and has a clear vision of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governing body has yet to develop fully its role as a critical friend of the school.

Commentary

Leadership

41. The overall quality of leadership is good throughout the school. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for just over four terms. In this relatively short time, the school has undergone highly significant changes in almost all aspects of its life because of the commitment of the headteacher and other key senior staff. Although there are still important

aspects of school life and students' attainment that require improving, the headteacher has demonstrated excellent leadership so far. He has a very clear vision of what Cranford Community College seeks to achieve and he has the skill, energy and determination to put in place the measures necessary to ensure that the school is highly successful. He has a very visible presence around the school and is very approachable to students, parents and staff. He, and the re-organised senior management team, fully share this vision for the school, which is beginning to be made manifest. They have achieved a great deal and are aware of what else has to be improved.

42. The major vehicle for this change and improvement is the implementation of a whole-school self-evaluation programme, which rigorously examines all aspects of the school, identifies areas of concern, and then takes steps to improve them. The self-evaluation made clear that students' attainment was to be improved, that the community was to be more fully involved in the life of the school and that students' aspirations were to be raised. Very significant progress in all these areas has been achieved and is the basis for the school's future developments. Other major issues that have been successfully addressed are the raising of staff morale, the changed perception of the school by parents, teacher recruitment, establishing a productive and positive climate for learning and promoting inclusion in all aspects of school life.

Management

43. The overall quality of management is good throughout the school. There is a hardworking and dedicated senior management team that serves the school well. A particular strength of the school is the rigour of its self-evaluation procedures. These are used very well to identify key issues for improvement. Departmental and pastoral action plans are linked very clearly with the overall school development plan. The heads of curriculum areas and departments are, for the most part, efficient and effective managers. This is particularly true in the humanities area and in science, physical education, art and drama. However, management is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages. There are some variations in the effective use of performance data between departments. The management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory, as progress has been too slow and this now needs greater impetus. The school has begun to review the deployment of the special educational needs teachers and the teaching assistants to improve the support given to students. The special needs co-ordinator has provided some good training for new staff in the school to raise awareness of students' needs. The student referral panel provides a good forum to co-ordinate the variety of support available across the school. It is working well and providing a good method of monitoring the progress of students and communicating information to those, who need to become informed.
44. The financial management of the school has been strengthened since the previous inspection and there is now an effective system in place for making informed decisions about school priorities. The school applies 'best value' principles effectively.
45. Performance management is on target, records are thorough and policies for managing weak teaching and complaints are clear. This high level of efficiency helps to enable the school's aspirations to be translated into practice. The development of teaching and learning is a central focus of the school's provision that enriches and broadens the repertoire of teachers' skills and effectiveness. A comprehensive programme of in-service training for all staff successfully dovetails the needs of the school with those of individual teachers. The climate of the school encourages all teachers to raise expectations of themselves and contribute to the development of others. Those supporting newly qualified teachers and students in training enhance their own management skills while providing good support and professional advice to beginners. Considerable effort has been made to recruit and retain high-quality staff. Much time and energy has been expended, resulting in the school being fully staffed for the 2003/4 academic year. Newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school receive a very well organised and taught induction programme, which is very successful in helping staff to settle into the school.

Governance

46. The overall quality of governance is good. The governing body serves the school well. Governors are committed to the school's continued development and there is a well-organised committee structure that ensures that these developments are closely monitored. Governors are more confident about fulfilling their role, although not all governors with key responsibilities are able to give time to visit the school on a frequent and regular basis. Governors are kept well-informed of improvements and areas for development. They are, however, less confident in their role as a critical friend.

Aids and barriers to raising achievement

47. The school has identified many barriers that have made it difficult to raise students' achievement in the past. It has, however, achieved a considerable amount to overcome the barriers to learning, in particular, the impact of having a high proportion of students with English as an additional language, teacher turbulence, recruitment and retention. The school has in the past had to rely on unqualified and overseas teachers on short-term contracts to fill vacancies. However, following an innovative recruitment initiative, the school has been successful in filling the majority of vacancies to a point where practically all departments are fully staffed. Regular staff training and career development have proved successful in retaining teachers. Departmental reviews highlighted weaknesses in teaching and the school has worked closely with partner institutions to observe teaching and mentor weak teachers and raise student expectation. A major focus for teaching has been training to raise the literacy levels of students. The school is improving, and in a good position to sustain further important improvements in the forthcoming years.

Sixth form

Key staff with responsibilities in the sixth form provide **satisfactory** leadership. The effectiveness of managing the sixth form is now **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Until recently, the management of the sixth form did not ensure sufficient monitoring of teaching, learning, assessment information and the level of support given to students.
- New initiatives are raising standards of students' work.
- Students are very positive about the level of support they receive.

Commentary

48. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. In previous years, the management of the sixth form did not ensure sufficient monitoring of teaching, learning, assessment information and the level of support given to students. Consequently, examination results have declined over recent years. This year, the head of sixth form is supported well by a team of key staff, including an excellent administrative assistant. The team have initiated new strategies to improve the monitoring of students' academic and personal development. This involves the tutors in a mentoring role. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of this initiative and monitoring of the system has not yet been implemented. There is a new programme for monitoring teaching in the sixth form. New initiatives are beginning to have an impact on raising the previously low levels of attendance, punctuality and the quality of students' work.
49. The views of students in Years 11, 12 and 13 have been well sought through an effective series of questionnaires and the results have formed the basis for planned future developments. Students are very positive about the improved level of support they receive and are pleased to be consulted on future developments. A target for sixth-form development was to increase the number of students on roll. Good early advice in Year 11 and successful marketing strategies in the local community have resulted in a significant rise in enrolments in Year 12 this year.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,767,870	Balance from previous year	29,375
Total expenditure	4,607,092	Balance carried forward to the next	160,778
Expenditure per pupil	3,438		

Value for Money

50. Taking into account:

- The good achievement of students in Years 7 to 11.
- The good behaviour and attitudes of students throughout the school.
- The overall good quality of leadership and management.
- The very good arrangements for care and support.
- The breadth of the curriculum and wide range of extra-curriculum opportunities.

The school gives good value for money overall and the sixth form is cost effective.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

1 The Language College and European and community languages

The effectiveness of the Language College, including the provision for European and community languages, is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The essential characteristics of a specialist language school are not fully in place.
- A good range of European and community languages are offered to students.
- Difficulties with staffing in previous years have led to low standards of achievement.
- Leadership and management of the language provision have not met the needs of the students.
- Students make unsatisfactory progress in French and the community languages of Panjabi and Urdu.
- Unsatisfactory teaching results in poor student behaviour, motivation and achievement in some languages.
- There is excellent practice to be found in German.

Commentary

51. The school is entering its third phase of language college status and has clear planning for future developments. It is aware of the weaknesses and has appointed a new manager to co-ordinate the planned changes. The essential characteristics of a specialist language school are not fully in place. There are a number of opportunities for students to experience languages outside the classroom and to link with schools abroad, but the range is too limited. The international ethos of the language college and the vision of how it can enrich the whole curriculum are not sufficiently developed or shared. There are some examples of good contributions by languages to work in other subjects. Chinese is an element in post-16 business studies and well-structured visits to China are organised. Links with British Airways demonstrate to students how languages are used at work. A good choice of European and community languages is provided, particularly for students up to the age of 14 years. However, changes and difficulties with staffing in previous years have led to low standards of achievement in some of these languages. This is also a result of some poor teaching leading to unsatisfactory student behaviour and motivation. Evidence from the inspection does indicate that good improvements are now underway in relation to the quality of teaching and learning in some of these languages, particularly in students' second foreign language. German makes an excellent contribution as one of the first foreign languages for students aged 11-16 years. Italian is now well planned with clear guidance. There is additional support for Chinese and further help in class. There are some continued weaknesses in the teaching of Panjabi and Urdu, resulting in underachievement and unsatisfactory student attitudes. This is a result of a narrow range of classroom activities that are not well matched to student abilities.
52. The school has very accurately identified an additional range of targets that need to be achieved. These include improving students' motivation in their second foreign language by providing them with a school certificate at the end of their course in Year 9. The planned provision of alternative examinations to GCSE in Year 11 should also offer more achievable targets for some students.
53. The school has aimed to meet the prescribed requirements of a language college, particularly in relation to European languages. However, ineffective leadership and management of language teaching have not met the diverse cultural needs of the students in school. The school has made a very accurate analysis of key strengths and areas for development in relation to its specialist language college status and is working positively to take these forward.

2 The work of the special educational needs unit. (Specific learning difficulties)

The effectiveness of the special educational needs unit for students with specific learning difficulties is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and students are very good.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently co-ordinated. Work has begun to draw this together so that students' progress can be better monitored.
- Although the quality of one-to-one support is good, the students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop study skills and independent learning techniques, particularly through group work.
- The students are positive about the support they receive and can fully join in school life.
- Students do not receive adequate structured and targeted support in class to consolidate skills acquired in withdrawal sessions.

Commentary

54. The school has a centre for students with specific learning difficulties (Dyslexia). There are currently 15 students in the centre, some of whom come from beyond the school's catchment area. All students receive regular one-to-one support from well-qualified teachers and make good progress during these sessions. The ethos and relationships in the centre are very good and students appreciate the support they receive from the school. They have good opportunities to fully join in the activities offered by the school.
55. Teaching is characterised by careful preparation, programmes that are individually tailored to students' needs, good use of multi-sensory techniques to enhance learning, a clear rewards system and reinforcement of learning by using positive language. However, opportunities for the students to work in groups are insufficient. Overall, students make satisfactory progress and some achieve well in their subjects. However, the centre has not developed a sufficiently wide role in the school, for example, through providing training to raise the skills of all staff in meeting the needs of the students with specific learning difficulties.
56. Assessment information to identify students' needs and monitor their progress is unco-ordinated and varied, although structures have recently been put in place to address this issue. Assessment is not used to highlight the most important next stages of learning for these students.

3 Community provision

The effectiveness of the community provision is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The large number of adults and students, who participate in the community provision.
- The positive contribution that the community provision makes to students' academic and personal development.
- The extensive range of activities offered to students and adults in the community.
- The school has become an important focal point in the community.

Commentary

57. The community provision initiated by the school and associated partnerships in the community are excellent. Over 5000 users are involved in community programmes each week and often many more come to the school when there are festivals or special events.
58. All groups welcome the participation of school students in their activities and are prepared to lower fees where necessary. Many students attend the activities offered and this has a direct benefit on their academic achievement and personal development. There are also facilities and services that support social activities, such as the provision of match teas and wedding catering. The managers of each area are very committed, enthusiastic professionals, who recognise that support for students' learning is increased by the involvement of parents and families in the community programme. The various aspects of community provision are managed very well.
59. The school recognises that the community provision helps the basic needs of the local community. It gives a sense of belonging to parents, who are then more confident about sending their children to the school and allowing them to participate in school visits and residential education. The school, with its excellent community provision, is at the heart of the local community, promoting much trust and social integration.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The overall quality of provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of a developing department are good.
- Students achieve well by the age of 16 years.
- Work is not matched well to the needs of some individual learners.
- There is insufficient support to ensure the students with special educational needs do well.
- The good overall quality of teaching promotes learning.
- There are positive attitudes and relationships between staff and students.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The unsuitable temporary accommodation restricts teaching and learning opportunities.

Commentary

60. Although there are variations in how well individual students speak, listen, read and write in English, standards are in line with what is expected nationally of students by the ages of both 14 and 16 years. The leadership and teachers within the English department deserve particular credit for this, given the very high proportion of students with English as an additional language and the substantial amount of pupil mobility experienced by the school. Girls attain higher standards than boys, although the gap is not as great as indicated by previous test results, which in recent years have mostly been close to the national average. There is a substantial minority of students whose standards are below average partly because they come from a background in which English is not the first language. Standards of 16-year-olds in English literature are below those of English language, as reflected in examination results. Since students join the school with below average standards, many students, and particularly girls, achieve well, especially by the age of 14, as they respond to good teaching. Some higher attainers, and students with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are restricted in their learning by ineffective teaching methods or insufficient support. Students with special educational needs receive insufficient support in class and through learning in small groups. As more sophisticated English skills become necessary at the higher GCSE levels, progress in learning is slower.
61. The overall good achievement of students is directly attributable to good teaching. Students respond well to challenging expectations, good pace and the effective use of resources. This combination was particularly evident in a Year 10 lesson in which the teacher encouraged students to become absorbed in the tensions of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, whilst simultaneously teaching them the skills, which enabled them to analyse the text critically. Where teaching is less effective or unsatisfactory, tasks or resources are not matched effectively to the needs of the wide range of abilities in classes. Students with special educational needs and lower attainers sometimes struggle with texts such as travelogues, whilst there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the more able. Consequently, groups of students occasionally learn less effectively. Although students' positive attitudes support good learning, occasionally, teachers become preoccupied with managing the behaviour of a less-committed minority, to the detriment of teaching knowledge and skills. The marking of work is inconsistent and not always helpful to students' progress, although teachers' high expectations are a strong feature of much of the teaching.
62. Students also achieve well as the result of good leadership and management by the curriculum area leader. She has a clear vision of where the department is and where it is

going, and she successfully manages a group of largely inexperienced teachers. The support, which the curriculum leader provides, is having a positive effect on achievement, for example, through updating resources. Systematic monitoring is too recent to have had a consistently positive impact throughout the department. The increasing use of information and communication technology as an aid to learning is well managed. Accommodation is unsatisfactory: the department is spread across the campus and the unsuitable hut accommodation restricts teaching and learning opportunities.

63. Although the progress of higher attainers and students with special educational needs and English as an additional language remains inconsistent, the standards and achievement of most students are better than at the time of the previous inspection. Overall improvement has, therefore, been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. The school's strategy for developing students' literacy has a satisfactory impact on students' learning and achievement. Professional development of teachers has enabled all curriculum areas to appreciate the importance of a concerted approach to literacy development. The literacy co-ordinator has begun to work with individual staff to promote teaching literacy in their subject areas. However, this support is having a limited impact on achievement because the monitoring of literacy is under-developed and there has not been a systematic evaluation of the changes to teaching and learning of literacy. Consequently, students' literacy is addressed more effectively in some areas than others. In history, for example, there are conscious attempts to promote study skills and encourage verbal presentations by students, approaches, which are improving achievement. However, in several other areas, although planning is in place, the attention given to literacy development is too limited or inconsistent to have a sustained impact on standards or achievement. This is partly responsible for the slowing down in the rate of students' progress after the age of 14 years. Many students are not fully equipped with the higher-level language skills necessary for more advanced work at GCSE and in the sixth form, work, which often puts a higher premium on extended writing, a wider vocabulary and more developed analytical skills.

Modern foreign languages

The focus of the inspection was on French and the community languages of Panjabi and Urdu. Work in German was sampled. German makes an excellent contribution to students' development of foreign languages. An excellent lesson was seen in Year 9, which is described below.

German lesson (Year 9) An outstanding example of teaching German.

Eins, zwei, drei ... 'three minutes and counting'. Year 9 know that this is German with a difference. Timed activities – heads down writing – hands shooting up. Rapid questioning in German from start to finish; there's no escape. They have to listen or they are lost! Picture after picture on the screen – practice, practice, practice. Describing holidays – flags of countries to help them say where they went, picture of the seasons to say when it was. Constantly changing pictures, constantly changing details. Rapid questioning! This is how to build confidence. Now it's flash cards, now it's paired work, refocus, stay alert! You start the next sentence and you finish it. Not a second lost, resources ready, quickly distributed. This is the way to speak good German. Imitate the teacher's accent, add on details to the overhead projector screen to extend answers, involve everybody in the class. The cassette recording is fast, but help is at hand – a sheet to guide, all planned, all ready. Vary the activities – listen, speak, read, write. Lessons are ending, in German they are still working. This is challenge.

French

The overall quality of provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are significant weaknesses in the leadership and teaching of the subject.

- The management of the department does not ensure common approaches to teaching and learning.
- Standards are well below average and not high enough throughout the school.
- Students do not achieve well, particularly in spoken French.
- There is an over-emphasis on worksheets, reading and writing.
- Unsatisfactory teaching causes the attitude and behaviour of some students to be poor.
- Students are insufficiently challenged by the pace of work in lessons.
- Teachers speak French confidently.

Commentary

65. Standards in French are below the national average in both Years 9 and 11. In 2002, GCSE results were comparable with those of other schools. In 2003, the unconfirmed grades indicate that they were well below average and that students' attainment in French was not as good as in many of their other school subjects. In Years 7-9, the achievement of most students is unsatisfactory as a result of weak leadership and teaching. Only higher-attaining students make sufficient progress to write and speak with any accuracy and at length. As a result, of ineffective teaching and the consequent poor behaviour in some classes, students of average and below-average ability make slow progress. Most students do not achieve well in speaking French. This is a result of too much emphasis given to teaching with worksheets and the more passive activities of reading and writing. There are insufficient opportunities provided to develop longer oral answers, although teachers speak French confidently and fluently. In some classes, students work at a slow pace because they are not sufficiently challenged and monitored. They tend to be passive rather than enthusiastic learners because they are not provided with an exciting range of activities.
66. In some lessons, good use is made of overhead projectors and visual material to convey meaning. This focuses students' attention and the pictures used avoid the need for English translation, which is a feature of some other lessons. In Years 10 and 11, there is a wide range of ability and not a sufficient range of materials and activities to meet the different needs of students. Most lessons are clearly planned and teachers work together well. External monitoring and review have clearly identified important areas for improvement. However, there has been insufficient progress in leading and managing improvement in relation to students' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. There is insufficient sharing of the excellent work in languages such as German, and to ensure common approaches to a range of issues that include assessment and classroom techniques. Several of the areas for further development were identified at the last inspection and still require attention. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Community Languages - Panjabi and Urdu

Overall, the quality of provision in community languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership, management and teaching have serious weaknesses.
- Most students underachieve because of unsatisfactory teaching and poor behaviour in classes.
- Teaching methods do not motivate students or meet their needs.
- There is not enough work for students matched to their differing abilities.
- Teachers are native speakers and have good knowledge of their subject.
- GCSE results in Panjabi are broadly in line with the national average when compared with other community languages.
- Inadequate information and communication technology facilities and accommodation to enhance teaching and learning in community languages.

Commentary

67. By the end of Year 9 and 11, most students in both Panjabi and Urdu classes underachieve because unsatisfactory subject leadership and teaching have caused a lack of interest and poor behaviour. As a result of ineffective teaching and learning, standards in both Panjabi and Urdu by the end of Year 9 are below the national expectations. Standards in Panjabi at the end of Year 11 are also below average. GCSE examination results for the higher A*-C grades in Panjabi were below the national average in 2003, but, when compared with the results in all other languages, the results were broadly in line with the national average. The school also encourages students to take GCSE, AS and A-level examinations in other community languages. However, the number of students, who took examinations in these languages in 2003, was very small because students have little commitment to learning community languages.
68. Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory as lessons do not sufficiently involve students in their own learning and are dominated by teacher talk. Consequently, opportunities to learn in groups and independently are very limited. Most students underachieve because of unsatisfactory classroom management and the resultant poor behaviour of many students. Activities often do not match students' capabilities and teachers make only limited use of teaching aids, such as an overhead projector, tape recorder and information and communication technology, to make teaching more interesting and effective. When a variety of teaching materials are used to match the students' abilities and students are allowed to work independently, teaching and learning are satisfactory, as was seen in a Year 11 Panjabi class.
69. There is insufficient guidance and support for the community languages' teachers. There are also some difficulties with the use of accommodation as teachers are required to teach in several different rooms, lacking an established class base.

MATHEMATICS

The overall quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory, as inexperienced teachers are not well supported.
- Students' standards in Year 9 tests and at GCSE are below average, but they make satisfactory progress.
- Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are still important weaknesses to be addressed.
- Most students are positive about mathematics and collaborate well in class.
- The provision for teaching students with special educational needs is inadequate.

Commentary

70. Students' results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below average, but close to the results of students in similar schools. Results reached a peak in 2000 and have deteriorated since because the management of teaching and learning throughout the department is weak. GCSE mathematics results in 2002 were below the national average. Test and examination results are broadly confirmed by the standard of work seen in classes and in students' work. Standards are below average overall in both key stages.
71. Students' achievement overall is satisfactory, and corresponds to the satisfactory teaching and learning, but there are weaknesses, notably in lower sets. Students achieve most where the teaching is lively and enthusiastic. For example, a very well taught Year 7 class gained much greater appreciation of work on number patterns because the teacher made full use of computer software to demonstrate concepts on a screen. In some other classes, teachers lack inspiration and ideas to interest and challenge students sufficiently. Students mostly remain attentive, behave well and collaborate effectively on joint tasks so that they make reasonable progress in their lessons. The support for lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs is inadequate in quantity and quality so that they often lack an equivalent interest and involvement.
72. Management of the department is satisfactory. For example, there are appropriate systems in place for assessment, GCSE coursework and day-to-day issues. However, the quality of marking varies and teachers do not disseminate good practice by comparing each other's approaches. Responsibilities within the department are clear and some useful ideas are in train, notably related to raising standards in Years 10 and 11. Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory as insufficient attention is paid to supporting inexperienced teachers in the classroom and improving their expertise by sharing examples of good practice. This particularly applies to the teaching in lower sets. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Teachers give freely of their time to run sessions at lunch-time and after school to raise students' standards. The effective display of students' work in classrooms and corridors helps raise the subject's status.
73. There has been patchy development since the previous inspection and overall improvements are unsatisfactory. The loss of key experienced staff and the rapid turnover have taken their toll so that the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievement have suffered a dip. Leadership of the new staff appointed this term is not sufficiently focused on improving teaching, learning and achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Standards of numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Staff have attended a training day and some useful collaboration between mathematics and science teachers is underway to improve the use of mathematics. In science, students collect and present data, interpret graphs and use formulae well. In geography, they accurately measure road distances. In history, students effectively interpret input and output data for sugar plantations and consider population changes during the industrial revolution. In design and technology, students use their numeracy skills well to weigh and measure, produce isometric drawings and present data from surveys. However, work in modern foreign and community languages is disappointing and not effectively used to promote further understanding of the subject.

SCIENCE

The overall quality of provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership in the department has led to positive relationships and a strong team ethos.
- There is a team of committed and enthusiastic staff with good subject knowledge.
- The assessment procedures are good, but do not analyse the achievement of different groups of students.
- Students' achievement is good, especially that of the higher-attaining students.
- The expectations of some teachers have been too low, especially with lower-attaining boys.

Commentary

75. By the end of Year 9, the national test results were just below the national level in 2002. However, compared to similar schools they are well above. The GCSE results were also below the national figure in 2002, but did improve in 2003. The standard of work seen was slightly better than the results indicate and was at the national average in Years 7-9 and just below in Years 10 and 11.
76. In Years 7-9, the achievement of students overall is good. This is due to the good teaching and learning that takes place in most lessons. Lessons are well planned by teachers, who have good subject knowledge and follow a suitable curriculum. In the most effective lessons, the teachers demonstrate a high expectation of attitude and behaviour with good classroom management skills. This gives rise to a pleasant and co-operative atmosphere with a good relationship between students and teachers. In the less successful lessons when teaching was not satisfactory, the students were less attentive. Teaching methods did not ensure that the lower-attaining students made sufficient progress. There is insufficient support for pupils with special educational needs and the attitudes of these students, especially boys, is not always positive and insufficient progress is made. Students with English as an additional language make good progress with a determination to succeed.
77. In Years 10 and 11, the achievement of students overall is satisfactory. The lessons are also well planned, but the course the Year 11 students are following is not suited to their needs. The department has recognised this and has introduced a new modular GCSE that is better suited to the students. The teaching is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and leading to higher achievement by the students.
78. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department was appointed two years ago and has overseen a complete change of staff and curriculum within this time. He provides a very good role-model for the department. The teachers work as a team and there is a strong emphasis on raising standards. The school has recognised that the inexperienced teachers need further support and guidance to improve learning, especially for the lower-

attaining students and those with special educational needs. The team are enthusiastic and share a commitment to improve standards.

79. The management of the department is good. There are clear guidelines and policies, and practice is monitored. The outcomes of this monitoring do not ensure that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations for all of the students. The department's procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. However, these procedures do not review the progress of specific groups of students such as those with special educational needs. The overall improvement since the last inspection is good, especially in the areas of teaching and assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The overall quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' good specialist knowledge is used effectively to guide students' learning and progress.
- The arrangements for assessment are good, and students' understanding of the procedures contributes positively to their learning.
- Students' positive attitudes to the subject contribute significantly to their progress.
- Students' achievement and progress made in Years 7-9 are especially good.
- Students' understanding of the use of ICT in its wider sense is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

80. Results in the most recent GNVQ examination were well below the level expected due to inaccurate marking of completed units of work and major staffing problems within the department. These staffing problems have been resolved and the units of work are to be presented for assessment again at the next session of examinations.
81. Students join the school in Year 7 with below average skills in ICT. However, because the school makes good use of clearly defined units of study based on the national ICT strategy and the students have positive attitudes to the subject, their achievement is good. By the time they reach 14, standards are at the level expected for their age. Students' understanding of how to present information in different formats is good. They successfully produce documents that are designed with a particular audience in mind. Their understanding of the potential use of ICT beyond the school is not high enough, and only a few give examples of where it might be used.
82. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Students studying the ICT GNVQ course are at the level expected at this point in the academic year. They use a range of ICT applications confidently, using them with understanding in projects which include data handling, hyperlinks and formulas for mathematical calculations with spreadsheets. Students with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress and achieve especially well in Years 7-9.
83. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Despite the inexperience of some teachers, they all have good subject expertise and this is now contributing positively to students' achievement and learning. Lessons are planned well with clear learning objectives. Teachers' good management skills ensure that students remain on task and that lessons move with pace. On the occasions when teaching was less effective, the initial explanation of the lessons tended to be too long with a lack of practical activities to maintain students' interest. The outcome of this was that students became restless and learning was slowed. The department's assessment procedures are good: results are recorded and stored on the computer. Students are able to readily access these assessments and usefully monitor their own progress. Students, especially those studying the GNVQ course, find this valuable as they are able to see the marks for each of their units and how to improve their overall standard.

84. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The new head of department has successfully overseen many changes in recent terms and has a clear vision about the need to raise attainment. Past staffing difficulties are now resolved, with the school having recruited teachers, who are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. With these recent innovations, the subject is set well for future developments. The overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. At the time of the last inspection, the use of ICT across the curriculum was judged to be **satisfactory** and the school maintained this standard. Although not all subjects have fully implemented the use of ICT to promote learning, there are examples of good practice in many subjects. For example, good use was seen in physical education when students' work in dance and gymnastics was videoed for assessment. Students then discuss techniques on how to improve their work. Good use was also seen in drama and media studies. Here, teachers use digital cameras to record and analyse students' performances. In addition, students use desktop publishing techniques to produce programmes and posters for school productions. Although the modern languages department has good resources with interactive programs to develop vocabulary, their use is underdeveloped. Effective use was also observed in music using programs to develop composing skills. The science department makes good use of its own suite of computers, using a range of programs for data logging, research and simulations. All subjects make good use of the Internet for research purposes.

HUMANITIES

History was inspected in depth and the work in geography and religious education were sampled.

86. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**. Falling standards at GCSE were mainly due to a large number of staff changes. Teaching and learning in the main school are now satisfactory. Leadership and management are good and the new head of geography, under the leadership of the head of humanities, has introduced a broad range of initiatives, including a change to a more suitable GCSE syllabus and a wider range of teaching and learning styles throughout the school.
87. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**. Students reach average standards in their work at the end of Year 9 and in Years 10 and 11 and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their earlier learning. Of the small sample of lessons seen all were satisfactory and some were very. The teaching by the head of department is dynamic and stimulating and benefits from her thorough knowledge of the subject. As a consequence, the students respond enthusiastically and make good advances in learning.
88. Satisfactory lessons, though well planned, do not always engage students with religious ideas in sufficient depth. The students enjoy their lessons and eagerly engage in animated discussion, particularly about family and society. Students of different faith groups respect one another's differing views. The subject is very well led by the head of department, who has done excellent work in supporting the non-specialist teachers.

History

The overall quality of provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The most recent GCSE results are very good, especially the higher grades.
- Students acquire historical skills rapidly from a low base of knowledge on entry in Year 7.
- The department is led and managed very well.
- A variety of effective teaching methods are used to promote good learning.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards their studies.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork in the department and in the humanities curriculum area.

Commentary

89. In the last few years, GCSE examination results have been below national averages in the A*-C grade range, but the most recent results have reversed that trend, as more than one-quarter of the students, who were entered, achieved the highest grades (A*/A). Despite very low levels of literacy and subject knowledge on entry in Year 7, most students acquire historical skills rapidly in lessons and soon develop a clear understanding of how to use historical sources. By the end of Year 9, standards are just below national expectations, but this represents good achievement and the commendable emphasis on raising standards of literacy throughout the department is having a very positive impact on students' progress. This progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11, when students develop a firmer grasp of historical skills, demonstrated, for example, in some impressive essays on Nazi Germany in Year 10 folders. Most students achieve well at this stage and standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 11.
90. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. A key element of this is strong classroom management that gives all students the confidence to become active learners. The previous inspection report noted the need for more discussion time in lessons. This is no longer the case and a variety of very effective methods are now used to promote learning. This was shown to very good effect in a Year 10 lesson using group work and role-play to unravel the complexities of the Treaty of Versailles. Students work hard and show very positive attitudes to history. There is also a very strong sense of shared purpose and mutual respect in the classroom. In order to build on this positive picture, higher-attaining students need more opportunities to develop their historical skills to greater depth.
91. The department is led and managed very well as part of the humanities curriculum area. The rigorous self-evaluation processes and the sense of teamwork are particularly noteworthy. Overall, history is an increasingly popular subject within the school and the key challenge now is to build upon this and upon the highly commendable GCSE results achieved this year.

TECHNOLOGY

No subject was inspected in depth, but the work in design and technology was sampled.

92. The overall quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**. Standards at the age of 14 are below average, but, given attainment on entry is low, this represents satisfactory progress by students. GCSE results for design and technology overall are well below the national average, but within the various design and technology courses there are considerable variations. For example, results have improved in resistant materials and textiles and are now close to the national average. Students did as well in these subjects as in their other GCSE examinations. However, staffing difficulties in food studies resulted in poor results and these adversely affected overall design and technology results.
93. Teaching is now generally satisfactory, but there are variations between the various design and technology subjects. Teacher and students form positive relationships and students like the subject and believe they are given good advice and support. Assessment is conscientiously carried out, but is currently too generous and does not accurately reflect students' standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, but the use of information and communication technology has significantly improved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

94. Art, drama and music were the focus of the inspection. Media studies was also sampled. In Years 10 and 11, media studies is taught as part of English, with students opting for media studies or English literature GCSE. The GCSE media studies results for 2003 were very high as a result of very effective teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned in a framework agreed across the department, which is well managed and led.

Art

The overall quality of provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the department is very good and management is very effective.
- Examination results are below national averages, but standards are improving.
- Teaching is good overall, as students learn and achieve well.
- Students have very positive attitudes and behave well in lessons, responding to the high expectations that teachers insist on.
- The systems for tracking progress are having a positive effect on standards.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used effectively.

Commentary

95. The head of department has worked hard to raise standards by building a strong, committed teaching team and improving the curriculum. The good improvements made since the previous inspection have yet to feed through to examination results, although grades have risen steadily over the past three years. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate examination grades set to rise above national averages in 2005. Work seen during the inspection suggests that there will be a significant improvement in both GCSE and GNVQ results in the current year. The good and sometimes very good teaching seen during the inspection, supported by the good behaviour and positive attitudes of students, strengthens other indications of rising standards.
96. The department is developing a very effective means for tracking the progress of students, using targets set from regular reviews of their work. GNVQ results have improved following target setting. Parents are taking an increasing interest in these reviews, which clarify

individual standards of achievement and suggest ways to improve work. Students value the reviews.

97. The department is not equipped well with ICT software, although some good use is made of the Internet for research in Years 10 and 11 and for animation in Year 8. Across the staff there is insufficient knowledge and understanding of computer art to enable department plans to be realised effectively.

Drama

The overall quality of provision for drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement overall is good in Years 7-9.
- GCSE results are consistently good.
- Teaching and learning overall are good and sometimes very good.
- The department is very ably led and managed.
- There is a lack of consistent written assessment to help the development of written work.
- Relationships between teachers and students are generally very good and there are extensive opportunities to take part in productions and other out-of-school activities.

Commentary

98. In Years 7-9, students have one hour of drama a week. These lessons are linked to the National Curriculum for English, but also explore other aspects of drama like mime and improvisation. Overall, these students achieve well in lessons and make good progress.
99. GCSE results are consistently high. In 2002, overall GCSE results were above the national average with girls' results significantly above the national average at grades A*-C. In 2003, results were only marginally less good overall than in 2002.
100. Teachers have high expectations and lessons are well planned and well paced with a variety of activities and resources. In Years 7-9, students generally concentrate well, gain confidence and make progress in lessons. Students with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English are equally involved and successful.
101. GCSE students are motivated and focussed on making good progress in lessons. GCSE coursework is generally of a high standard. However, lower-ability students have found coursework less easy and the department is targeting these students with further in-school support this year. Oral feedback from staff is effective, but written assessments need to be further developed to support coursework and set individual targets.
102. Relationships between students and teachers are generally very good and behaviour is well managed. The department is well led and managed and offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including large-scale productions. Development plans and schemes of work are well organised and department self-evaluation is particularly effective at analysing problems and seeking solutions so that students achieve their potential.

Music

The overall quality of provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards of students' work in Years 7 to 9 are improving.
- The attainment of students in Year 11 is below the national average.
- Students enjoy the subject, have positive attitudes, and, consequently, work hard.
- Students can participate in a wide range of out-of-school activities.
- Music composition skills are underdeveloped in Years 7-9.
- The assessment procedures are not fully developed to include audio recording of the students' creative work.

Commentary

103. The GCSE results for 2002 were below the national average and did not improve in 2003. Students join the school in Year 7 with varied previous musical experiences. Achievement, however, in Years 7-9 is good, as students benefit greatly from the revised units of study that provide a wide experience and range of musical styles and skills.
104. The overall level of attainment in Year 11 is below expectations with students lacking many of the basic technical skills to assist them when appraising music. However, some students, who use information and communication technology for composition, are beginning to understand structure and harmonic progression, composing short sections of music that show good potential and creativity.
105. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject expertise and use this knowledge effectively to interest and motivate students. An example of this was in a Year 9 lesson when the teacher used his keyboard skills to demonstrate popular TV themes. This immediately engaged the students' interest, with a result that they responded with considerable enthusiasm. On occasions when teaching was less effective, the planning of lessons did not take into account the individual needs of students and, as a consequence, progress was slow and students became frustrated.
106. The management and leadership of the subject are good. During his time as the subject leader, the head of department has raised the profile of the subject within the school to a point where students regard it as a worthwhile subject. The open-house approach, where students are invited to 'drop in' at dinner times and after school, has contributed to this higher profile. There are many opportunities for pupils to play in groups and bands and play in public. The improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE are well above average.
- Strong leadership, clear direction and a positive ethos characterises the management of the department.
- Very good relationships and good lesson management means that students have a very positive attitude to the subject.
- There are very good opportunities in extra-curricular activities that are well supported by large and enthusiastic groups of students.
- Some students have too few opportunities to plan and evaluate their own work.

Commentary

107. In the 2003 GCSE examination, the number of students gaining A*-C grade passes increased significantly and was well above the national average. Students arrive from their primary schools with a range of physical education experiences and standards, with many below that expected for their age. They settle into the school quickly, respond very positively to the good-quality teaching and make good progress so that by the time they are 14 most are reaching standards that are in line with that seen nationally.
108. Good progress is also made by students during Years 10 and 11, and, by the time they are 16, they attain levels that are at least in line with national expectations, and some, especially those in the examination groups, are doing even better. High levels of skill are clearly evident in a range of activities. Students successfully undertake a range of roles including coaching, umpiring and recording the results of activities. Students in the examination groups are developing a good understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. High-attaining students present work that is well structured, with some using their information and communication technology skills to produce good-quality coursework folders.
109. Students with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons. They are given much support by both teachers and other students and most reach satisfactory levels of attainment. Teaching is sensitive, and there is no evidence of students with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. Talented students are encouraged to extend their skills both in school lessons and with outside clubs.
110. The learning of most students is good because the teaching is well managed and the relationship between teachers and students is very good. All lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, with the majority being judged to be good or very good. There is an expectancy that students will work hard, behave well and achieve good standards, and generally these expectations are met. Some students are involved in the planning and evaluation of their work and are able to make perceptive comments on how improvements can be made, but others are given too little opportunity to develop this aspect. Students respond very positively to the good-quality teaching. They are enthusiastic, behave well, and are prepared to work hard. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.
111. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The number of students opting for the GCSE in the subject has improved and the number of students gaining the higher pass grades in the examination has improved significantly.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school offers a wide range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. The overall provision was inspected, and business education was the main focus of an in-depth investigation.

Business education

The overall quality of provision in business education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good A-C pass rate in 2003 in GNVQ business, but a high number of students did not achieve a pass grade.
- A low A*-C pass rate in GCSE economics.
- Good relationships between students and teachers and attitudes to learning in the lessons observed.
- A lack of challenge and variety of tasks in some lessons.
- Teachers insist on high standards of student behaviour and act as good role-models.
- Students are given good opportunities to make progress in lessons, supported by good accommodation and resources.

Commentary

112. Overall, the standards observed in lessons and assessed through work scrutiny and public examination results are below national standards. Whilst the only distinctions in any GNVQ course in 2003 were achieved in business, 35 per cent of candidates failed. However, current achievement is satisfactory overall and slightly higher for girls than boys. This mixed picture resulted from an unsettled staffing situation and weaknesses in the management of the GNVQ course.
113. A new development plan has brought greater consistency in teaching methods and an improved focus on learning objectives. The head of department's commitment to this strategy and the positive approach of all teachers has meant that teaching and learning in all lessons observed was at least satisfactory. Students approach their learning in a positive way and benefit from well-planned lessons, although, in some instances, greater variety and more challenging tasks will enhance achievement. Good accommodation and improved resources, including the use of a large number of computers, aids individual research and presentation.

Other vocational courses

The overall quality of provision of vocational education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of GNVQ courses plus other opportunities for vocational experiences.
- All students follow one GNVQ course and experience alternative ways of learning.
- An encouraging overall A-C pass rate in 2003, but many students failed their courses and there were very few top grades.
- Committed leadership from the vocational co-ordinator.

Commentary

114. Vocational education is a significant and important part of the Year 10 and 11 curriculum. Students can choose one of the five GNVQ courses offered and study at Intermediate or Foundation level, which provides different and rewarding teaching and learning experiences. In addition, work placements, alternative curriculum experience days and workshops enhance the provision.

115. In 2003, good teaching and learning ensured good results in leisure and tourism, art and design, health and social care and business. However, staffing and organisational problems also resulted in 34 per cent of all students being ungraded. Given the quality of work currently being produced by students, effective leadership by the vocational co-ordinator, improved monitoring and a better staffing context, it is likely that students' standards and achievement will increase in future.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and Citizenship

Overall, the quality of provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**. The quality of provision in citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of citizenship taught through the school's personal, social, health and citizenship programme has been very effective.
- Leadership and management are very good and have ensured that all the elements of citizenship and personal, social and health education are covered in considerable depth.
- Sessions are well planned using a variety of attractive resources.
- Teachers support and motivate students well.
- Students are enthusiastic and attempt to complete the tasks sensibly at a good pace, so good progress is made.
- Year group assemblies are constructive, relevant and interesting.
- The school council is very effective in involving all students and both this and other initiatives successfully promote participation in citizenship and many community activities.
- Achievement is not consistent across all groups of students.

Commentary

116. The school has developed a very effective programme to teach personal, social and health education and citizenship. The well-planned sessions help students to maintain interest in their work and reach a satisfactory standard of understanding about key elements of the course. For example, good lesson planning and support from a tutor were seen in Year 7 where an attractive leaflet outlining important information for new students and details of the School Council were discussed enthusiastically.

117. In most lessons, expectations are high and relationships between students and their tutors are very good. When working in groups is involved, students generally work purposefully and co-operatively. Orally, students are confident and mature in their reflections. In a Year 10 assembly, students responded well and were supportive of their peers when the class of the week and pupil of the week awards were announced. These activities are clearly valued by students.

118. In a minority of cases, tutors do not plan well or insist on good attitudes from a small minority in tutor sessions. In a Year 8 session, the pace of the lesson was slow, the activity was not at an appropriate level, the outcome was not explained and organisation was unsatisfactory. The school has a successful personal, social, health and citizenship education program due to very effective management that has ensured involvement from a wide variety of other subjects.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 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.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses 2002

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	17	71		5.9		21.88	
Drama/Theatre Studies	11	91		0		29.09	
History	4	75		0		20.00	
Mathematics	24	0		25		7.92	
Physical Education	2	50		0		10.00	
French	4	50		0		15.00	
Spanish	1	100		100		50.00	
Art	6	83		0		31.67	
Business Studies	46	35		8.7		11.30	
Chemistry	10	60		0		18.00	
Computer Science	15	0		0		0	
Design Technology	2	50		0		10.00	
Economics	18	44		0		10.56	
French	5	60		0		16.00	
History	4	100		0		25.00	
Media Studies	22	59		4.5		16.82	
Music	2	100		100		60.00	
Psychology	30	97		7		64.00	
Sociology	44	100		4		49.00	

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
Biology	5	60		20		52.00	
Business Studies	19	95		11		63.16	
Chemistry	4	100		0		70.00	
Computer Studies	21	62		0		36.19	
Drama/Theatre Studies	6	100		0		73.33	
Design Technology	2	100		0		50.00	
Economics	3	66.7		0		33.33	
English Literature	24	95.8		16.67		66.67	
Geography	9	88.9		22		66.67	
History	7	85.7		0		60.00	
Languages (Urdu)	1	100		100		80.00	
Mathematics	7	71.4		43		60.00	
Media Studies	24	87.5		25		67.50	
Music	2	100		50		100.00	
Physical Education	4	75		0		40.00	
Physics	11	90.9		18		58.18	
Psychology	19	94.7		32		80.00	
Sociology	17	69.41		18		69.41	

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Intermediate Business	27	85		11		0	
GNVQ Intermediate Science	12	100		50		0	
GNVQ Intermediate Leisure & Tourism	14	85.7		43		0	
GNVQ Intermediate Information Technology	3	33.3		33.3		0	

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

The overall quality of provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although overall standards are not high, students achieve well in relation to prior attainment.
- Good and very good teaching leads to good learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- Good leadership and management ensure a productive work ethos.
- A minority of students lack confidence or are reluctant to contribute ideas.

Commentary

119. Although examination results indicate below average standards in relation to national norms, the majority of students by the age of 18 achieve well in relation to their abilities and prior attainment at GCSE. They frequently do better in English than in their other subjects. The students, who are mostly female, learn to enjoy a range of texts and develop the ability to analyse them critically. Many students enjoy discussion, and when this is skilfully managed by the teacher, as in a Year 13 lesson on Philip Larkin's poetry, they make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. They make thoughtful and perceptive comments when discussing sensitive issues such as human relationships. Students' achievement is largely the consequence of skilful teaching, which is firmly rooted in the good relationships that teachers quickly establish. Students have respect for their teachers' knowledge and challenging, but caring approach. They learn well in response to the high expectations of teachers. Questioning is used particularly well to improve students' understanding of how a poet like Larkin uses structure and language to convey his message of earthy, but poignant realism. A few students are more reluctant to contribute their ideas, but teachers do try to involve them, and succeed in getting a response without always initiating a full debate. Learning is particularly effective when students are encouraged to reflect and analyse by working individually or in pairs.
120. The very good, productive work ethos is also a reflection of the good leadership and management of sixth-form English. The co-ordinator and staff have addressed the school's concerns that teaching in the sixth form should lead to more independent and collaborative learning by students.
121. Although standards at A-level are not as high as when the previous inspection took place, students enjoy the subject and achieve well, making English one of the more successful subjects in the sixth form. Improvement has been satisfactory since that time.

An excellent Year 12 English lesson in which the teacher made use of her personal experiences to create the mood of the lesson.

A heightened sense of spiritual awareness was very evident in a sixth-form English literature lesson. The teacher was seeking a meaningful way of introducing the earthy realism of Philip Larkin's poetry, which contrasted the liberation of the 1960s with the more ordered and stultified world of an earlier generation. The teacher skilfully made use of her own early memories. A group of sixth formers from various ethnic backgrounds and light years away from Larkin in attitudes and experience were entranced by the teacher's family photograph album and her moving account of the memories it stirred. This was the use of personal resources to their greatest effect: in prompting the reflection of treasured memories and recreating what for these students was a far-off age, the teacher, who was close to tears herself, set up a mood of reflection amongst quiet, almost sombre listeners. As a result, the students were immediately receptive to the singular combination of poignancy and dismissiveness, which permeated Larkin's world view. The reflection was of a high order and set the tone for a thought-provoking lesson, which resulted in high levels of understanding and empathy.

Modern Languages

The focus of the inspection was on A-level French. German at A-level was also sampled. In previous years, too few students have taken German to enable a valid evaluation of examination results. During the inspection, one German lesson was observed. This was excellent, characterised by very skilful teaching and achievement of high quality.

French

The overall quality of provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too few students opt for French because leadership, management and teaching are weak.
- Students' achievement is below average, particularly in relation to their oral work.
- Insufficient opportunities are planned to help students speak and write at length.
- Independent learning is well supported through the provision of individual listening exercises.
- There is an over-emphasis on the teaching of vocabulary and the content of topics.

Commentary

122. Only small numbers of students have taken A-level French in previous years. No students take French in the current Year 13. The unsatisfactory leadership and management of the subject have not ensured satisfactory quality in teaching and learning, and students have decided not to opt for the examination courses. Although there is limited evidence to make an evaluation of the achievement of the current Year 12 students, standards are below average in their work seen during lessons. Discussions with students confirm these below average standards. Students' best achievements are in acquiring new vocabulary related to new topics such as their families and relationships between generations. This results from the imaginative use of resources such as photographs and the teacher's regular recording of new words, good subject knowledge and confident oral French.
123. Students' spoken French is very hesitant and they have difficulty in maintaining a simple conversation. Lower-attaining students do not always understand their teacher's French and responses are limited to a few words. This is a result of insufficient opportunities provided for them by the teachers to practise longer answers. In writing, students sometimes 'anglicise' key words, resulting in spelling mistakes.
124. Teachers have good, confident spoken French. They use a range of activities including brainstorming, pictures on the overhead projector, and listening activities and these result in students making satisfactory progress in class. Sometimes, however, teachers use English translation to help students' comprehension. This lowers the level of challenge to students in the lesson without the expectation that they must respond in French and not in English. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
125. Satisfactory relationships between teachers and students create co-operative attitudes to work. Independent study and the development of listening skills are well supported by the provision of cassette recordings for students to work on at home. Some language lessons are timetabled in science laboratories because there are too few language classrooms. These do not provide a comfortable environment conducive to the study of A-level French.
126. Small numbers taking French at A-level indicate that this is not a popular subject and an improvement in the leadership of the department is required to encourage students to continue with French by providing them with a broader and more motivating range of opportunities. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

The overall quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' commitment is high and they are ready to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Students' standards in GCE A-level are below average.
- Leadership to improve the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
- Students are positive about the subject.
- Some recent improvements are underway to enhance provision.
- At the start of Year 12, students lack background information to choose between statistics and mechanics.

Commentary

127. GCE A-level results in 2002 were well below the national average. Results were better in 2001 and provisional figures indicate a slight improvement in 2003. Numbers of students taking A-level mathematics are disappointingly small and are partly affected by the high drop-out rate, common to many schools, after attaining poor results in AS level in Year 12. The current small group of Year 13 students taking mathematics is nearer the average standard overall. The provision of an extra one-hour period each week for mathematics in Year 12 is a positive move that will help to raise overall standards by giving teachers greater breathing space to complete the syllabus adequately.
128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with weaknesses. The individual help that students receive from staff, both in and out of lessons, is good so that students have a positive attitude to mathematics. Their relationship with teachers is very good and they collaborate with each other productively, readily helping one another when in difficulty. Students achieve satisfactorily. They make suitable progress through their coursework across pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. The best students file their work in ring binders in a particularly effective way enabling quick and easy access to past work for revision purposes. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, but sometimes they lack the confidence and inspiration to really enthuse students. Their teaching is competent and explanations are mostly clear, but in lessons there is too little sparkle and they are not very lively.
129. Mathematics is not as popular a subject in the sixth form as it should be. As they start the course in Year 12, students are not sure whether to choose mechanics or statistics as an option. By the end of Year 12, students are not enthused enough to continue into the Year 13 A2 course. Leadership to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and hence students' commitment, is unsatisfactory. The recent introduction of an A-level tracking sheet to monitor students' progress is a useful start and has been received favourably by students. Teachers are conscientious in giving time to extra-curricular activities such as revision sessions or individual help. Students appreciate their efforts. There has been little change since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment are at a similar level to those reported in 1998 and, consequently, the amount of improvement is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

The focus was on biology and chemistry, but physics was also sampled. In physics, the examination results show that most students obtain at least the predicted grades based on their previous GCSE results. They are above the national average. One lesson was seen which was very good and the students achieved very well.

Biology

The quality of provision in biology has been **unsatisfactory** over the last few years, but is now **improving**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement at A- and AS levels has been unsatisfactory for the past two years.
- Teaching and learning over recent years have been unsatisfactory, but are currently good.
- Leadership is now firmly focused upon managing and bringing about the necessary improvements in students' achievement.
- Teamwork is good so that effective practice can be shared.
- Attitudes are good; students enjoy the subject and relate well to each other and their teachers. As a consequence, standards are now expected to rise.

Commentary

130. Grades in the 2002 and 2003 A- and AS level examinations were significantly below what would be expected for these students given their prior attainment at GCSE. This was a consequence of unsatisfactory teaching and monitoring of student progress and insufficient challenge and support. This was due to high staff turnover and inexperience, and inadequate leadership and management caused by the concentration of the new head of science upon other areas of the department's work and the absence of a key colleague. There has been little improvement in standards since the last inspection.
131. The head of science is now able to concentrate upon raising achievement in biology at post-16 and is providing very good leadership to support the head of biology. The quality of teaching and of work seen during the inspection was good. Despite being relatively inexperienced, the teachers are commendably knowledgeable and authoritative. The methods employed and the enthusiastic involvement of the students is leading to effective learning. The attitudes of the Year 13 students are very good; they relate well to one another and to their teachers and they enjoy the subject. The school is aware that the increasing number of students choosing to study biology in Year 12 will necessitate further resources if learning and teaching are to maintain the level of practical work and student involvement.
132. The department intends that the effectiveness of teaching and the progress of students will be closely monitored and action taken to bring about improvement in exam results to at least the expected levels. The students are currently achieving well, as indicated in their understanding and contribution in lessons; support and strategies are required to enable them to better prepare for and demonstrate this in external examinations.

Chemistry

The overall quality of provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is well led and managed.
- There is a team of enthusiastic specialist teachers with a shared commitment to the success of the students.
- The staff are relatively inexperienced and need further guidance on examination syllabus requirements.
- Students achieve well at A-level because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Students share very good relationships with teachers.

Commentary

133. In 2002, GCE A-level results were at the national average and this standard was maintained in 2003. The department has some individual student data from these years that clearly demonstrates that a majority of the students reach their potential grades and in many cases exceed them. Attainment at AS level is lower than at A-level and this is due to the fact that some lower-attaining students do not do as well as they should. Overall, achievement is good, especially in Year 13 where most students achieve their predicted grades. In Year 12, the achievement is satisfactory.
134. The work seen in lessons and in folders indicates that these standards have been maintained. Year 12 students showed a good understanding of naming and being able to draw organic compounds. In Year 13 standards of work are at the expected national average. These students were able to discuss with confidence their scientific work.
135. Teaching is good overall so that most students learn the topics effectively and make good progress in lessons. The lessons observed were taught with enthusiasm by teachers, who have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and resourced in a very efficient manner. This gives them pace and a structure that maintains the interest and involvement of all students. Students enter into class discussions confidently. Their responses are given in detail due to the high expectations of the teachers and the teachers' very good management of questioning. Modular tests and homework are marked in great detail, with many constructive comments that help the students improve and clearly indicate the attainment of the students.
136. There are very good relationships between the teachers and students as well as between the students themselves in both Year 12 and Year 13. The attitudes and behaviour of the students are good and give rise to a very pleasant co-operative working atmosphere in lessons. In discussions, students appreciated the support and guidance given by the teachers and the fact that the teachers were prepared to help and assist.
137. The leadership and management of the department are good. The recently appointed head of department is determined to raise attainment to an even higher level by ensuring all students reach their potential. The syllabus being followed is suitable and was introduced recently. There has been satisfactory progress made since the last inspection with attainment and the quality of teaching being maintained. The teachers are very well-qualified, but relatively inexperienced. They would benefit from further training in the requirements for the examination syllabus.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The A-level computer studies and the AVCE ICT courses were inspected in depth.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good specialist knowledge.
- Results in recent examinations have been below average.
- The retention from AS courses to A2 is below that normally seen.
- Students' positive attitude towards the subject.
- The good relationships between teachers and students supports learning.
- The lack of opportunities for students to experience the use of ICT in the business environment and talks from visiting speakers.

Commentary

138. The results of the 2002 GCE A-level computer studies were below average. 2003 did not see an improvement, with a significant proportion of students graded unclassified. The most recent results for the AS computing examination are also well below average with a high proportion not gaining a pass grade. In the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) ICT examination, a high proportion of the students entered achieved a pass grade.
139. Discussion with students and an examination of their work shows that students studying the AVCE course are at the expected level at this point in the academic year. They are confident users of the communication element and have sound knowledge of spreadsheets, using them with understanding in units of work completed to date. They have a sound understanding of the use of a database using macros (a procedure to activate a short-cut) with good understanding. Overall, students in Year 13 studying the computer science course are below the expected level. Students have sound knowledge of a database. They are developing an understanding of 'visual basic', a programming language, and are gaining familiarity with its use. Students expressed their disappointment with their AS results, commenting they felt that they were lacking the techniques required for the examination. This may well account for why several did not continue studying ICT into Year 13. Although students are able to discuss the use of ICT in its wider context they have not had the benefit of first-hand observation of its use in large organisations or talks from visiting speakers about the complexities of a large network.
140. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their expertise to guide students through complicated procedures. In the lessons observed, sessions started with a clear introduction resulting in students quickly settling to work. The teaching in the lessons observed tended to be dominated by teachers talking with a minimum of questioning to ascertain students' understanding. The outcome of this was that students did not fully understand their work. On the occasions when questioning took place, the response was from a small minority of students and many were not sufficiently engaged in their learning. The relationship between teacher and students are good, but there is reluctance from some students to seek help when needed.
141. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The head of department understands the need to raise standards, especially in the computer science course. Currently, there is inadequate analysis of examination results and then targeting the areas where students are failing to achieve their full potential.

HUMANITIES

History, psychology and sociology were inspected in depth. The work in geography was sampled.

History

The overall quality of provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- Teachers use their detailed subject knowledge very well to promote students' learning.
- Higher-attaining students do not receive detailed advice on how to achieve the highest grades in examinations.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students are given very good opportunities to develop study skills.
- Students would appreciate more opportunities to attend conferences and to listen to other historians.

Commentary

142. Results in recent AS and A-level examinations have been in line with national averages for the proportion of students achieving a pass grade, but well below for those achieving higher grades. The achievement of students on current courses is good in relation to their attainment at GCSE. In the Year 12 AS level course, students begin to plan and structure their work well and their skills of interpretation and evaluation are increasingly developed. Some lower-attaining students struggle with the range and complexity of advanced-level work, but they are given very clear advice on how to develop study skills. Some students in Year 13 use higher-order skills of analysis effectively to make sustainable arguments in their writing, but higher-attaining students generally need more advice on how to achieve higher grades. In lessons, students persevere very well and show a clear commitment to their studies. As a result, they make good progress.
143. Teaching is very good overall. This is mainly due to the detailed subject knowledge of teachers and their thorough lesson planning. Lessons are also enlivened by the use of varied tasks that engage students' interest. This was demonstrated to the full in an excellent Year 13 lesson with very impressive student presentations and detailed critiques from their peers. Students themselves are very positive about their courses and are appreciative of the support they get through the marking of essays and general coursework advice.
144. The subject is led and managed very well. There is very detailed monitoring and analysis of students' performance and targeted areas for improvement are agreed between students and staff. Information and communication technology and the Internet are now used widely and the subject makes a very strong contribution to the development of students' personal and citizenship skills. Students would, however, welcome more opportunities to attend conferences and to listen to visiting speakers.
145. Overall, this is an increasingly popular area of sixth-form provision with a dedicated teaching team. The key issue now is to raise achievement levels so that more students can attain higher grades in public examinations.

History (Year 13). An excellent lesson that contributed to the development of a wide range of academic and personal skills.

An excellent Year 13 lesson was observed in history based on students' presentations of their individual coursework proposals. These were very wide-ranging (including oral testimonies of the Blitz and Hogarth's "Marriage a la Mode") and students were very impressive and mature in their presentations. The excellent high quality of this lesson was enhanced by detailed peer critiques of these presentations. Important links were made by the teacher between the students' proposals and very clear advice was given on how to proceed. The lesson also made an excellent contribution to personal development and to the promotion of key skills.

Psychology

The overall quality of provision in psychology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The students achieve well in relation to their attainment on joining the courses.
- The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good and is a key factor in the enthusiasm students bring to their work.
- Lessons are invariably stimulating and are made relevant to the students' lives and interests.
- Very good relationships between students and their teachers lead to high expectations for attainment and good progress.
- Students have very good attitudes to their work, taking well-organised notes that help them to revise effectively for tests and examinations.

Commentary

146. Students begin the study of psychology with below average levels of attainment, particularly in writing, but make good advances in understanding as they move through the course. As a result of stimulating lessons and the teachers' attention to their individual learning needs, students are increasingly sophisticated in the way they tackle issues in psychology and in the clarity with which they defend their views. Results in 2003 at A-level have been above average at A-E grades and average at A-B. There was a similar pattern in the AS examinations. Most of the work seen reflects the standards in examinations. Students in both Years 12 and 13 build well on their earlier knowledge as a result of the progressively challenging activities provided by the teachers.
147. Very good leadership and management allied to clarity of direction account for the subject's success and popularity. Students speak in glowing terms of the inspiration they receive from lessons. They are inspired by the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff. The most striking feature of almost all teaching is the clarity with which the teachers explain even the most demanding ideas, with the consequence that students are well prepared for comparing and contrasting psychological theories. What is particularly effective is the use of well-organised group work. However, some group work occasionally remains at a basic level of discussion and students settle for ideas that are not grounded in evidence or argument. There are a few occasions, too, when questioning does not challenge students' ideas sufficiently. Students' interest in their work is revealed in the high proportion who intend to continue their study of the subject in further or higher education. Almost all students, who continue after AS level, persevere with the course.
148. The head of department has created a strong sense of common purpose and a willingness to improve. The teachers work as a cohesive, self-critical team and show an openness to ideas for improvement from whatever source, including from the students. The constructive way they embraced the inspection reveals a justified confidence and pride in what they offer the students. Over the last four years, the subject has gone from strength to strength and provides a good model of how to support learning at A-level.

Sociology

The overall quality of provision in sociology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well at A-level.
- Relationships are good and students are prepared to ask for help.
- Analysis and use of results do not promote higher standards by focusing teaching and learning.
- The attitudes of students in Year 13 are very good and this promotes their learning.
- Insufficient opportunities for students to extend their knowledge through the use of external agencies.

Commentary

149. Over previous years, attainment in the A-level examination has fluctuated, but has been mostly below the national average. There is an increasing trend in the number of students attaining A-C grades. This represents good achievement because students join the course with below average levels of attainment. The unconfirmed results of the AS level examination in 2003 are well below average. The achievement of a significant minority of students was unsatisfactory because they selected the subject as their fourth course of study and did not give it enough time or priority. These students have not continued with the course and, consequently, the work of the present Year 13 is average and this represents good achievement for these students. They extend their thinking beyond the initial topic and make confident presentations. Year 12 students are making satisfactory progress and the standard of their work is satisfactory.
150. The satisfactory teaching seen during the inspection is supported by good relationships with students, who have positive attitudes and feel able to ask for help and clarification. When the teacher uses contemporary events to illustrate sociological theories, learning is good. However, there are no external visits or speakers arranged to give students first-hand experiences. Teaching is beginning to address the lack of higher-order literacy skills by giving students key terminology and writing frames. Marking is thorough and gives students a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. The analysis of assessments, performance data and results is not used effectively to ensure individual students reach their maximum potential and to guide curricular planning.
151. Leadership and management are satisfactory and lesson planning has been improved through use of the new schemes of work. These emphasise the very good contribution which the subject makes to students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was on art, drama and media studies.

Art

The overall quality of provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the department is very good and management is very effective.
- Examination results are disappointingly low.
- Teaching is now good overall and much teaching is very good.
- Students are encouraged as independent learners and respond with very positive attitudes to work. This is reflected in some outstanding sketchbooks.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used effectively to promote digital art.
- The sixth-form area is wholly inadequate for its purpose, especially since numbers are rising.

Commentary

152. Although examination results have been disappointing in past years, standards have risen steadily. Student acceptance onto some advanced-level examination courses has led to some students being inappropriately placed on the courses. Consequently, these students showed little interest in the work as the course proceeded and they attained poor examination results. This inappropriate placing of students on courses has been overcome for the current Year 13, although leading to very small entry numbers. The advanced supplementary (AS) and advanced vocational certificate examinations (AVCE) attract more students and results are improving. The head of department has built a strong team of teachers, who have a very good command of their subject and teach it well. This has led to good improvement since the previous inspection.
153. The mature commitment of students and their enthusiasm for learning enables them to gain the maximum benefit from the courses they follow. Some very imaginative sketchbooks were seen during the inspection. Students use the Internet well for research, but they are restricted in exploring digital imaging because the department's computer and software resources are inadequate and teachers are not yet sufficiently well-trained to lead in this area. The area set aside for students to work is too small, with no natural light. This restricts the quality and amount of work they can do during their spare time.

Drama

The overall quality of provision for drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement in lessons is good, but A-level results are unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Assessment information is not consistently recorded to set targets and help the development of students' written work and preparation for examinations.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.

Commentary

154. Students' achievement in A-level classes is good, but attainment at A-level was unsatisfactory. Analysis of the A-level grades show that the weakness lies in the written part of examination. The department's self-evaluation procedures have already identified this and staff have put in place measures to correct it. These measures are already evident in lessons.

155. Teachers have high expectations that challenge students effectively. Lessons are well structured and taught at a good pace with a variety of activities and resources to support and strengthen learning. Occasionally, the rapid pace inhibits students' consolidation of the topics covered, but, overall, students make good progress and focus with a determination on their tasks. Group work is particularly successful and students are good at evaluating each other's work. Oral feedback from staff is effective and appreciated by students. There is insufficient written feedback given to students to support constructive assessment of their work. This inhibits the use of target setting, the use of standard English, when appropriate, and preparation for examinations.
156. Relationships between students and teachers are very good. Sixth-form students are very enthusiastic about drama and particularly enjoy participating in performance work. They are well behaved and are particularly appreciative of staff support both in and, especially, outside lessons. They greatly enjoy and learn from performance opportunities and theatre trips.
157. The department is well led and managed. Development plans and schemes of work are clear and well organised. Departmental self-evaluation is a particular strength in analysing where improvements need to be made to ensure that students will achieve their potential. Accommodation, resources and access to ICT are very good and this enhances students' learning.
158. Drama was seen as a strength in the last inspection and this is still the case. Drama continues to have a high status in the school. The planned further development of extra-curricular drama opportunities will greatly enhance the cultural life of the school community.

Media studies

Overall, the quality of provision for media studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement overall in lessons is good, but the A-level results were unsatisfactory.
- There are insufficient accurate assessments of the students' A-level coursework.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and committed, and teaching overall is good.
- The department is ably led and managed.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students.
- Accommodation, media resources and access to ICT have been greatly improved and are now very good.

Commentary

159. Students' overall achievement in lessons is good, but attainment at A-level in 2003 was unsatisfactory. The department's self-evaluation procedures have already identified the problems. Staffing has been improved and appropriate equipment to enable students to carry out practical work is now in place. Measures, already evident in lessons, have been put in place to develop written work over the duration of the course. The staff are having further training on the assessment of coursework to enable students to predict and achieve more accurate grades.
160. Teachers have high expectations. Lessons are particularly well structured with a variety of activities and media resources like film clips to support and strengthen learning. This is an excellent role-model for students, who also have to compile their coursework from a variety of media.
161. Students make good progress in lessons and work hard on their tasks. They show real understanding of what they have learned, the progress they are making and what to do to improve. They are particularly appreciative of staff support in lessons and the opportunities

which staff provide to see films outside school time and visits to media venues. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and create a positive environment for learning.

162. A new team of staff, including two enthusiastic newly qualified teachers, is ably led and managed by the head of department. The staff have analysed where their strengths and weaknesses lie and have successfully obtained more equipment, resources and staff development to enable further student progress.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No subjects were inspected in depth, but the work in physical education was sampled. Students achieve well in examinations. A small number of students in the sixth form take A-level examinations in physical education and gain pass grades that are in line with levels gained nationally.

BUSINESS

Business education

The overall quality of provision in business is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Poor results in AVCE and A-level courses in 2002 and 2003.
- Good student attitudes to learning in all lessons observed.
- In some lessons, students were insufficiently challenged.
- An inclusive approach and good relationships between students and teachers.
- Recent unsatisfactory teaching and learning are being addressed by improved teaching strategies.
- A good range of courses at post-16 and extra-curricular provision.

Commentary

163. Although satisfactory results were achieved in AVCE business between 1998 and 2001, there has been significant underachievement in all courses in 2002 and 2003. This underachievement, most notable in A-level economics and in A-level business studies, has in part been due to unsatisfactory teaching, learning and leadership. The expectations of students and the level of rigour in the teaching have been too low. Standards in these examinations have been consistently below national standards. In the lessons observed and work scrutinised, standards are broadly in line with national standards, but with very few examples of top-grade work being achieved by students.
164. Staffing difficulties have now been overcome and on the basis of lessons observed, work scrutinised and discussions with students and teachers, these weaknesses are being addressed in a positive way. In all observed lessons, teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory or better, although there were situations when the students were not given sufficiently challenging tasks.
165. Learning and achievement are enhanced by the teachers' secure knowledge of their subjects, good rapport with the students and the good attitudes of the students. All students interviewed spoke very positively about their work and the support they are receiving from their teachers. Recent department initiatives have brought more effective strategies for improving learning. Teaching fully involves all students, ensuring that those students in need of additional support receive it. The department also intends to organise a lunchtime club for the gifted and talented.
166. The good range of vocational and academic courses are supplemented by good extra-curricular opportunities. In addition, Year 13 AVCE students are able to visit China. This two-

week trip involving visiting businesses and learning the language is an exciting and rewarding opportunity for these students.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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