INSPECTION REPORT

CHINGFORD FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Chingford, London

LEA area: Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 103108

Headteacher: Mr C Moore

Lead inspector: Dr Calvin Pike

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th January 2004

Inspection number: 259343

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1247
School address:	Nevin Drive
	Chingford
	London
Postcode:	E4 7LT
Telephone number:	020 8529 1853
Fax number:	020 8506 3875
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Maxim
Date of previous inspection:	18th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chingford Foundation is a popular, larger than average, mixed comprehensive school with increasing numbers of pupils on roll. It is involved with the Excellence in Cities initiative and has awards for School Achievement, Sports Mark and Football Association Charter Standard. The school is located in a pleasant area of mixed, mainly owner-occupied housing to the north of Chingford where there is comparatively little unemployment or social deprivation. Its intake is predominately white British with 23 per cent of its pupils from ethnic minority groups. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals has reduced since the last inspection to 9.2 per cent, as has the proportion of pupils with special educational needs which is now 9.5 per cent. Just over 10 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, slightly higher than average. The intake reflects the full range of ability but with an increasing proportion of higher attaining pupils. Girls outnumber boys in the school. Very few pupils enter or leave the school at times other than Year 7 and 11 respectively, but approximately a quarter of the students in the sixth form join from other schools.

Sixth form numbers have increased year on year since the last inspection. The percentages of sixth form students eligible for free school meals, who have special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language are below the national averages.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1565	Calvin Pike	Lead inspector	
9542	Brian Jones	Lay inspector	
1068	Jan Allcorn	Team inspector	Mathematics, Mathematics (Sixth), English as an additional language
2561	Tony Byrne	Team inspector	English
3266	Peter Baker	Team inspector	English (Sixth) Media studies (Sixth)
5714	Frances Thornton	Team inspector	Science
21906	John Scottow	Team inspector	Chemistry (Sixth)
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology, Special educational needs
7636	Anil Sinha	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
11543	Angela Cornforth	Team inspector	French (Sixth)
4317	Ken Madrell	Team inspector	History, History (Sixth), Religious education
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT), ICT (Sixth)
22501	Sue Jones	Team inspector	Citizenship, Music
32350	Ann-Marie Latham	Team inspector	Physical education
31685	Val Girling	Team inspector	Art and design, Art and design (Sixth)
32147	Ann Wallis	Team inspector	Geography Sociology (Sixth)
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business education (Sixth)

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good, effective** and **increasingly popular** school with many **very good** features. The headteacher identifies and leads priorities **well** to ensure on-going development. Teaching has improved **well** since the last inspection, bringing about good learning overall. Standards are now **above** national averages in the main school and almost **in line** with them in the expanding sixth form. Support for pupils' personal needs is good. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Test and examination results at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 have improved in the majority of subjects over the last four years.
- Standards are above those of schools in similar contexts: compared with schools nationally, they are above average in Years 7-11 and almost in line with them overall in the sixth form.
- Teaching, and the learning which results, are good overall: the majority of teaching is good and there is some excellent practice, although there is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching.
- The headteacher has a clear vision that is realised effectively in most areas through a strong leadership team but the quality of middle management ranges from very good to unsatisfactory.
- Governors are knowledgeable, well informed and very effective in constructively challenging the school, but not all statutory requirements are met.
- Provision is unsatisfactory in art, for citizenship and for ICT across the curriculum.
- The monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently robust or regular to enable consistent improvement across all subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, having a positive effect on learning and the ethos of the school.
- Pupils' personal development and their day-to-day care are very good, creating a secure and well-ordered community, but there is insufficient monitoring of pupils for whom English is an additional language or, in most subjects, for those who are deemed to be gifted and talented.
- There is a good range of out-of-school activities, some of which are initiated to support the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

The school has improved well since the last inspection, enhancing its popularity locally. Standards have risen to being above national averages in the main school and, whilst nearly doubling in student numbers, just below the average nationally in the sixth form. This is because, along with resources and the school site, the extent of good teaching overall has improved and only a relatively small proportion is unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

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

Most pupils achieve well between Years 7 and 11, including those with special educational needs, as a result of good teaching. However, the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language or who are deemed to be gifted and talented are not identified and addressed well enough. Standards in the 2003 national tests are well above schools nationally in English, above them in science and in line with them in mathematics. GCSE results overall are above the national average. This is confirmed by what inspectors saw in lessons and directly linked to the quality of teaching across departments. GCSE results overall are rising above the trend nationally, showing that the school is being successful in improving its performance. Students in the sixth form,

approximately a quarter of whom join from other schools, achieve satisfactorily compared with their starting point. Although standards are just below national averages, they have improved consistently as the sixth form has grown in number and popularity.

Pupils' personal development is **very good.** This is shown in the very good behaviour and positive attitudes to school of the majority, encouraged by the mutually respectful relationships between teachers and pupils and underpinned by a very effective year management structure. Sixth form students have very good attitudes and behave maturely. Attendance has improved and is now good. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is **good** and their spiritual development is **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is most often **good** with some **very good** teaching in the main school and sixth form and only a small proportion of **unsatisfactory** teaching. There is some strong teaching in most departments, particularly in English, science, drama, dance, physical education and history. Good teaching is characterised by teachers' thorough knowledge of their subject, high expectations, effective planning and very good relationships that enable pupils to be involved in their work and develop their understanding well. In the relatively small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching seen, particularly in Year 11, teaching was not as well matched to the needs of pupils and the range of approaches used to encourage pupils' involvement was limited. This hampers the learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. Accommodation is good in most areas. It enhances learning well except in some areas in physical education and English. Similarly, resources are good overall and are used effectively to support teaching but previous funding for design and technology and resources for information technology within departments are inhibiting development. In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum is broad and balanced but the time available for teaching citizenship and personal, social and health education limits progress. In Years 10 and 11 it is organised effectively but the choice of courses apart from GCSEs is too narrow to cater for the needs of lower attaining pupils. Across the school requirements for teaching ICT in other subjects and the reporting of learning outcomes in Years 7 to 9 for citizenship are not met. The sixth form curriculum offers a wide range of subjects though few alternatives to AS and A-levels. There is a very wide range of leisure, cultural and sporting opportunities outside school hours with a high number of pupils involved in each. There are good links with parents and the local community and very good links with other schools and colleges, all of which enhance the quality of provision and the school's ethos for learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management are **good.** The school is well led by the headteacher supported effectively overall by an experienced leadership team. Their key responsibilities for curriculum, staffing and pupil welfare are addressed very well, apart from those concerned with determining the needs of pupils who are gifted and talented or for whom English is an additional language. Although there are good systems for reviewing departments' work, the current structure is insufficiently rigorous in monitoring practice, particularly the quality of teaching. As a result, middle managers are insufficiently developed and their impact on learning is uneven. The school's focus on improving self-evaluation is appropriate but will require middle managers to be more active in ensuring the consistency of good teaching to raise pupils' achievement still further. The effective governors are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play an important role in offering constructive challenge, though some aspects of their work related to statutory requirements are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents support the school and are very pleased with the progress their children make. The great majority of pupils enjoy school and feel secure and supported in it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things to improve are linked to the school's central priorities to raise achievement still further. Some are already identified in the school's development plans or more recent proposals:

- ensure that the management of departments is more active and rigorous to improve teaching and standards through the development of middle managers;
- address the weaknesses in identifying the needs and monitoring the progress of pupils who are gifted and talented and those for whom English is an additional language so as to enhance their progress;
- extend choice within the curriculum to offer courses which better match the needs of pupils and students across the range of abilities;
- enhance the use of ICT across the curriculum, extending resources in departments where necessary and making more use of current resources in the school;
- improve provision for citizenship to meet current gaps and assessment and reporting requirements;
- attend to the uneven quality of provision for art;
- raise achievement in mathematics in the sixth form;

and to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that curriculum requirements for ICT are met
- address omissions in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is both effective and cost-efficient. Since the last inspection the sixth form has made significant improvements. Whilst doubling in number, its standards have also improved consistently. This is because teaching and the assessment and monitoring of pupils to inform learning is rarely unsatisfactory and most often good, particularly in Year 13.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good and sometimes very good and this means that most students learn well but in a few courses teaching is insufficiently demanding as students are not encouraged to become independent in the learning.
- Standards are rising consistently: they are now nearly in line with the average nationally and students achieve well.
- Accommodation in the sixth form is good apart from. some cramped rooms used in English which inhibit learning as they preclude the use of ICT
- Teachers' expertise is good.
- A-level results in mathematics 2003 showed that some pupils underachieved.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	**Very good in English.** Standards are improving and achievement is good because staff have high levels of subject expertise and a good range of teaching styles, including excellent management of group work. **Good in French**. Standards are improving through good use of the target-language and teaching, encouraging confidence as well as competence.
Mathematics	**Satisfactory**. A-level results in 2003 were not as good as they should have been. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall but not enough emphasis was given to developing students' ability to solve problems.
Science	**Satisfactory** in **chemistry**. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good, but limited in the range of strategies used to develop independent learning.
Information and communication technology	**Good**. Standards are below average but achievement is sound because limited ICT resources, including staffing, has inhibited learning previously. **Computing is satisfactory**. Standards are average and achievement is good, pupils having benefited from specialist teaching.
Humanities	**Good** in **history**. Good standards and achievement directly related to the quality of teaching. **Satisfactory** in **sociology** where teaching is mainly effective but a lack of variety of styles inhibits learning.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	
Visual and performing arts and media	**Good** in **media studies**. Good access to high quality equipment for creating media texts and staff expertise. **Unsatisfactory** in **art**. Standards have fallen over the last three years, partly as a result of staffing issues but mainly as the quality of teaching is variable.
Business	**Satisfactory** in **business studies**. Teaching is satisfactory. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The quality of personal support and guidance is very good. Induction arrangements are good and students feel that they are consulted about their views and listened to. There is very good and effective monitoring of progress and follow-up action where necessary to enable students to succeed. Students choose from a range of A-level but alternative course provision is limited.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good overall. The sixth form is managed effectively with very good support and guidance that ensures all students are treated fairly, though some aspects of support for students for whom English is an additional language are underdeveloped. Day-to-day management is very good. Teaching in the sixth form is monitored through the use of students' questionnaires but, as for the rest of the school, this aspect of work is most often too reactive.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and feel that they can go to their teachers for advice. They confirm that all students are treated fairly and with respect. Students reported that their work is assessed well and feedback from teachers helps them to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall achievement at Chingford Foundation School is good. Pupils progress as well as expected in Years 7 to 9 and there is good achievement in Years 10, 11 and in the sixth form. In most lessons good teaching helps pupils learn well, except in Year 11 and in art where teaching is not as consistently effective. Results in tests in Year 9 and in GCSEs are above average and standards in most subjects are above the national average at the end of Year 11. In the sixth form, where a quarter of students come from other schools, examination results overall are just below the national average but they are high in English, history and in media studies. Standards are improving in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in English, science, history, geography, religious education and in design and technology.
- GCSE results are rising faster than they are in other schools and sixth form standards are improving as action is being taken to enhance the quality of learning where necessary.
- Almost all pupils gain at least one GCSE pass and the proportion achieving at least five is above the average for schools in England.
- The proportion of boys attaining higher grades A*-C is lower than girls but overall there is less difference than there is nationally.
- Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in Years 11 and across the school in art, because of the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in these areas.
- ICT is not used effectively in all subjects across the school and this limits pupils' learning and achievement.

Commentary

1. The school's performance in the national tests and examinations is above average. The 2003 Year 9 national tests are well above average in English, above average in science and in line with national averages in mathematics. These show rising standards in English and mathematics but a slight dip in science. In English outcomes exceeded targets set whereas they just met the improved target for mathematics and were below expected results in science. In other subjects, assessment indicated standards to be above the national average except in art. This is confirmed by lessons: standards in subjects are relatively high in relation to national averages.

2. The 2003 GCSE results are also above the national average and improving at a faster rate than they are nationally. Whilst they came close to meeting the school's targets, they were just below the results anticipated. There are some differences between boys and girls. Whilst girls outperformed boys overall, the differences between boys' and girls' attainments were narrowed. This shows that the school's efforts to improve boys' achievements are being effective and that it uses its analysis of performance by gender well.

3. However, the school does not analyse performance of other different groups represented in the school in the same depth. Review of the achievements of the relatively small proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups shows that they do as well as those from white backgrounds. However, there is limited monitoring of the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) or of those who are gifted and talented. Whilst the inspectors' analysis of the results of a small sample of gifted and talented pupils showed that they had made good progress, there is insufficient identification of the needs of these pupils or those with English as an additional language for the school to be sure that they achieve as well as possible. By contrast, analysis confirms that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In 2003, of the twelve Year 9 pupils who received support, all bar one improved on

their predicted levels in the Standard Attainment Tests, one by three levels. In the GCSE examinations, of the pupils who had support, a quarter gained A* to C grades, and three quarters gained D to G grades, which is good achievement. Pupils also make good progress to meet their targets, such as learning to spell 100 common words.

4. Additionally, data indicates that standards of attainment on entry are improving over time, with the overall attainment of pupils in the current Year 7 being just above average. Considering the starting point of pupils taking the most recent national tests in Year 9 and examinations in Year 11, achievement overall is satisfactory between Years 7 and 9 and is good in Years 10 and 11. What all this confirms is that the above average standards overall are due to pupils learning well in most subjects and achieving well overall. One other way of identifying this success is by comparing examination and test results with other comprehensive schools in similar circumstances. These indicate that pupils at Chingford are attaining above similar schools overall. However, there is some unevenness in performance between subjects. Pupils achieve well in English, science, history, geography, religious education and in design and technology because teaching is more often good or better. But in music, art and business studies standards and achievement are more variable. This is partly because there is a smaller proportion of good teaching, itself related to staffing issues within the departments.

5. Pupils' achievements and the school's performance in tests and examinations are confirmed by lessons. In Years 7, 8 and 9 most achieve reasonably but some teaching does not challenge all pupils to make good progress. This is most notable in mathematics, information and communication technology, art, music and citizenship. In mathematics, it is because teachers miss opportunities to use a wider range of teaching approaches to promote effective learning. In information and communication technology, standards and achievement are too low, in part due to some previous staffing difficulties that have now been resolved but also because the knowledge of non-specialist teachers is not always secure. In art and music the uneven quality of teaching across the department has a negative impact on the extent pupils make consistent progress between years. In citizenship pupils' progress is inhibited as the time available is limited and planning does not show clearly enough how the required curriculum is covered, especially in Years 7 to 9.

6. By contrast, achievements in English, design and technology, history and geography are very good while in science, modern languages, physical education and religious education they are good. In English and history, for example, the very good teaching triggers pupils' interest and involvement in their work. As a result of teachers' high expectations in relation to work and behaviour, pupils are very willing learners. Similarly in physical education pupils respond quickly to the good teaching and achieve well.

7. Pupils' achievements are good in Years 10 and 11. This is confirmed by looking at their achievements from the end of Year 9. Pupils make good progress as they move through these years though this is less consistent in art and in their development and application of skills and knowledge in ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.9 (34.1)	(33.3)
Mathematics	36.2 (35.8)	(34.7)
Science	34.6 (35.4)	(33.3)

There were 206 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	61 (58)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	39.9 (34.7)	39.1 (34.7)

There were 201 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form

8. Sixth form standards are just below the average nationally but rising. Results in 2003 indicated that students performed better than in most schools locally, attainment being above all other state schools in the borough. These results show improvement over recent years and that students achieve well. The best subjects at AS level are dance, media studies, English literature and history where students achieve very well. Course work and practical activities are mainly of a high standard. At A-level, subjects that added most value in relation to the students' starting points were travel and tourism, media studies and physical education. Students are developing good critical awareness in most subjects and express themselves well, encouraged by good teaching, particularly in Year 13.

9. This is not the case for all subjects, however. For example, in mathematics, chemistry and sociology students are not doing as well as they should, partly because the teaching is not challenging enough as the range of teaching and learning methods are not wide enough to cater for the full range of students' needs and also because there is not a strong enough drive for improvement by subject managers.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	97.4 (86.5)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	29.1 (19.3)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	239.7 (202.6)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Strong social and moral provision leads to a **very good** ethos in the school. Attitudes, relationships and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers transmit their enthusiasm and pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- The strong pastoral system achieves very good behaviour, with very few problems.
- Sixth form students work eagerly and are good role models.
- Attendance and punctuality, both in the main school and the sixth form, are good.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They have improved since the previous inspection, when they were 'generally positive'. Social, moral and cultural provision is good. Spiritual provision is satisfactory. It reaches a high standard in some lessons, for example religious

education and English. Although pupils do not get an assembly every day, the quality of most of those observed was good. Pupils relate very well to one another and to staff. Most say there is an adult at school they can turn to if they have a problem. An emotional moment came when a pupil with severe physical difficulties spoke on behalf of her nominated charity. The other pupils applauded very warmly. Pupils experience poetry, art and music from a wide range of cultures.

11. Pupils behave very well. The positive behaviour policy developed after the previous inspection is proving effective. Pupils are considerate to one another and polite to adults. Last year there were 11 fixed period exclusions. This is a very low total for a school of this size. It is less than half the number in the previous report. The school's Compact Club offers strong support for pupils at risk of disaffection. They recently did much good work in organising the school's shoe box Christmas appeal. The school has a strong anti-bullying policy. Incidents are rare. Parents and pupils are confident that the school sorts out problems quickly. Racial incidents are even rarer, averaging fewer than four per year. The school acts quickly against racist language or any other harassment.

Sixth form

12. Attitudes, attendance and relationships in the sixth form are very good. Students join pupils in the main school in a variety of extra-curricular activities.

13. Sixth form students work hard and are interested in their learning. They are good role models. They co-operate readily with pupils in the main school. For example, 43 students trained to help with the 'big read' challenge. A sixth former was a convincing Father Christmas at Year 8's fund-raising craft fair. Sixth form attendance is 93.6 per cent, 3.6 per cent above the local authority's target.

14. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to school. They are fully included in all school activities, such as sport and music. They behave well and have good relationships with their peers and teachers. They want to do well.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	959	7	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	116	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	16	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	17	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	26	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	27	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	25	1	0

Black or Black British – African	16	1	0
Black or Black British – any other British background	14	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	14	1	

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

Attendance

Authorised absence	
School data:	6.1
National data:	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.7
National data:	1.1

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

15. Last year's attendance figure of 93.2 per cent is 1.5 per cent above the national average. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when attendance was 7.3 per cent lower than it is now. Good procedures encourage good attendance and punctuality. The school welfare assistant telephones parents on the first day if the reason for absence is unknown.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form is **good** because pupils and students learn well. The quality of assessment is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and **good** in the sixth form. However, the use of assessment information to enhance pupils' learning is inconsistent across subject areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers relate well to pupils and give them the confidence to learn in an atmosphere of respect and trust.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to extend pupils' understanding.
- Teaching and learning in the main school are good in English, history, modern languages, technology, physical education and religious education but are unsatisfactory in art.
- New teaching initiatives have resulted in well structured lessons in many subjects but this is not consistent across the whole school.
- The use of assessment information to enhance pupils' learning is inconsistent across subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is uneven across departments so good practice is not always identified and shared.
- Teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good in English and pupils achieve well.
- A very effective tracking system is used to monitor the academic progress of sixth form students against the targets they have been set.
- Sixth form teachers in some subjects use a limited variety of teaching styles which do not always challenge and engage all students.

Commentary

16. The overall good quality of teaching and learning enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Good working relationships between teachers and pupils give pupils the confidence to contribute to lessons and produce their best work. Pupils and parents are appreciative of the good quality of teaching and support given by teachers across the school. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and convey this to pupils clearly, which increases their understanding.

17. In subjects where teaching is good lessons have some important strengths which reflect good practice across the school. These lessons are well paced, questioning is lively and probing and teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Consequently, pupils are interested and keen to learn. Resources are well used to support learning and engage pupils' interest so they achieve well and reach high standards. There is good use of classroom assistants and other support staff to maximise pupils' learning, especially that of those pupils who have special educational needs. In the best lessons, where new teaching initiatives are put into practice, learning objectives are clearly set out and reviews involve pupils at the end of the lesson.

18. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory learning is limited because teachers use a narrow range of approaches and pupils are not challenged to produce good work. Lessons are less well structured and new learning initiatives have not been used to focus and reinforce pupils' learning.

19. The quality of assessment is satisfactory overall but varies between subject departments. There are examples of very good practice in English and technology where pupils are given very good feedback so they know exactly how to improve their work. However, in other subjects pupils are less sure of the levels they are working at or how to improve their work. Whole school assessment and examination data is carefully collated and distributed to departments and is used to produce good, detailed reports for parents. However, it is not always used consistently by departments to plan the next step in teaching and learning.

20. The monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of development and is not yet sufficiently consistent for good practice to be identified and shared so that learning can be improved further.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught for the majority of subjects in small groups. Withdrawal is kept to a minimum, so that these pupils receive the full curriculum. Additional support is given outside the taught time for specific areas of learning, such as handwriting. The quality of teaching is good overall, with tasks that match the needs of the pupils, but with sufficient challenge to enable them to make progress and want to learn. Where support is given, it is valuable in ensuring that they understand. The pupils stated that the support that they receive from the teacher assistants has been a crucial factor in the progress that they have made. Pupils' individual educational plans have clear attainable targets, which help them to make progress.

Sixth form

22. Teaching in the sixth form is good so that students achieve well. Teaching is particularly good in English where lessons are conducted at a fast pace and students respond very well to the challenging tasks that are set. However, in some subjects lessons are less successful because teachers use a limited range of teaching styles which do not engage and challenge all students. Students are set realistic targets and their progress towards them is very effectively monitored by an efficient tracking system. This ensures that they remain focused throughout the course and are given support if they experience difficulties.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 187 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (2.1%)	24 (12.8%)	78 (41.7%)	69 (36.9%)	10 (5.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum provision for pupils aged 11-16 is **satisfactory** overall with **good** provision of extra-curricular activities. The quality and quantity of resources at the school are **good** and the accommodation in the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of GCSE options but limited vocational education.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) provision is unsatisfactory.
- The provision of citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- Cross-curricular provision is not sufficiently mapped to ensure all pupils benefit equally.
- There is no statutory daily act of collective worship.
- The provision for pupils with special education needs is good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities.
- The quality and quantity of resources at the school are good.
- Accommodation is satisfactory overall but there are limitations on teaching space in some departments.

Commentary

23. Curriculum provision for pupils aged 11-16 is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced but teaching time for geography and history is less than the national average and that scheduled for citizenship and personal, social and health education limits progress. There are significant weaknesses in the provision of ICT, particularly in science and music. In Years 10-11, ICT does not meet requirements for more than half the pupils. There is not sufficient time in physical education to meet core requirements in Years 10 and 11. In religious education, all pupils follow a short course GCSE that is timetabled for one hour weekly. Those wishing to take a full GCSE also follow a one-hour after school each week. GCSE dance is provided entirely outside timetabled time. The provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory as time is limited and the assessment requirements are not implemented. The school does not provide the statutory daily act of collective worship. There is a good range of GCSE courses but opportunities for those pupils who would benefit from vocational education and work-related learning are limited. All pupils get two weeks' work experience in Year 10.

24. The banding and setting system is complex in Years 7-9 but is flexible enough for pupils to move between bands. The system has made a positive impact on achievement since it was put in place. The provision of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the school is managed by the English, mathematics and ICT departments. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is carried out in departments but there is no central mapping of these aspects of the curriculum to ensure all pupils benefit equally.

25. There are no pupils with special educational needs who are disapplied from the National Curriculum, although there is one pupil who is on a restricted timetable in order to meet her specific needs. The organisation of groups ensures that these pupils are taught a curriculum that matches their attainment. When these pupils are in mixed ability groups, both teachers and teacher assistants ensure that they access the full curriculum and enable them to reach the targets on their individual educational plans. The Compact Club caters for pupils in both Years 10 and 11 who follow the ASDAN challenge course, which enables these pupils to gain both the bronze and silver awards. The pupils enjoy the course and the challenge that it gives them. It has given them self-esteem and the ability to work in groups. It also prepares them well for college or employment. There is no register of students with English as an additional language. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and departments extend their work but there are gaps in provision for these pupils.

26. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs, visits and a large range of peripatetic instrumental lessons that attract a high level of participation from pupils. Additional funding from Excellence in Cities has enabled the school to offer master classes for gifted and

talented pupils. The school organises an Activities' week for all pupils to include charity work, visits to historical sites and a residential visit for pupils in Year 7. Activities in drama and music include productions, ensembles and choirs. The school offers booster classes in mathematics, English and science for pupils in Year 11 to support them learning prior to the GCSE examinations.

27. The quality and quantity of resources at the school are good. The school is staffed well with teachers whose subject expertise is very good and with effective support staff. The school has an experienced coordinator for special educational needs and seven committed teacher assistants. However, this is a small number to enable support to be targeted where it would make maximum impact on pupils' progress. Learning resources are generally good and they are very good in history and religious education. The library is a very good resource. It is staffed by an effective librarian and, in addition to a reasonable book stock, contains a good bank of computers that are well used by pupils throughout the day. However, overall, the provision of information and communication technology as a resource to support learning is unsatisfactory.

28. The accommodation in the school is satisfactory overall. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with subject areas having specialist rooms, in particular mathematics, science, media studies and humanities subjects. This has reduced teacher mobility around the school and enabled rooms to become effective teaching bases. English rooms are small for large classes and art, music and physical education have some small teaching areas. These inhibit the effective use of some teaching methods. Although the special educational needs department has a central base for teaching and storage with an attached office, this accommodation is small and unsatisfactory, reducing the quality of support for pupils.

Sixth form

Curriculum provision in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of A-level courses on offer but vocational courses are limited.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is not inclusive.
- The statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form are not met.
- Extra-curricular provision is good.
- The quality and quantity of resources are good.
- Accommodation for the sixth form is very good.

Commentary

29. There is a good range of A-level courses on offer but vocational courses are limited. Key skills, in communications only and in personal, health and social education, are provided in 'drop down days' and Activities' week. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is carried out in departments but there is no mapping of provision to ensure all pupils benefit equally. The statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form are not met. Preparation for employment is developing. Students who want a gap year to travel are helped to prepare with sessions on personal safety. There is a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, especially music, sport and dance.

30. In the sixth form the quality and quantity of resources are good. Teachers are very well qualified and support staff are effective. Learning resources are generally good. Staffing and resources are very good in English, media studies and history. The library is a good resource; it has a good book stock and contains information and communication resources that are very well used by sixth form students. Accommodation for the sixth form is very good, as are the social and study areas, including ICT facilities, provided for sixth form students.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care for pupils. It gives them **good** advice and guidance. It prepares them **very well** for their careers and studies after school. It seeks and responds **well** to pupils' opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care for pupils' health, safety and welfare is very good.
- The school gives pupils good guidance in their learning and personal development.
- The school helps pupils settle in well and gives good guidance for future careers and studies.
- The school has a good system of year councils and takes notice of pupils' ideas.

Commentary

31. Chingford cares very well for pupils' health, safety and well-being. It regularly updates its health and safety policy. The site manager knows the site well, monitoring it every day. He and his staff correct most minor issues as they arise. He reports to the headteacher each week. Governors inspect formally once per term. Parents have expressed concern about the toilets, which are dispersed around the school. A member of site staff with specific responsibility for toilets has already improved the situation. A deputy headteacher and a year manager have designated responsibility for child protection. They regularly update their training and make sure that staff know the requirements. Arrangements for first aid are good. Six members of staff, including the medical officer, have full certificates. The medical room is well set up and has adequate space.

32. Monitoring and support for pupils' learning and personal support are good. Year managers stay with their year groups from Year 7 to Year 11. They know their students well. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs. The learning mentor works well with Year 10 and 11 pupils at risk of becoming disaffected. They undertake a series of challenges, leading to the ASDAN Silver Award. The school is piloting an initiative for these awards to be recognised as a GCSE.

33. Heavy demand for places at Chingford means that it recruits pupils from relatively few primary schools. This enables Chingford's Year 7 manager and its special educational needs co-ordinator to visit each primary school. They get full information about their new pupils as individuals. Year 7 pupils interviewed say they settled into school smoothly.

34. Pupils get good opportunities to express their opinions through their year councils. The school responds well to pupils' ideas. For example, there was concern about the school lunches, The school has invited contractors to tender for a healthy eating option, with more fruit and vegetables and fewer chips.

Sixth form

35. Sixth form students get good opportunities to develop their maturity in the school and their responsibility to the community.

36. Sixth formers help the main school's pupils with their learning and with a variety of extra-curricular activities. Travel and tourism students organise visits, for example to the London Dungeon. Year 13 elect their own committee to organise the end-of-year prom. These activities build students' maturity and sense of belonging to the community.

37. All pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need receive the support to which they are entitled. Every effort is made to meet the special educational coordinators in the contributory primary schools, in order to ensure the smooth transition of these pupils. Care is taken to ensure that all such pupils have a friendly person with whom to communicate and the pupils named more than one person in whom they could confide.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good links with other schools improve the quality of teaching and learning. There are **good** links with parents and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good partnership with five local secondary schools enables Chingford's pupils to benefit from a wider range of expertise.
- Good information for parents enables them to support their children's progress well.
- Good links with the community increase pupils' opportunities for learning.
- The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents omit some items required by statute.

Commentary

38. The school has very good links with other local schools. Chingford is part of the 'Northern Lights' collaborative of six secondary schools who receive funding from the Leadership Incentive Grant. The headteachers meet every term. Each school focuses on a different initiative to improve teaching and learning. The schools share expertise. Each benefits from consultation with subject leaders in the other schools. There are close links with the feeder primary schools. In summer, staff consult closely with the Year 6 teachers who are teaching the pupils who will join Chingford in the autumn term. Staff from the primary schools and from Chingford share information before pupils arrive and after they have settled in. This means the pupils get better support in both academic and personal development.

39. Since the previous inspection, parents' opinion of the school has improved substantially. High quality teaching and improved standards are having a positive effect. Good links with parents help them take a full part in their children's learning. Virtually all have signed the home-school agreement and they support the homework policy. The school provides good, individual reports at the end of the school year. The school obtains parents' opinions by circulating questionnaires. In particular, parents wanted more frequent information about their children's progress. They now get records of pupils' attitudes and achievements at other times of year. Parents give good support to meetings with teachers, events and concerts. The parents' association is small but active. Last year they raised funds to keep the two minibuses running and for a new media projector. They provided extra money for Activities week, which greatly benefits pupils' personal development.

40. Good links with the local community enhance pupils' maturity and sense of social responsibility. There are close links with a local church. Members of other religious groups speak at assemblies to strengthen pupils' spiritual awareness. There are also good links with a local bank and some local businesses. Pupils participate very fully in local sports clubs and competitions. The Year 8 team is the current borough champion in basketball.

41. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are well presented. However, both documents omit some statutory requirements. The school is aware of these omissions and has undertaken to rectify them in future. The omissions have not had an adverse effect on pupils' learning.

42. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are committed to giving them support. All attend their children's annual reviews and they know that they can meet the SENCO informally at any time. The department has effective links with local colleges which many attend on leaving school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall, with many very good features. This has a positive impact on the school's development, ethos and the rising standards achieved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership of the school with clear vision and direction.
- Good management by most other key staff though some areas require faster response to ensure appropriate improvement.
- Good use of data to support self-evaluation but aspects of subject monitoring are insufficiently robust and underdeveloped.
- Very good management of provision for pupils with special educational needs, although requirements for those for whom English is an additional language and for others who are gifted and talented are not well determined or monitored.
- Well developed systems for managing the performance of teachers and other staff.
- Very informed governors who provide good and constructive challenge for the school, though some aspects of governance are not fully in place.
- Very good financial management, following best value principles, enables appropriate support for learning in most areas.

Commentary

43. Leadership is good overall. The headteacher leads the school well. This is clear in the way the vision for the school's future directs the work of staff, pupils and the school's overall purpose. The process is evident in the relationship between the long-term strategic plan and the school's day-to-day operations. The strategic plan priorities are based on good analysis of data and identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses as well as projections of future needs.

44. The strategic plan is translated into practice well through separate levels of planning by departments, year groups and the sixth form. However, there is unevenness in the quality of these plans. Development plans for the sixth form link whole-school intentions and outcomes well: since the last inspection, sixth form numbers have almost doubled, its provision widened and standards are improving. Year group plans are tailored to meet the needs of the separate year groups but also reflect whole school priorities effectively. By contrast, departmental plans for the future are not sufficiently clear and too reliant on annual reviews of past examination outcomes held by senior managers.

45. The headteacher is supported by an experienced and effective leadership team whose members work well together. Since the last inspection this has been expanded and the roles of its members have been refined. Whilst these roles are clear, the balance of their responsibilities does not enable all areas of the school's work to be managed well. Staff development, including performance management, is directed effectively and supports overall school aims. The line management of year managers is tight and rigorous, ensuring not only that future plans reflect the whole-school plan but also that day-to-day issues for pupils are addressed efficiently. There is clear and effective management of the school's administration systems and staff. The interpretation and use of data concerning pupils' performance is well developed in most areas, although there are some gaps concerning the monitoring of pupils who are gifted and talented and others for whom English is an additional language. However, the direct management of all subject departments is the responsibility of only one senior leader. There are good procedures for reviewing outcomes annually, along with recently introduced audits of selected departments by external consultants.

46. As a result of the structure, the quality of middle management of departments is overly dependent on the individuals themselves, leading to uneven outcomes and rates of success. Subject leadership across the school is good overall but in some subjects such as mathematics leadership is no more than satisfactory because there is insufficient detail in

planning or in monitoring to enable standards to be raised fully, whilst in art leadership is unsatisfactory because the impact on learning of variations in the quality of teaching have not been addressed quickly enough.

47. The area of special educational needs, including the co-ordination of the committed team of teacher assistants, is very well administered, although the policy needs to be updated to reflect the new Code of Practice and there is insufficient face-to-face communication with departments to ensure a consistent flow of information to and from them. However, the assessment, monitoring and provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language and those who are gifted and talented is underdeveloped and lacks precision. The governors are kept fully aware of developments in the area of special educational needs but are less aware of the issues associated with ensuring progress for gifted and talented pupils and pupils for whom English is an additional language within the school.

48. Another consequence of the current structure for managing the work of departments is that the school's success in implementing some whole-school curriculum issues has been unnecessarily varied. For example, the curriculum has been effectively developed since the last inspection to provide different courses to meet a fuller range of abilities; a more consistent structure for lesson planning has been introduced; and, through performance management, additional training and time has been devoted to monitoring work in lessons. However, the impact of this work on pupils' learning is not yet clear or consistent enough in relation to lesson planning to provide for the needs of all pupils, to the quality of teaching and to assessment in the classroom. This is because the lesson plan format is not being used by all teachers to identify and reflect the needs of the pupils they are teaching; performance management classroom observations focus on teaching qualities and style rather than on learning outcomes; although there is much data concerning pupils' prior attainment, assessment in the classroom is not being used consistently in all departments to target subsequent lesson plans at what pupils most need to do, know and understand. In addition, too few departments plan effectively to define and meet the needs of pupils who are gifted and talented or for those for whom English is an additional language.

49. Governance of the school is very good overall. Governors are very well informed and provide valuable constructive challenge in helping to set the school's overall direction. Examples of their strength are evident in the way they have worked effectively to support the school in changing its status to a Foundation school, to develop the school's sixth form, to expand and to improve the school's accommodation. Nearly all statutory responsibilities are met except for the need to provide ICT to all pupils in Year 10 and 11 and a daily act of collective worship. In addition, some information required for parents in the governors' annual report and the school's prospectus are not provided. The governors are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are very supportive of its development. One area which reflects their support is in their agreement to enhance staffing in line with workforce reforms to reduce the administrative load on teachers whilst improving provision for pupils. This is evident in a restructuring of administration staff, the appointment of a school bursar, a network manager, external examination invigilators and a school welfare assistant. Governors are properly involved in setting the budget and in monitoring expenditure during the year.

50. Arrangements for performance management of teachers and other staff are very good. There are effective links between the school development plan and staff development in establishing performance management systems and setting individual objectives. The school's commitment to developing all staff is evident in its efforts to gain Investors in People status in the near future. The school's self-evaluation processes are linked to whole staff training but, as a result of the uneven quality of review within departments, these are not yet being developed as rigorously as necessary to drive standards up even further.

51. Financial management is very good. The school consistently balances its budget and ensures sufficient contingency amounts to prepare to meet future needs. Best value principles are followed well in relation to purchasing and premises, though these need to be implemented

more consistently at departmental level in the school's evaluation of its performance. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,657,631
Total expenditure	4,514,893
Expenditure per pupil	3,606

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	110,986
Balance carried forward to the next	253,724*

** including some earmarked for initiatives*

52. Chingford Foundation is a very large school that runs smoothly and well. Managers contend with some accommodation difficulties and challenges in recruiting and retaining well-qualified and effective teachers well. Management is effective in maintaining a positive school ethos that enables most pupils to make good progress even though there are some shortcomings in implementing policy across departments consistently.

Sixth form

53. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. There is good guidance that ensures students new to the school at the start of Year 12 are supported effectively, though more analysis is required to ensure the needs of students for whom English is an additional language are met fully. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds, who represent a greater proportion of the sixth form population than the main school, are treated fairly.

54. Day-to-day management is good, largely because relationships between staff and students are productive and mutually respectful. The monitoring of students' performance is regular and rigorous. Effective student tracking, mentoring by staff and reporting to parents ensures that students know how to improve and are helped to do so and parents are well informed of the progress throughout. Teaching in the sixth form is monitored more regularly than in the rest of the school but the best practice is not shared as fully as it might be.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good progress of students leads to high attainment.
- Leadership, management, communications and teamwork are all very good.
- Planning and assessment support teaching and learning very well.
- Effective strategies are improving standards achieved by boys, but students do not vary their spoken language from the everyday to the more formal.
- Cramped accommodation prevents the use of drama and ICT.
- Achievement of ethnic groups is not monitored.
- Timetabling disadvantages a few classes because the teaching is split between two teachers.

Commentary

55. Standards achieved in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE are well above average, with a rising trend over several years. In 2003, students at the end of Year 9 made the best progress in English of all subjects tested, when compared with results they had achieved at the end of primary school. Almost all students are entered for and pass GCSE in both language and literature in Year 11. Many students with special educational needs, or of lower ability, obtain grades close to average, which represents very good achievement. About three out of every four students passed at A*-C in language and even more, four out of five, passed at that level in literature. About a fifth of the Year group gain A* or A grades in both subjects. Very high achievement includes more than just the gifted and talented students. There is no evidence that ethnic minority students are achieving less well, but there is no monitoring to ensure that this does not occur. Boys do less well than girls; although boys do better than their gender group nationally, girls are improving faster and are further ahead of their gender group. Action by the department is ensuring that boys' results are rising, so that the most able boys are obtaining high levels in Year 9 tests and GCSE and there is a good take-up of post-16 studies by boys.

56. In lessons and work seen, standards matched the high level of recent results. Teaching and learning are good and almost all students make very good progress. This is because teaching engages students and helps them to understand clearly how to reach high standards. Objectives, referred to at the start of lessons, are emphasised throughout. The criteria by which work will be judged are clearly indicated. The schemes of work are well structured and interesting, so that students at all levels gain confidence as they progress. Writing, for a broad range of purposes, is presented well by both boys and girls. Students of lower ability produce short but very accurate final drafts, which consolidate their command of spelling and punctuation. Assessment is a strength, used as it is in lessons to inform students about how to do well. Marking is regular, accurate and provides helpful guidance and clear targets are set. Many opportunities for speaking and listening are provided. In the best lessons this makes a strong contribution to spiritual and social development as students listen with respect as others describe experiences and emotions. However, as at the time of the last inspection, teachers are not challenging students to vary their range of expression from everyday to more formal language. The policy of seating boys next to girls generally works well, with boys concentrating as readily as girls; but in a few lessons some boys are restless and some girls are reluctant to contribute. Occasionally teachers do not make the best of material provided, as when one episode of teaching from the front is followed by another, or when a task is not the best approach to the central purpose. Classrooms have little space for work involving movement or resources such as computers.

57. Leadership and management are very good. Data is used well, except for monitoring students by ethnic origin. Pupil grouping is very well thought through to secure progress, except that a few classes are taught by two teachers, which is confusing and interrupts the planned flow of the scheme of work. Behaviour management is very well supported. School priorities are followed up very well. The department is identified as an example of effective practice for other local schools to visit because of its planning and teamwork. Internal communications are clear and meetings encourage reflection and self-evaluation. Delegation is well organised and good work by staff is warmly recognised. Communications with parents are very good. Since the previous inspection, attainment is higher, students with special educational needs do better and marking has improved: leadership has built on previous strength and improvement is good. There is united effort within a common framework, high expectations and supportive monitoring. These values are transmitted to students, so that the subject has meaning and coherence for them. This leads to high standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Departments support literacy by drawing attention to key words and indicating important spelling errors in students' written work. The above average literacy of many students means that they cope well with reading required and those of lower ability or with special educational needs receive appropriate support. Whilst students use speaking and listening skills well in group work in most subjects, they are rarely encouraged to provide more than brief spoken contributions in whole class situations.

59. The library supports literacy well with a good range of fiction and reference texts, but borrowing rates are not particularly high. The English department has been entrusted to do the main work on improving literacy and is contributing strongly but there is no coordination of what is expected of students in other subjects.

Modern foreign languages

The provision for modern languages is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for two languages, French and Spanish, and other innovative programmes offer choice to many students.
- Teachers are competent and enthusiastic. The department enjoys a large complement of native speakers.
- Current developments based on a self-analysis of the department's activities are resulting in improved teaching and learning.
- Teaching strategies do not always encourage student independence and self-motivation.
- The use of ICT remains to be integrated into teaching practice so as to foster greater enjoyment in language learning and to stimulate greater student independence and responsibility, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers do not fully implement the department's policy on marking and feedback

Commentary

60. In Years 7-9 and Years 10-11, standards overall are in line with similar schools. There are no significant variations in outcomes between the two languages, French and Spanish, even though the dual linguists starting to learn Spanish in Year 8 are higher attaining pupils. There are significant variations within year groups, arising in part from the innovative ways the school has tried to offer choice and variety to most students, including those with low motivation or with special or additional learning needs. Consequently, standards are well above average in one Year 11 higher-ability French group and much below average in another lower-ability Year 11 French group. GCSE results for 2002 and 2003 for both French and Spanish are well below the national averages. Results based on teachers' assessment of Year 9 students show an upward trend in recent years. Numbers opting for two languages have shown a year on year

increase in both Years 10 and Year 11, reflecting pupils' increased interest in studying a language.

61. The standards of attainment in the four language skills in Years 7-9 are generally good overall. For example, in Year 8 French, most students can recall vocabulary and grammatical structures in response to pictorial prompts, usually with a feel for the French pronunciation. They use reflexive verbs with confidence and can tell the time in French. They respond to a good deal of French spoken by their teachers at normal speed and most can engage in short dialogues with their teachers and other students. Similarly, in Year 8 Spanish, students have made considerable progress since September as a result of their commitment to the subject. Their pronunciation demonstrates their grasp of spoken Spanish and the range of their vocabulary is increasing. They listen to and respond appropriately to their teacher's classroom instructions usually delivered at normal speed. Girls outperform boys. Year 10 and Year 11 students in both French and Spanish are working to the requirements of the appropriate levels of their GCSE courses.

62. Teaching of modern languages is good overall. All teachers are competent and enthusiastic and the department enjoys a strong complement of native speakers. Lessons are generally planned carefully to provide opportunities for learning all the four language skills. The amount of the new language materials introduced in lessons is generally controlled to ensure continuity and progress. Teachers deliver their lessons with enthusiasm, incorporating a variety of effective strategies, activities and teaching aids. Their skilful use of the target language as well as their high expectations of students' behaviour and commitment lead to students' motivation and enthusiasm for the language they study. Individual support and supervision is also provided both in lessons and outside lessons. They devise and utilise suitable materials and tests to assess students' progress and achievement.

63. Teachers recognise the needs of all students, including gifted and talented students, but this is not always translated into their lesson planning. Moreover, teaching strategies do not always cultivate the necessary skills of independent learning and of students taking responsibility. In some lessons sound delivery does not always accompany fun and enjoyment. The use of ICT remains largely unexplored for fostering greater enjoyment and independent learning skills as well as for researching into associated cultures, geographies and histories. The department's policy on marking and feedback has yet to be fully implemented by all teachers.

64. Students' learning is good overall in both French and Spanish. Relationships and student behaviour are good and most students find lessons enjoyable. Consequently, most students in Years 7-11 work consistently, making good to very good progress in lessons and over time. However, while students are usually responsive to the tasks and activities set by their teachers, they do not always demonstrate independent language learning skills nor do they always take responsibility for their own learning.

65. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The stable staffing in recent months has led to greater coherence in planning, teaching methodology, assessment, delivery and other initiatives. Resources are generally adequate. ICT resources and, as at the last inspection, library resources remain inadequate, however. The quality of accommodation is satisfactory overall but its volume is insufficient. The absence of blinds in some rooms impedes OHP work. Since the last inspection the modern languages provision has remained stable despite heavy staff turnover and other changes.

66. The provision for two languages for the more able and other innovative programmes demonstrate the school's commitment to modern languages for all its students. The school also encourages and supports community languages and has entered students for GCSE in these languages. The senior managers actively support the current developments in modern languages. A programme of regular study trips abroad, as envisaged in the previous inspection report, has not yet been established.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE in summer 2003 were above those nationally.
- Students do better in national tests and examinations than they do in similar types of school.
- Students take good advantage of the knowledgeable teaching they receive and generally work hard in lessons.
- Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, teachers miss opportunities to use a wider range of teaching approaches that would promote more effective learning.
- Regular testing thoroughly tracks pupils' progress, but marking and feedback in pupils' books is sometimes insufficient to help pupils understand their errors.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the department's work to identify strategies to improve students' achievements further.

Commentary

67. Students make good progress throughout their time in the school. GCSE results in summer 2003 were above average with a higher proportion of pupils than nationally achieving the top A*-C grades. This represents good achievement given their average attainment on entry to the school in Year 7. Results in national tests for 14 year olds also show steady improvement over the last three years and in summer 2003 were in line with those nationally. Boys do better than girls by a slightly greater margin than nationally. Nevertheless this aspect of the department's work is not yet monitored sufficiently to ensure girls achieve as well as they should, particularly as in a significant number of lessons observed girls were not as fully involved as boys.

68. Standards seen for pupils currently in Year 9 were at nationally expected levels and in Year 11 just above. Pupils in the lowest groups achieve well with good teaching. This significantly contributes to their positive attitudes and concentration in mathematics even though they often find the work difficult. Other pupils make at least sound progress and, although standards are above average in the top sets, there is the potential for more students to achieve the highest GCSE A*/A grades which are currently at national levels if teaching were more consistently focused on their needs.

69. Teaching is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection but very few were of good quality. Teachers know their subject well and plan carefully for lessons. They have good relationships with pupils and generously give up time out of lessons to help students with difficulties. Students appreciate this, respond well in lessons and take full advantage of the competent teaching they receive. They therefore make good progress by the time they leave the school. The best lessons use a good range of teaching strategies and carefully constructed questioning techniques. As a result, students are made to analyse and think about what they are doing, activities are more interesting and learning is more secure. For example a lower ability Year 7 set worked really hard in their groups to see which group could work out first the number of factors in each number up to 50 and then identify any patterns in these numbers.

70. The management and leadership of the work of the department is satisfactory. Teachers know what is expected of them and contribute satisfactorily to the department's development. Priorities for improvement are appropriate but lack detail on how they are to be achieved and success to be measured. Regular testing tracks students' progress well but monitoring of teaching, students' books and the performance of different groups of students is not yet systematic enough to identify areas for improvement and to ensure greater consistency of practice. Whilst students know the grades they are expected to get in national tests and examinations, they are less well informed about how to achieve these.

71. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory as performance at GCSE and in national tests for 14 year olds shows continuing improvement. The use of information and communication technology is developing, although the two recently networked computer rooms are not yet sufficiently used by all staff. However, a few issues have not been fully addressed such as the narrow range of teaching styles. The National Strategy for 11-14 year olds has been put in place but during the inspection there was limited evidence of the use of some of the teaching approaches and practical resources identified nationally as effective strategies.

72. By the time they leave school most pupils have good numeracy skills, although some of the lowest ability still have difficulties with basic number skills such as times tables up to ten. Pupils competently use their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example the manipulation of formulae and the drawing of graphs in science and the accurate use of percentages in business studies.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Although a whole school training day has taken place to identify how subject areas can contribute to pupils' mathematics competence, this has not been followed by the development of a whole school numeracy policy. However, departments such as geography and design and technology have developed their own policies and identified within their schemes of work opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills. The lack of a whole school numeracy policy is the result of a lack of clarity in who is responsible for this aspect of the school's work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in science because teaching and learning are good.
- Test and examination results are above average and have improved since the last inspection.
- Testing is rigorous and helps pupils to improve their work, although this information is not always used to adjust lessons.
- Provision for ICT in science is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

74. Pupils' achievement in science by the time they leave school is good. Since the last inspection standards have improved. In 2003, GCSE results for pupils aged 16 were above average. When these pupils entered the school their attainment was average. This represents good achievement. The school enters more pupils for GCSE science than other schools nationally and almost all achieve a result. Girls and boys achieve equally well in science. They achieve better results in science than in other subjects. In 2003, the results in the national tests for 14 year olds were well above average and better than those for pupils in similar schools. Achievement for these pupils since age 11 was satisfactory and the achievement of high attaining pupils was good. Current standards in Year 9 and Year 11 are above the national expectation. This is because teaching is good. Teachers regularly assess pupils' learning in science. The acting heads of department track pupils' achievement and those who are falling behind are identified and helped to improve in lessons and revision classes. The achievement of some pupils in the year is unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory teaching and marking. This is because lesson planning did not take into account the low ability of the pupils, behaviour was not managed effectively and pupils were distracted and the marking of pupils' work was limited. These characteristics resulted in unsatisfactory achievement for these pupils.

75. Teaching and learning are good overall and have improved since the last inspection. In the sample observed teaching was better in Years 7-9 than in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good knowledge of science and in very good lessons this knowledge is translated into good

discussion and effective questions. The teachers then adjust the content of the lesson to ensure pupils learn from their mistakes. As a result, pupils have to think and achieve well. In most lessons, teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage their behaviour well. In good lessons, pupils feel safe to make mistakes and produce good work and teachers use a variety of strategies, which interest pupils and make science fun. Pupils work hard to understand difficult scientific ideas. All teachers use homework to consolidate work in class. The science department has started to introduce the science strategy. Teachers explain to pupils what they are going to learn and the meaning of scientific language, which helps the pupils to learn. Specific learning support for pupils with special educational needs helps these pupils to make similar progress to the rest of the class.

76. All teachers use the information from tests to help pupils to achieve higher test and examination results. In good lessons, teachers use this information to help them adapt the work to pupils' needs. Most marking is regular and supportive. Pupils have a clear view of what they should do to improve but not all teachers use this information in their teaching and pupils do not always respond to teachers' comments. Marking is better in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have a clear view of what the examinations demand. In all years, but in particular Years 10 and 11, pupils learn the skills of independent scientific enquiry. There is unsatisfactory use of ICT to help pupils learn science. The provision of computers is limited.

77. Management is good and leadership is satisfactory. The two acting heads of science are committed to raising standards. They provide good role models for other staff and pupils and lead a team that works well together. They do not have a detailed plan of action, but have evaluated 2003 results and monitor performance of individual pupils rigorously. There has been insufficient time to ensure full consistency of implementation of marking, to monitor teaching rigorously and share good practice. Technicians work efficiently and effectively and provide very good support to teachers.

78. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards have improved from below to above average. Achievement is good overall. Teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. Leadership and management have improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are too low and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The raised profile of the subject is contributing positively to pupils' attitudes to the subject.
- Pupils have a good understanding of presenting information.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience data handling and control technology.
- The use of ICT in other subjects in the curriculum to support learning is not consistent.
- The lack of a digital projector to demonstrate procedures is slowing pupils' learning.
- Teachers circulate well in lessons and manage pupils well contributing to pupils' understanding.

Commentary

79. Results in the most recent GCSE information and communication technology (ICT) examination were well below average for 16-year-old pupils. These results are lower than those in previous years, which were also below the level expected. Pupils attained lower results in ICT when compared with other subjects. Boys performed much better than girls.

80. In lessons observed, in work seen and discussion with pupils, standards in ICT are below the level expected in Years 9 and 11 at this point in the academic year. Due to staffing problems and inconsistent teaching in the past, pupils have not reached the expected standard and achievement over time is unsatisfactory. Staffing difficulties, however, have now been resolved

and there is evidence of improved progress in recent months. Pupils have good knowledge of how to present information using a variety of applications. This was evident in their 'Myself' slide show varying their presentations using techniques to move text and add art images. Opportunities to develop an understanding of data handling and control technology have been limited and consequently these elements are unsatisfactory. Although pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to describe where ICT is used outside school, this understanding in younger pupils is limited, with few able to give examples of where it might be used.

81. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Where teachers have good subject knowledge, progress in lessons is good. However, some pupils are taught by non-ICT specialists whose knowledge is not always secure; this results in slower learning. A strong feature of the teaching is the way teachers move around the class advising pupils on how to refine and improve their work, contributing to their understanding. Teachers manage pupils well. Most lessons commence with a clear explanation about the task. However, the lack of a digital projector to demonstrate procedures to whole classes meant that not all pupils understood and time was spent re-explaining procedures slowing the pace of learning. The national three-part format of lessons is not embedded into the curriculum; as a consequence plenary sessions are often too brief to ascertain pupils' understanding and learning.

82. The leadership and the management of the subject are satisfactory. There have been many changes since the beginning of the academic year. Schemes of work are in the process of being re-written to reflect pupils' needs more accurately, the hardware has been upgraded and the time allocated for the subject increased. All these changes have had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and the profile of the subject has been raised to a point where pupils now enjoy the work and are keen to succeed.

83. The overall improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. However, standards are still too low and statutory requirements are not fully met for some pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The overall use of ICT in other subjects in the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Some subjects have made provision in their schemes of work but its use is not consistent. This underdevelopment is partially due to difficulties in accessing the ICT suites and the lack of resources within departments. Although there is a computer suite dedicated for use in other subjects in the curriculum, the suite is in constant use and is insufficient to meet the needs of all subjects. The mathematics department have their own computer suites and, when used, effectively support pupils' mathematical development, accessing mathematics programs on the website and using programs for graph plotting. The management of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory and provision is not systematically coordinated across the school.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results in 2003 were good and showed an improvement on previous years.
- The range of teaching and learning methods being used in most lessons are not sufficiently varied to engage and challenge all pupils.
- Pupils are productive because working relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- Systems to ensure the accurate assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 are as yet in the early stages of development.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to extend pupils' understanding of geography.

- The opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to develop their enquiry skills through fieldwork are underdeveloped.

Commentary

85. GCSE examination results in 2003 were above the national average and pupils attained higher grades in geography than in many other subjects they took. These results showed an improvement on previous years when results were below national averages. Although systems to ensure the accurate assessment of pupils' attainment are in the early stages of development, pupils clearly reached standards just above the national average at the end of Year 9. This represents satisfactory progress for pupils from the time they entered the school.

86. In work seen in the inspection standards are good and pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. This is because teaching has a positive impact on learning overall and, in some lessons, the quality of teaching is good or very good. There are good working relationships between teachers and pupils. Most pupils respond well to teachers' praise and encouragement and produce good work. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to extend pupils' understanding. All pupils, including those with additional educational needs, understand specialist terminology and higher attainers use this with confidence and accuracy. Pupils complete independent research and make use of a range of resources in order to compare, for example, different regions of Brazil. Pupils' opportunities to develop their fieldwork and information and communication technology skills are limited, as these approaches to learning are not fully utilised. Pupils in Year 11 have good speaking and listening skills and make well-informed presentations to the whole class on geographical topics.

87. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. A thorough review of examination and assessment data has been conducted and appropriate priorities have been identified for development. Teaching and learning are not yet monitored rigorously enough in order to share good practice and extend the range of teaching and learning strategies used in lessons. Some teaching resources, for example maps, videos, computers and projectors, are not fully used to engage and challenge all pupils.

88. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards of work have risen in all year groups. The department has both the commitment and the capacity to improve further.

History

Overall the quality of provision in history is **good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses
- Very good leadership and management of the department.
- GCSE examination results are well above average.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Very good features of teaching are the quality of marking and homework.
- High quality resources are used to support pupils' learning
- There is a need to provide more opportunities for the use and application of information and communication technology.

Commentary

89. Overall standards are above average. Teacher assessments show the standards pupils attain in history are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Year 9. In 2003, at the end of Year 11, all pupils secured a GCSE pass grade and three-quarters gained passes at the higher grades A*-C. This is well above the national average. The standards achieved by girls are higher than those of boys.

90. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement for many pupils in relation to when they started at the school in Year 7, including those pupils with special educational needs and those designated as gifted and talented. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate increasingly good factual knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. They acquire a good range of skills with the interpretation and analysis of sources. Pupils successfully describe and evaluate the cause and effect of historical events such as the Slave Trade. There is good support for language development and the standards of written work of most pupils are good. Very good written work was seen in a Year 9 study on transport.

91. Standards in the current Year 11 are well above average. This represents good achievement by pupils who opt for history. Coursework is very good. Pupils are able to plan their work effectively and produce well structured assignments which show very good use and application of historical skills and techniques. Work seen on the Irish Question show that pupils have a good understanding of the causes and consequences of topics such as the 1916 Easter Rising and Bogside riots of 1969.

92. The quality of teaching and learning in history is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge; they are enthusiastic and committed and use a range of effective approaches in the classroom. Lessons are well structured with an interesting range of starter activities that engage and enthuse the pupils. A very good feature of teaching is the high quality of resources used to support pupils' learning. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology. Assessment procedures are good, especially the marking of pupils' work, which is very good. Pupils are given very good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Homework is set on a regular basis and is successful in developing pupils' learning of the subject. Often this will be a research topic and involve the use of the school library or the Internet. Relationships in the classroom are good and pupils display very good attitudes to their work.

93. Leadership and management of history are very good. Strong departmental teamwork is helping to raise standards. Performance management is having a good impact on improving teaching. Subject staff are very well qualified and learning resources are of good quality and meet the needs of the curriculum well. Across Years 7 to 11 the curriculum is enhanced through a very good programme of educational visits. Good use is made of performance data to set targets and to plan work. There are very good procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the department.

94. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils make good progress across Years 7 to 11 and perform very well in GCSE examinations.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management of the department.
- Subject staff are enthusiastic and committed; their relationships with pupils are very good.
- There is no formal programme for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- The quality of resources used in the classroom is very good but there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is very good.

Commentary

95. Standards are above average. The standards attained by pupils when they enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 are above average. By the age of 14, teachers' assessments show that standards are above what is expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have followed the GCSE short course and results are in line with the national average.

Girls are achieving higher standards than boys. In 2004, pupils will also be entered for the GCSE full course.

96. Achievement in religious education is good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those designated as gifted and talented is good. This is because subject staff are enthusiastic and committed and good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Standards of work seen are good. By Year 9 pupils have developed a good knowledge and understanding of the origins, beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other principal religions of the world. Their skills in making a personal response to religious questions are also good. In Years 10 and 11 the achievement of pupils following GCSE courses is good. The quality of pupils' written work is good; they use technical language accurately and can illustrate their ideas with good case study material. The presentation of their work is generally good.

97. Teaching and learning are good. Although some teaching is delivered by non-specialists, their experience and commitment are strengths of the department. The specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge. Teachers use a range of effective approaches in the classroom and pupils' learning is supported by good quality resources. However, there is a need to provide more opportunities for the use and application of information and communication technology as a resource to support pupils' learning. Marking of work is very good and provides pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Relationships are very good and pupils respond well to the subject. Across Years 7 to 11 pupils' learning in religious education makes a good contribution to their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.

98. The leadership and management of religious education are good. Planning for the curriculum and the work of the department are very good features. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department are developing but there is no formal programme for the observation of teaching and learning. Resources to support the curriculum are very good. The quality of accommodation is good.

99. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards of work have risen in all year groups. Pupils' achievement is good across Years 7 to 11. More time is allocated to the subject and short and full-GCSE courses are now available. Subject specialist staff have been appointed and the quality of teaching has improved.

100. One Year 13 lesson of religious studies was sampled. There were five students in the group. Teaching was good and attainment was in line with course expectations.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The quality of provision is **good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in high standards and very good achievement.
- Leadership and management is good, although the department is fragmented, which inhibits the sharing of good practice.
- Information and communication technology needs further development.
- Assessment is very good, which contributes to the high standards.
- Gifted and talented pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- Visits are not integral in schemes of work; these extend pupils' understanding of the subject.

Commentary

101. Standards in the 2003 GCSE examinations were just above the national average. Results in the different subjects varied. Electronics results were very high. This subject is partly set for the more able pupils. Results in food technology were also high, but results had declined in graphics and resistant materials, partly due to the cohort and to low coursework marks. Teacher assessment of Year 9 pupils in the Standard Attainment Tests showed high standards. These results show very good achievement by pupils, who enter the school with standards that are below those expected because they have had an incomplete experience of the subject. This is seen in their poor standards of drawing and colouring when they enter the school, which improve until they reach good levels at the end of Year 9. Standards in work seen in Year 9 matched those of the 2003 Standard Attainment Tests, while standards seen at the end of Year 11 were high overall, with very high standards seen in electronics. This is an improvement on the 2003 GCSE examinations.

102. The high standards are the result of good teaching, where good subject knowledge underpins all subjects taught. Questioning is probing, which makes pupils think and therefore learn. With lessons conducted at a fast pace, much is covered and learnt. Assessment is very good, with National Curriculum levels given from the first project in Year 7 and with projected GCSE levels for Years 10 and 11. Pupils are given clear targets that show how they can improve and to which they respond. Demonstrations are very good and teachers take care to ensure that pupils understand any new processes. With tasks that range in difficulty, all pupils achieve well. Teachers create good working and learning environments, which motivates pupils to learn. They all enjoy the subject, which reflects the enthusiasm of the teachers.

103. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has made tremendous improvements in the department since her appointment. However, the use of information and communication technology needs further development, as some equipment has only recently been purchased and has yet to be fully integrated into the curriculum. Also, computers are not readily accessible by all. For example, there is only one computer in food technology. Pupils who are gifted and talented are noted, but a programme to fully extend them has not yet been developed. Visits are also planned, but have not been implemented or made integral to the projects. The different subjects do not meet as one department, as food technology is still a separate entity. Good practices are therefore not shared and methods are not comparable throughout, which is puzzling for pupils and does not lead to a common practice. The experience and qualifications of staff is good and enables the teaching of the different subjects. However, the allocation of technician time is inadequate to meet the needs of the department.

104. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen, pupils now achieve very well, accommodation has improved and, although the facilities for information and communication technology are still inadequate, they have improved since the time of the last report.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the department lead to varying quality of learning by pupils.
- Pupils work in a wide variety of media.
- Assessment procedures are not used in sufficient detail by every teacher to inform pupils adequately how to improve their standard of work.
- Computer technology is not used enough by all teachers to develop work creatively.

- Visiting artists have inspired and motivated pupils.

Commentary

105. In 2003 by the end of Year 9 pupils were working at a level below that expected nationally according to teacher assessments. This was supported by work seen during the inspection. Standards in GCSE results have deteriorated over the last two years to fall below the national average. In 2003 the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades was below the national average, with most pupils gaining better grades in the other subjects they took at GCSE. Pupils arrive at the school with an average ability in art. By the end of Year 9, pupils are working at a standard below average. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory between Years 7 and 9. Those with special educational needs achieve similarly to their classmates. There is no logical progression to the schemes of work to encourage the gradual building of skills and knowledge and understanding that enable most pupils to reach the standard expected nationally. In addition, teachers' interpretations of the schemes vary widely across the department, leading to unacceptable discrepancies in the quality of experience from one pupil to another from class to class and over the three years from Years 7 to 9.

106. By the end of Year 11 pupils are working at a standard which is below average. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory over the two years. Standards vary widely as a result of their experiences in Years 7 to 9 and there has been staff instability in the last two years which has affected pupils' achievement but which has now been resolved.

107. The quality of teaching and learning overall is unsatisfactory. It varies from excellent to unsatisfactory and the variable nature of its quality and its effect on pupils' achievement across the department is unsatisfactory. The quality of relationships between pupils and teachers is good. Teachers care for their pupils and know them well. However, a lack of consistency in the quality of planning means that, where teaching is weaker, planning does not always meet the needs of those who find art difficult and does not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Where teaching is stronger, planning focuses on learning objectives rather than tasks, in contrast with the schemes of work which focus on themes rather than on learning objectives. Ideas are successfully developed using computers by some teachers. Day-to-day assessment is used well when speaking to pupils in class, but is not used in sufficient detail in records by all teachers to ensure all pupils know what to do to improve their standard of work. Pupils' understanding of the level at which they are working varies in accuracy across the department.

108. The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory, as is improvement since the last inspection. Insufficient action has been taken by the department to resolve issues identified in the last inspection report and in the audit by the local authority last year. Standards and achievement of pupils have deteriorated, as has the quality of teaching and learning. The structure provided to guide teachers on delivering the curriculum to Years 7, 8 and 9 fulfils National Curriculum requirements but is insufficient to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as other pupils across the country in similar schools. Monitoring of teaching takes place but insufficient action has been taken to ensure that there is consistency of delivery across the department. The subject leader has not managed to create an effective team which shares good practice and where every member of the team feels equally valued. Although support has been provided from senior management, its impact has not been sufficient to ensure that factors identified to raise standards have been resolved.

109. The art department moved into new accommodation two years ago. There are now two spacious and well-equipped rooms and a smaller third room that is too small for some art groups. Consequently, teachers sometimes change teaching areas to match the needs of teaching groups of different sizes. Whilst this creates some inconvenience in having to prepare or mark work in other than the room in which teaching is always to take place, it usefully maximises the overall space available in the department. The arrangement operates smoothly supported by the technicians who are a valuable asset to the department.

110. There are no computer facilities for use by groups of pupils in the art room, other than a digital camera, although some teachers do book ICT suites for their classes. Not all members of the art department are fully competent in the use of computer technology.

111. Artists-in-residence have had a positive effect on pupils' motivation across the school, raising awareness and interest. Extra-curricular time is provided by all teachers at art club at lunch time or after school.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not plan well enough for pupils of different levels of ability.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use ICT to develop their musical learning.
- The range of specialist instrumental and vocal tuition provided is very good.
- A good number of pupils take part in extra-curricular activities and concerts.

Commentary

112. GCSE results for 2003 were well above the national average. Since the previous inspection results have been consistently high but numbers are small.

113. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement, since entering the school in Year 7, is satisfactory. This is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Pupils show good ensemble skills as in some group performances of *'Buffalo Soldier'* which very effectively captured the reggae style. Their knowledge of chords and how to play them is good. However, their knowledge and understanding of styles of music such as reggae and blues are limited and their skills in improvising are underdeveloped.

114. By the end of Year 11 standards are above expectations and pupils achieve well because the overall quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. Standards in performing are above average. This is because most pupils receive instrumental or vocal tuition which contributes very effectively to all aspects of their GCSE work. Pupils' compositions are well structured and show good understanding of the instruments or voice and of the type of music they have chosen for their pieces.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The learning objectives for the lesson are always explained to pupils, which means that they understand clearly what is expected. High standards of behaviour are expected and, as a result, pupils are generally attentive and concentrate well. However, assessment of pupils' musical learning is not always used well enough in lessons to plan for different pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9. This means that pupils do not always make enough progress, especially the more musically able. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9. This is because activities and teaching methods do not engage pupils well and enable them to develop their musical learning effectively. Pupils learn well in Years 10 and 11 because teachers' expectations are higher.

116. Music teachers work hard to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities and performance opportunities which involve a good number of pupils and contribute effectively to their personal and musical development. These continue to be well supported as at the time of the previous inspection. Provision for pupils to receive specialist instrumental and vocal tuition is very good and is well managed.

117. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. This is because there is an understanding of some of the areas for development but commitment to improvement is not strong enough and very little action has been taken. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to sing or to use music ICT resources to develop their composing and performing skills. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good GCSE examination results in 2003.
- Good leadership and management, which sets high expectations.
- Target setting and use of assessment data, which is well developed at GCSE is not being used to raise standards in all core physical education.
- Teaching overall is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Girls' achievement is hindered by curriculum organisation.
- Restricted accommodation influences curriculum time and provision.

Commentary

118. Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have been consistently above the national average and in 2003 they were well above, with pupils performing better in physical education than any other subject. Although the standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 were good, pupils on GCSE examinations courses are achieving better than pupils in core practical lessons because of a well developed assessment and individual target setting structure. GCSE dance is taught in twilight sessions and results over the last two years have been of an excellent standard. Curriculum time in physical education for Years 10 and 11 is insufficient which influences the overall standards achieved by the majority of the pupils. In addition, the range and size of the accommodation adversely influences the diversity of the curriculum and time allocation. At examination level, lower attaining pupils do particularly well compared with their performance in other subjects and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

119. Teachers' assessments of attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above the national average. From the work seen, pupils on entry to the school and across Years 7 to 9 perform at the expected standard. This represents satisfactory achievement. However, girls' achievement is influenced by curriculum organisation in terms of both how and what is taught. In those lessons where girls and boys are taught together, boys dominate and control learning opportunities and restrict girls' practical involvement and achievement. The predominance of invasion games within the curriculum offers girls little opportunity for individual and aesthetic activities. In Years 7-9, ongoing assessment information is not used effectively to set targets and further raise pupils' achievement.

120. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is good across all years. One very good lesson was observed and one unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan progressively challenging tasks and provide appropriate individual intervention to support skill development. Teachers have created good working relationships with pupils and have high expectations, which support pupils' achievement. Unsatisfactory learning, where pupils just take part in physical activity, is due to unstructured teaching.

121. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a high profile amongst pupils and sets high standards. Effective teamwork between staff contributes to the consistency of the day-to-day running of the department. Monitoring systems are in place; however, the information gathered is not being used effectively to further develop teaching and learning or share good practice. Improvements since the last inspection are good. Pupils take

greater responsibility within lessons and teaching has improved with a broader range of teaching styles being used effectively. However, pupils are not involved enough in evaluation to further improve their work. A good range of sporting activities are provided outside lessons with a good fixture list for school teams, which achieve a high level of success within borough competitions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear progress has been made in implementing citizenship.
- There is insufficient time allocated overall to citizenship in Years 7 to 9.
- Overall planning does not show clearly enough how the strands of citizenship are covered.
- The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good and results in pupils learning well.
- Arrangements for reporting to parents in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not yet in place.

Commentary

122. Citizenship is taught as part of the programme for careers, citizenship and personal education (CCPE) by a dedicated team of experienced teachers in Years 9 to 11. There are also planned units within specific subjects, such as the 'Power Project' in design and technology, and whole 'drop down' days in Years 7 and 8 which contribute to citizenship. However, the time allocated for planned citizenship overall is inadequate.

123. During the inspection, citizenship units were only being taught in some Year 10 and 11 CCPE lessons. The evidence from these lessons indicates that by the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is broadly in line with expectations. Pupils demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the topics explored, such as local government, and of key citizenship concepts such as justice and government. They identify and develop questions to support their enquiries, for instance in a role play of a local council meeting based on information from a local newspaper article, and can express and justify their opinions in class discussions.

124. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is good. Lessons are well planned with varied activities, well chosen materials and effective teaching methods and, as a result, pupils learn well.

125. Leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory. Clear progress has been made in implementing citizenship in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. The head of department has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development but a development plan has not yet been devised and no systematic monitoring takes place. Overall planning lacks coherence because it does not show clearly enough how each of the three citizenship strands is covered. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of participation and responsible action, as required by the national curriculum for citizenship, through school-based activities such as the year councils, Activities week and the residential experience for Year 7 pupils. However, they have not yet been incorporated into the overall planning for citizenship. Procedures for assessing pupils by the end of Year 9, a requirement for the first time this year, are in the process of development.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The time available for personal, social and health education limits progress.
- The programme is taught by a dedicated team of teachers and specialists.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- Pupils' literacy development is not well supported because books are unmarked.

Commentary

126. Personal, social and health education is taught as part of the programme for careers, citizenship and personal education (CCPE) by a dedicated team of experienced teachers in Years 9 to 11. This provides greater consistency in approach and utilises teachers' strengths. There are also two planned 'drop down' days in each of Years 7 and 8, such as the 'drugs awareness day in Year 7 and the 'crime and safety awareness day' in Year 8, which contribute to the programme, led by specialists from outside school

127. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of different topics covered, such as sexually transmitted infections and aspects related to careers education.

128. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are taught by a dedicated team of teachers which provides greater consistency in approach. Because lessons are well planned with varied activities and well chosen and effectively used resources, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well. Good relationships between teachers and pupils and a relaxed atmosphere effectively enable the discussion of sensitive issues in which pupils share ideas openly and co-operatively. However, pupils' exercise books are unmarked which means that their literacy development is not well supported.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

Sixth form

In the inspection, 10 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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	13	100	90	46	42.7	43	39
Biology	29	86	83.5	24	36.1	32	34.6
Business studies	22	100	89.1	32	31.7	38	35.4
Chemistry	9	100	84.8	11	36.9	33	35.2
Computing	8	100	-	63	-	49	-
Drama	5	100	-	0	-	30	-
English language	3	67	-	0	-	20	-
English literature	20	100	94.4	75	37.9	52	38.9
French	7	100	85.4	71	35.2	44	34.9
General studies	8	100	-	25	-	28	-
Geography	8	100	88.3	38	36.4	41	36.3
History	26	100	-	53	-	46	-
ICT	25	96	78.2	16	20.6	32	28.5
Maths	18	95	74.2	28	34.3	34	31.3
Media Studies	35	100	-	43	-	44	-
Music	4	100	-	75	-	50	-
Physical education	15	100	-	53	-	45	-
Physics	12	100	-	25	-	32	-
Psychology	32	97	-	34	-	37	-
Religious studies	8	100	-	25	-	38	-
Sociology	3	100	83.7	67	33.6	50	33.8
Spanish	7	100	87.5	86	36.1	49	35.9

In the table above, national comparative data are provided where available

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	10	90	91.6	50	36.3	74	74.1
Biology	21	90	-	19	-	67	-
Business studies	18	89	96.4	28	32.8	61	76.5
Chemistry	6	100	94.0	0	45.9	63	81.1
Computing	8	100	-	38	-	70	-
English literature	20	100	98.5	35	43.7	79	84.3
French	4	100	-	100	-	100	-
Geography	7	100	97.1	14	40.5	74	80.9
History	22	100	97.1	50	41	85	81.2
ICT	18	100	89.1	28	22.4	74	64.1
Leisure & Recreation	6	100	-	0	-	67	-
Mathematics	16	88	93.3	25	52.2	56	84.7
Media studies	32	100	-	47	-	85	-
Music	4	100	-	50	-	85	-
Physical education	15	100	95.4	27	29.5	81	73.2
Physics	7	78	92.8	43	42.8	69	78.6
Psychology	20	90	-	10	-	66	-
Religious studies	5	100	-	40	-	76	-
Sociology	3	100	95.4	33	39.6	87	79.1
Spanish	4	100	-	25	-	80	-
Travel & Tourism	14	100	-	29	-	81	-

In the table above, national comparative data are provided where available

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Overall, the quality of provision for English literature and language in the sixth form is **very good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards of achievement are high.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Students' learning is very good, especially in group work.
- Teacher/student relationships are excellent and contribute significantly to learning and achievement.

Commentary

129. Standards of achievement in A-level English literature have improved continuously since 1999. English Language A-level was introduced in 2002 with good results at AS level in 2003. Students achieve well in lessons as a result of their own commitment and good teaching. Their responses to questions are very confident and show a good understanding of ideas and terminology. They engage effectively in debate and discussions that are very productive. They show increased understanding of new ideas as lessons progress and are able to apply them. The number of boys taking English at A-level is very creditable. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and stretched.

130. Teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations and lessons are well prepared and structured. Well paced lessons with a number of activities are particularly effective when time is given to consolidating new ideas. Questioning is challenging, perceptive and effective in progressing learning. Teachers have considerable expertise that enables them both to support and to challenge students. They use a wide range of techniques and resources to enable students to learn more effectively. Teacher/student relationships are excellent and stimulate a productive work ethos which reflects very good teaching and the positive attitude of students. Teachers' assessment of students' work is thorough, clear and focused with good evaluative comments.

131. Students make good progress in lessons. They have a good grasp of specialist terminology, especially in English language, which they can apply to new work. They are good at working independently and co-operatively to analyse texts. Group work is particularly effective. Their responses are confident and thoughtful. English literature students have been genuinely engaged with some of their texts and are capable of sophisticated critical appreciation. Students write well using a good range of research skills, including the Internet. Their self-evaluation of their work is very perceptive.

132. English is very well led and managed in the sixth form. Plans are well organised and thorough. Teaching and learning is underpinned by a detailed analysis of student attainment. Annual reviews assess the department's progress, analyse results and plan for improvement. Staff are well supported by the Head of Department and regular focused meetings, co-operative planning and positive training. They also share good practice. This would be further enhanced by sharing teaching styles as teachers tend to have individual styles of working which, although very effective, could lose their edge over time. The department offers a number of extra-curricular activities to support learning, including theatre visits. Since the last inspection, the department has improved sixth form standards significantly and students are motivated and contribute considerably to their own learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

133. The development of language and literacy across the curriculum is effectively organised for all Year 12 students through Key Skills in Communication at Level 3. Communication skills are

not discretely taught but integrated across the curriculum and capitalise on work students are already doing in their subject areas. This enables both teachers and students to focus on literacy in different subjects. There were, for example, very high quality discussions in English literature; in religious studies students were effectively using PowerPoint presentations to develop their work on Determinism; and good support was given to students in history to support their essay writing skills. All students prepare a portfolio of work with the support of their subject teachers with whom they identify opportunities for assessment. This work is tracked by form tutors to ensure that the skills required are covered.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good attitudes to learning, although their independent learning skills are relatively weak.
- Teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good and there are planned strategies for continuing improvement.
- Some policies are underdeveloped.

Commentary

134. Students achieve well in French in the sixth form in relation to national averages. In lessons students respond positively to the framework set by teachers and most of them are making good progress and are acquiring relevant knowledge and skills. Students' portfolios of work reflect the efforts they make to bridge the transition from GCSE to AS and A-level, and their coursework and classwork demonstrate that the approach being adopted by teachers is leading to sustained and successful learning by the majority of students.

135. Teachers have high expectations and organise activities comprising a lively pace. Students are aware of the progress they are making and collaborate well with their peers and with the teacher. Students are reluctant to take the initiative in language tasks and the passivity of some of the students prevents them from adopting the independent approach required by many of the tasks contained in the sixth form course. Students show satisfactory competence in the key skill areas. They respond willingly and accurately to the prompts in the target language from teachers and in the majority of writing tasks they use higher level linguistic structures well. On occasions, students' vocabulary and grasp of structures and concepts lack sophistication and they seek support in order to undertake in-depth analyses of items presented. In 2003 AS and A-level results in French were in line with school expectations and those nationally.

136. Leadership of the department is good. Although policies for the delivery of ICT are underdeveloped, current provision and plans for long-term improvement of the subject within the sixth form are good.

MATHEMATICS

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Results in summer 2003 were not as good as they should have been.
- Because of inconsistencies in teaching that range from very good to unsatisfactory, students do not acquire sufficiently the strategies needed to solve problems successfully without teachers' support.

- Regular end-of-topic testing keeps good track of students' progress, but teachers' oversight of students' ongoing work is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

137. Although provision in mathematics is judged satisfactory overall, there are some important aspects of the department's practice that need to be addressed to ensure all students make the best possible progress. Performance at A-level in summer 2002 was in line with that nationally but for summer 2003 it was below preliminary national figures, because too few students obtained the highest grades. This performance does not reflect the good pass rate in AS units in summer 2002 and students' achievement in mathematics was not as good as that for other A-level subjects.

138. In summer 2003 current Year 13 students took only two AS units, an increasing practice in schools nationally to ensure the work for the third unit is covered in sufficient depth. Results in the pure unit and the statistics option were close to national figures but results for the small number of students taking the mechanics option were poor. Strategies are in place to improve this aspect of the department's work and the teaching seen in mechanics during the inspection was sound. Results for the third unit taken in the autumn term 2003 were not available at the time of the inspection to give an overall picture of students' AS performance.

139. Standards of work seen during the inspection ranged from above to below average with most students making satisfactory progress given their previous attainments. Overall standards are below those expected. The most able students are achieving at levels expected nationally for the course and make good progress. Other students are working below expectations and sometimes have difficulty with more advanced concepts. Although most girls who take advanced mathematics do well, the number of girls taking and completing advanced mathematics courses over the last five years is low. There is no significant evidence available as to why this is so, although observation in the main school did identify girls' participation and enthusiasm in mathematics lessons as lower than that of boys.

140. Teaching is satisfactory overall and lessons seen during the inspection ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is best students make good progress in understanding and consolidating new work because they experience a range of learning styles. They are expected to contribute their own approaches to questions, for example by working in pairs to present the solution to a problem to other students in the class. They also have opportunities to use graph plotting packages on the computer. Helpful notes, regular checking of ongoing work with feedback on errors all help the students in these classes to build on previous learning and make progress. All teachers have good subject knowledge but on occasions new ideas are not always presented in the most effective way to support students' learning. The teacher works through problems with little questioning of students on how the problem might be solved or what might be the next step. As a result, students do not gain a range of strategies to help them solve the problems they meet in examinations even though most work hard and are keen to succeed.

141. Management and leadership of sixth form courses are satisfactory. Organisation is good and strategies to improve results are clearly matched to the overall development of the work of the department. Regular testing at the end of each section of work keeps track of each student's progress. However teachers' monitoring of students' ongoing work, expectations of the amount to be completed in their own time and setting out procedures are not consistent across all aspects of the course. In particular, the department does not analyse the results of different groups of students closely enough, such as those with English as an additional language or who have joined the school in the sixth form, to identify any possible reasons for underachievement.

142. Since the last inspection the school has had its first A-level results and these have improved in the last two years as the department's expertise has developed. Mathematics is a popular

course and the department must now look at strategies, particularly through the development of teaching approaches, to ensure all students achieve as well as they should.

Mathematics across the curriculum

143. Students' numeracy skills are good and they use mathematics competently and with confidence in other subject areas. Use of formulae is good for work in business studies and science and in history students interpret graphs well when analysing information.

SCIENCE

144. The focus was on chemistry, but biology and physics were also sampled. In biology, examination results were in line with the national average. Achievement in A-level examinations was slightly lower than expected. In lessons seen in the inspection, standards are average. Two lessons were observed, teaching and learning was satisfactory overall with one good lesson. In the good lesson, the students made good progress in their understanding of the electron transport system because the teacher asked good questions, which extended the students' knowledge and understanding and challenged the students to respond.

145. In physics, in 2002 all the students obtained a pass grade, but there were no higher grades. In 2003, the results were just below the national pass rate for physics. However, achievement for some students is limited by their prior attainment. In lessons seen in the inspection, standards were average. Two lessons were observed and both were satisfactory. The teacher showed good subject knowledge in questioning and explanations and in the tasks set. She supported the students who struggled with the calculations to ensure their learning was satisfactory. Students are attentive and respond well. Relationships are good. Homework complements the work completed in class.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject.
- Students are well supported in learning the theoretical aspects of the subject.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their practical skills.
- Students have positive attitudes to the subject.
- The use of ICT to support learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

146. A-level and AS level results remain below the national average for all schools, but are improving and all students entered for A-level in 2003 achieved pass grades. Few students achieved higher grades, but results approached the grades predicted from performance at GCSE. Boys and girls do equally well in the subject. Numbers studying chemistry at both AS and A-level have increased considerably since the previous inspection. Retention of students from Year 12 to Year 13 is good and almost all students complete the courses.

147. Standards in the current Years 12 and 13 are in line with national expectations and students work well in lessons so that achievement is good. Students in Year 12 have made good progress from GCSE, the transition being smooth and well managed. Their knowledge of functional groups and the properties of organic chemicals is good, and they show good understanding of chemical bonding and intermolecular forces. Students in Year 13 are able to name organic molecules with confidence and are able to apply their learning from several parts of the specification, for example when discussing the reactions of organic acids. Their knowledge of chemical equations and their ability to do calculations is good.

148. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. Teachers show good knowledge of the subject and the assessment requirements for A and AS levels. They are very supportive, recognise students' needs and plan lessons that cover the theoretical content of the subject well. Teachers explain this very clearly and students make notes in lessons that provide a good basis for learning. Teachers check students' understanding by probing questions in class but do not always allow enough time for students to consider their answers or to discuss their ideas with each other. Homework that effectively extends the learning in lessons is marked thoroughly and followed up meticulously.

149. Students are very positive about the subject and rise to its challenge. They are sometimes required to research topics themselves to produce essays or presentations and could be encouraged to do more of these activities to extend their learning. There is insufficient time given to practical work during the courses to ensure adequate development of practical skills. ICT is rarely used in lessons, although students use their own computers and those available in school out of lessons for research and to complete assignments. Results of regular testing using examination questions are monitored and used to show where improvement is needed, but students are not always aware of how these results relate to examination grades.

150. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory and there is a clear commitment to improvement. Management is good, producing the improvements and increase in popularity of the subject since the previous inspection. Teachers undertake joint planning of lessons and the courses, supporting each other effectively in better meeting the needs of their students. Performance management has helped identify the good professional development that has taken place. Laboratory provision is good with good resources for practical work. The department has only one computer and no ICT equipment suitable for teaching or recording data from experiments and so students have little experience of its use in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good specialist knowledge.
- Results in recent examinations have been below average.
- The retention from AS courses to A2 is low.
- The good relationships between teachers and students support learning.
- The lack of opportunities for students to experience the use of ICT in the business environment

Commentary

151. The most recent results for the AS level information and communication technology (ICT) and computing examination were overall below average. Few students achieved the higher grades of A and B. In the A2 computing examination the eight students entered all achieved a grade, three the higher grades of A and B. In the ICT examination all 18 students achieved a grade but only five gained higher grades.

152. Discussion with students and examination of work shows that students studying the ICT course are below the expected level at this point in the academic year. Achievement over time is satisfactory; however, there is evidence of improvement in recent weeks following staffing stability. Students studying the computing course are at the level expected. Achievement is good, students having benefited from regular specialist teaching.

153. Students are confident users of the communication element, presenting their work using a variety of applications. Due to staffing difficulties students studying ICT have only recently commenced their course assignment project. Although this is showing progress, discussion with students indicates that they lack the in-depth knowledge to develop their work to a higher level, in particular data handling procedures. Students in the Year 13 computing course are

developing sound knowledge of data handling techniques and modelling procedures. Their individual projects show progress using techniques with understanding such as macros, 'look up' and 'if' procedures for spreadsheets and the query facility for data handling. Students gained an understanding of the use of ICT in large organisations following a one-day conference with guest speakers. There are no immediate plans to repeat this but students would benefit from visits to organisations to observe first hand the complexities of a large network.

154. Students' attitude to the subject is generally positive, showing a good level of interest. The majority of students are confident to discuss their work, commenting that they find the work challenging. All are of the opinion that they were well advised about the course and had a clear understanding of what was required. Some of the students in the ICT course are not so positive, commenting that they did not find the work interesting and expressing disappointment about their AS results, having been predicted higher grades than achieved. The retention rate is low, less than half continuing their studies from AS to A2.

155. Teaching overall is satisfactory, a proportion good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and computing skills, using their expertise well to guide students. Progress in lessons is better when students are given clear targets. Teachers circulate well during lessons, intercepting when necessary, guiding and advising, discussing projects and using focused questioning to ascertain understanding. Teachers have good relationships with students in an ethos where students are confident to seek help when needed. Students value the individual support they are given to develop their coursework.

156. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Much energy has been devoted to the sixth form issues in order to raise the morale of disillusioned students following disappointing AS results. The computing course is predominantly males. The school is aware of this and are exploring ways to attract more females.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use their good subject knowledge combined with probing questioning to extend students' understanding. Standards in work seen are above average and students' achievement is satisfactory.

History

Overall the quality of provision in history is **good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of history are very good.
- The most recent results in A-level and AS level are well above the national average.
- The teaching of history is good: teachers have very good subject knowledge, they use high quality resources to support students' learning and the quality of marking is very high.
- Relationships are very good and students display very good attitudes to their learning.
- Students are well supported with the development of examination techniques.

Commentary

157. The standards achieved by students are well above average. In 2003 all students who were entered for the A-level examination in Year 13 gained a pass grade and half the students gained the highest grades, A and B. The AS-level examination results were also good. All students who started the course completed it, gaining a pass grade. Nearly two-thirds of students gained the highest grades, A and B. All students achieve well and make good progress across Years 12 and 13. Overall, girls achieve better results than boys.

158. The observation of students in lessons and an analysis of their work confirm that the achievement of students on AS and A-level courses is good. This is because of good teaching. Students are able to analyse historical sources critically and evaluate a wide range of evidence effectively to produce well-balanced arguments, as observed in a Year 13 lesson on Hitler and the Nazi State. Their written work is carefully organised and well structured. Essays on Britain's attitudes to the softening of the Treaty of Versailles indicate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and their ability to evaluate appropriate evidence.

159. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lessons are well organised with a good range of strategies and the use of high quality resources that promote good learning. A very good feature of the work of the department is the guidance given to students with examination techniques. For example, in a Year 13 lesson students worked in groups to analyse evidence and formulate arguments to support an examination question. The teacher effectively guided the students in analysing the question and structuring their findings. The marking of students' work is very good. Detailed comments provide them with a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve. Relationships in lessons are very good and students demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. They are attentive and work effectively, both independently or collaboratively.

160. The leadership and management of history are very good. Teamwork is very effective in planning and delivering the AS and A-level courses. Teachers' expertise is very well matched to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is a good stock of reference materials held in the school library and many students make good use of the Internet to support individual research. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by students' attendance at conferences and visits to museums and galleries in London and abroad. There are very good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the department.

161. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Students make good progress in Years 12 and 13 and examination results are well above average.

Sociology

Overall the provision in sociology is **satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A and AS level examination results are not yet consistently good enough.
- Working relationships between teachers and students are good and lessons take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.
- The range of teaching and learning methods being used are not sufficiently varied to challenge all students.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and ask probing questions which enhance students' learning.

Commentary

162. Standards overall are satisfactory although A and AS level examination results have been inconsistent over the last two years. A-level results in 2002 and 2003 and AS level results in 2002 have been above the national average but AS level results in 2003 were well below those of the previous year. These recent poor AS level results were partly due to students attaining low marks for their coursework. Action has now been taken to remedy this situation by students taking a further examination paper rather than submitting coursework.

163. Students' achievement is satisfactory because teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to extend students' knowledge and understanding. Working relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers give students the confidence to contribute to class

discussions which develops their speaking and listening skills well and enables them to put forward balanced opinions. For example, Year 12 students select relevant information from a range of sources and use this to arrive at logical conclusions about differences in educational achievement. Year 13 students have a sound understanding of sociological theories and research methods. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, the range of teaching and learning methods used is not wide enough to cater fully for the needs of all students. Some higher attaining students are not challenged sufficiently to work independently and think for themselves. Lessons are not varied or paced quickly enough to engage the interest of all students fully.

164. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Clear priorities have been identified for development. Examination and assessment data has been carefully analysed and is being used to plan future learning in order to improve standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet fully developed so good practice, including the use of more varied teaching and learning styles, has yet to be shared.

165. The department has not been fully inspected previously. Improvements in recent years have been satisfactory overall and the department has the capacity to improve further.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' experiences vary widely across the department leading to a variable quality of work being produced.
- Opportunities are offered to work in two- and three-dimensional materials.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work which contribute to their learning.
- Visits to art galleries inform and inspire their work.

Commentary

166. Group sizes have varied between six and eleven in the last four years. Standards have ranged from average to well below average, but most pupils achieve as expected in relation to predictions made against previous learning. Standards in 2002 and 2003 were below average, but pupils achieved as expected.

167. The standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with expectation in Year 12 and below expectation in Year 13. There are eight pupils in Year 12 and seven in Year 13. All three of the art teachers share the teaching of both groups but the standard of work produced in response to one third of the teaching is far better than that produced in response to the other two thirds. The result is that standards of work vary according to the quality of teaching which is not consistently good. The best work is produced in response to first hand stimulus as in the self-portraits from direct observation rather than second-hand images resulting in pedestrian responses.

168. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best teaching, planning is extensive with a wide range of visual material to stimulate ideas and promote discussion. Learning objectives are clear and delivery inspires and motivates pupils to be creative and productive, as in a Year 12 lesson observed. Work is regularly reviewed, clear guidance given on how to improve and challenging questions asked to encourage pupils' best efforts. ICT is used most effectively to develop and expand ideas. The work produced is impressive. Where teaching is weaker learning objectives are unclear, pupils work with less confidence and even the most conscientious and highest attaining pupils feel unable to complete work because of being

unsure what is required. Pupils take their work seriously and their very good attitudes contribute to their learning, especially where teaching is less strong.

169. The quality of leadership and management of art in the sixth form is unsatisfactory because there is a lack of consistency to the courses resulting in a wide variation in pupil achievement. A more cohesive approach with much more effective liaison and where best practice is shared is necessary if pupils are to receive equally successful experiences whoever teaches them across the department. Standards are much the same as at the time of the last inspection but the overall quality of teaching has deteriorated slightly, making improvement since the last inspection unsatisfactory.

170. Visits made to the Tate Modern by Year 13 and the Estorick Collection by Year 12 and the contributions made by visiting artists have inspired and informed pupils' work.

Media studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high at A-level.
- The standard of students' coursework is excellent.
- Teacher/student relationships are excellent.
- Students work well independently and co-operatively.
- Teacher-led lessons limit learning and assessment.

Commentary

171. Media studies has been introduced in the school since the last inspection. Standards in media studies are very high at A-level. Value added scores in media studies are outstanding and the highest in the school. The standards and quality of students' work seen are very high, particularly the excellent coursework on magazines and some very sophisticated video trailers. The students show good command of media ideas and terminology and contribute well to lessons.

172. Teachers have a high level of expertise and high expectations of their students. Teaching is well planned and makes good use of a range of media resources. Lessons led by teachers give students less opportunity to contribute and teachers less opportunity to check overall understanding. Question and answer sessions are challenging and particularly successful at extending students' learning. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons. They are able to work independently and co-operatively to achieve tasks. Their understanding of media ideas and terminology enables them to apply their learning and make effective contributions to group and class discussions. Teacher/student relationships are excellent and enhance learning. Students' work shows a high level of practical skills in media production. Magazine and video work is especially effective and makes excellent use of the facilities available in the new media suite. Students are very proficient at using information technology, including the Internet, for research and presenting their work. Teachers' assessment of students' work is encouraging, evaluative and constructive,

173. The department has clear aims and high expectations. It is very well managed by the Head of Media Studies. Plans and schemes of work are well organised. The analysis of results and student assessments are detailed and are used to track students' progress and target their learning. Annual departmental reviews are very thorough and raise key issues for future development but do not have strategies for improvement. The department works in a new media suite that has contributed significantly to students' ability to construct high quality media texts. The department offers students many enrichment opportunities out of school hours, including visits to the BBC, media institutions, cinemas and museums.

Music

174. There was no specific focus on music. Teaching was good in the one lesson observed and resulted in students learning well. The planned activities developed students' independent learning effectively.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

175. One AS level lesson was sampled in Year 12. Here teaching and learning was good, standards above average and students' achievement good. The teacher used good subject knowledge to set and support students' learning. The tasks were challenging and required students to work independently and apply their theoretical knowledge to a practical activity. The teacher supported individual students through good intervention and feedback.

176. Two dance lessons were sampled, one AS level Year 12 and the other at A2 in Year 13. Teaching and learning overall are very good, standards are well above average and achievement is very good. There is very good use of structured independent work that allows students to apply their compositional knowledge and develop their ideas. During a choreography session, for example, the teacher used very good intervention techniques throughout the learning process, challenging students to think and consolidate their learning. Good peer relationships enhanced the learning environment and supported very good achievement.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Provision in **business studies** is **satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good features of teaching include good lesson planning and assessment.
- Students show good attitudes and enjoy lessons.
- Students do not use ICT enough in lessons.
- Links with local business and industry are limited and need more development.

Commentary

177. Overall standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. A2 results in 2003 were slightly below the national average; nearly all students passed and half of them gained A-C grades. Results improved from 2002 where, though all passed, there were no top grades; results were well below average. Students' achievement in 2003 from GCSE was satisfactory, with most students' grades matching predictions. About a half of students in the sixth form took GCSE business studies in Years 10 and 11.

178. AS results were disappointing in 2003 because only three quarters of the students passed and there were no top A/B grades. Higher-attaining students gained no top grades and results were worse than in 2002. They are partly explained by the large class, immature attitudes of some students in a weaker cohort and lesson time missed. Students' achievement, below predictions, was unsatisfactory.

179. In lessons and work seen, current students in AS and A2 are working at nationally expected levels and make satisfactory progress. In a good A2 lesson, Year 13 students critically discussed points for and against a record label's decision to invest in an international pop singer. This helped reinforce understanding and raise standards.

180. The quality of teaching and learning seen in the sample of seven lessons was satisfactory overall and learning in a half of lessons was good. Good features of teaching include planning, relationships with students and business expertise. Where students misunderstood financial concepts, teachers reinforced terms clearly. Students showed good attitudes. Teachers assess work thoroughly and regularly, reinforcing marking criteria used by examiners. Students make occasional presentations to improve key communication skills but do not use ICT enough because base rooms have no computers. This affects progress. Visits to local businesses are limited and students do not research businesses enough to develop independent learning skills and critical thinking.

181. Leadership and management are good. Experienced specialist staff work as a close-knit team, well matched to students' needs, although timetable arrangements require review. Students' achievement against targets is regularly analysed. Plans for improvement, including more vocational courses, are realistic. It is not possible to gauge improvement since the last inspection as the subject was not reported upon.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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