

INSPECTION REPORT

Walderslade Girls' School

Chatham, Kent

LEA area: Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118814

Headteacher: Mrs Pamela Conibeer

Lead inspector: David Benstock

Dates of inspection: 24th – 28th November 2003

Inspection number: 261817

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Female
Number on roll:	927
School address:	Bradfields Avenue Walderslade Chatham
Postcode:	ME5 0LE
Telephone number:	01634 861596
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Louise Smith
Date of previous inspection:	5 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Walderslade Girls' School is an 11 - 18 non-selective modern school, and is a little smaller than average size. It admits girls only into the main school and has a mixed joint sixth form in association with Greenacre Boys' School. The schools are side by side on the same site. The joint sixth form was formed in 2001 and is still growing rapidly. The school is situated near the village of Walderslade, on the outskirts of Chatham in Kent, and it serves the local housing estates and the nearby villages. The socio-economic background of the girls is quite varied. It reflects the circumstances of some families having well below average experience of higher education and experiencing some social deprivation, as well as those from more settled backgrounds. The attainment on entry, after local selection procedures for grammar schools have occurred, is well below average. The great majority of pupils have white British heritage. The number of students with English as an additional language is a little higher than in most schools but none are at an early stage of language acquisition. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, and the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. The percentage with statements is broadly in line with the national average. Pupil mobility last year was significant, with approximately 6 per cent of pupils moving in or out at other than the usual time. The rapidly expanding joint sixth form has some classes that are shared with three other schools in the area forming a small consortium. In the past two years the school has received awards for achievement, active citizenship, excellence in mentoring and healthy eating.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20243	David Benstock	Lead inspector	
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs
32211	Brendon Geoghegan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Design and technology
4727	Jeff Hale	Team inspector	Geography
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
33173	Malcolm Doolin	Team inspector	History
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Science
31525	Sue O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Music
32919	Sue Hartropp	Team inspector	English
3534	Ann Braithwaite	Team inspector	Physical education
4908	Ian Farquhar	Team inspector	Mathematics
15277	Chris Vidler	Team inspector	Business education
31528	Trevor Riddiough	Team inspector	Biology (Post 16)
30941	Keith Brammer	Team inspector	English (Post 16)
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	22
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	50

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Walderslade girls' school is a good school with a satisfactory and rapidly developing sixth form run jointly in association with the neighbouring boys' school. It gives good value for money. The overall quality of education is good. Standards of work are below the national average but are average compared with schools admitting pupils having a similar level of ability. Pupils' achievement is good in the main school and good in the sixth form. Teaching and learning are good and overall the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has good provision for care and safety. Teachers' support for individuals is very good so that attitudes of pupils to their work and relationships with other pupils and staff are very positive. The overall leadership and management of the school are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is well supported by her senior team and the governing body.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes towards work, staff and other pupils, and benefit from good programmes in citizenship, and in moral and social development.
- Reports to parents on their children's progress are not sufficient in detail to identify achievement in subjects or how well they are doing to meet targets.
- All pupils are valued and the school does much to raise their aspirations and motivation.
- Strategies to develop independent learning are not well established.
- Assessment, including marking, in Years 7 to 9 is not providing enough information in writing for pupils on their levels of attainment or what they must do to improve.

Since the last inspection the overall attainment at the end of Year 9 has risen in line with the national trend although there have been significant fluctuations in English. The improvement in mathematics and science has been above that found nationally. The percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades in GCSE has increased significantly in this period and the average point score per pupil increased every year at a rate above the national trend until 2002, but fell slightly in 2003. Sixth form standards are improving as the joint sixth form becomes established. The 'Key Issues' in the last inspection related to raising attainment in English, mathematics and science in GCSE, achievement in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), quality of marking and access to resources. The percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in all three core subjects has increased significantly, very good progress has been made with reading and writing development, and there has been dramatic improvement shown in the provision for ICT. There is improved access to resources including a refurbished library although access remains difficult for some pupils. There remains further work needed to establish numeracy more consistently across subjects, and to ensure the quality of marking together with other assessment is more fully embedded into teaching and learning especially in Years 7 to 9. Overall the school has improved well since the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	D	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.*

Pupils enter the school with attainment overall well below average. Standards of work overall in core subjects in 2003 were well below average at the end of Year 9, and below average at the end of Year 11. Pupils made satisfactory progress overall from Year 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. In the current year pupils are achieving well overall throughout the school. Achievement in English is very good in Years 7 to 9. In mathematics pupils find the demands of the GCSE course difficult and achievement is just satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Results in expressive arts, and art

and design were above average in 2003. Standards are currently below average in the joint sixth form but students achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry from Year 11 in most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, achieve well as a result of good support. Pupils who are gifted or talented are encouraged and achieve well.

The great majority of pupils show very good attitudes towards their work. They are encouraged to achieve well, are supported well and as a result aspire to maximum success. Behaviour overall in lessons seen is good. There is a very positive ethos for learning in school. Attitudes are fostered well by very good moral and social development in all aspects of the school. Cultural awareness is well addressed and spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual in getting to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory but variation between departments is found in the feedback given to pupils on their level of work. There is not enough independent learning. The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school and in the sixth form. Provision for physical education in Years 10 and 11 is currently unsatisfactory. There are good opportunities for extracurricular activities, except in sport, in Years 7 to 11. Sixth form private study facilities are limited. There are good procedures for care, support and guidance. Links with parents and other schools are satisfactory, although reports need more detail about pupils' achievement, and links with the community are developing.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has been very instrumental in bringing about the significant rise in standards and overall good improvement since the last inspection. Leadership of key staff including heads of department is good overall. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion of all pupils. The effectiveness of management, including the finances, is good. Staff development is excellent. Overall governance is good but the governors have not ensured that statutory requirements are met by provision of a daily act of collective worship. In addition the National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of physical education in Years 10 and 11 have been misunderstood.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are satisfied with the school. A significant number of parents feel they are not kept well enough informed about their children's progress and they want more opportunities to meet teachers. Pupils generally enjoy being at the school but some expressed concern over the behaviour of a minority of pupils in classes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- The quality of reports for parents.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9, including consistency of marking, to ensure pupils are clear about their National Curriculum levels and progress.
- Physical education in Years 10 and 11, which is currently unsatisfactory

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship
- Improve provision for physical education in Years 10 and 11

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provision is satisfactory and rapidly developing. It is financially cost effective.

Walderslade and Greenacre schools offer a joint sixth form for their students. This venture started in 2001 and is still developing, in both the curriculum offered and in the standards reached by students. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is completely shared, classes are mixed gender and facilities in both schools are equally available to all students. The joint sixth form also forms part of a wider consortium with three other schools. Although standards of attainment are generally below or well below average, they are improving and students achieve well from GCSE. ICT is a strong subject and provision for the development of key skills in general is good. Leadership and management of the sixth form as a whole, incorporating the close collaboration of the leadership teams of both schools, are good, but there is a weakness in the leadership of business education.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision for ICT is very good, where students achieve above average standards as a result of very good teaching.
- Students' attitudes to their work are very good, resulting in a very constructive, open and secure climate for learning.
- Provision for full vocational courses is underdeveloped.
- Development of key skills in communication and application of number is good and results in key skills qualifications above those in similar schools.
- Accommodation and resources for independent learning are inadequate for the demands of an expanding sixth form.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; skills of independent learning are not well enough developed. Students' attitudes are very good and contribute significantly to good overall achievement.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . Overall, teaching and learning are good but opportunities for independent learning and the use of ICT are undeveloped and achievement is satisfactory.
Science	Provision in biology is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are good, but there are insufficient resources for students to work independently. Physics was also sampled and provision found to be satisfactory .
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is very good . Teaching and learning are very good and the subject is expertly led and managed. Students achieve above average standards.
Humanities	Provision in history is good . Good teaching coupled with very positive students' attitudes allows students to achieve well. Extended writing skills are underdeveloped.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in music technology is good . Teaching of this new subject is good. Students are well motivated and are making good progress.
Business	Provision in business education is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is too narrow a range of strategies being used, and insufficient opportunities given for independent learning.

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

Support, advice and guidance for the students in the joint sixth form are good. All students are allocated to mixed tutor groups from the two schools, and tutors provide overall good support, although there is some inconsistency in their quality. There is good support from tutors on university applications and good impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities. Students often use school mentors but they also receive effective help from representatives of Greenwich University. The monitoring of academic performance by tutors is satisfactory. The involvement of students by seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory. Although students have their views listened to in many informal setting, they also have a sixth form council where they have good opportunities to express ideas and concerns.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The overall leadership of the sixth form is good, and reflects the commitment of the two headteachers and governing bodies to the development of the joint sixth form. Day-to-day management of the sixth form is good and the development of the curriculum by senior and middle managers is very good. The head of sixth form, teachers and mentors, guide students well. Performance data is monitored very well. The two schools work closely together to allocate a joint fund to support the sixth form and regular meetings are held between staff. Overall, the joint sixth form is cost effective. The governing bodies have shown a very keen involvement in the sixth form development but do not ensure that religious education and a daily act of collective worship is provided for all students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The majority of students interviewed enjoy being in the sixth form. They appreciate the opportunities that have been created and show positive attitudes to their work. In the questionnaire responses, a very large percentage of students felt that they were helped to study independently, that teachers were expert in their subjects, were accessible for support and assessed their work so that they knew how to improve. A significant minority, however, indicated that homework was not always worthwhile and a number also noted that they did not feel there was someone in either school who knew them well.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, standards of attainment reached by Year 11 pupils in 2003 were below average compared with all schools but were average when compared with schools having a similar ability intake. **The overall achievement of pupils in their time in the school is good.** Students are making good progress in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are well above average in Year 9 National Curriculum tests, and broadly average at GCSE in comparison with schools admitting pupils with a similar prior attainment in Year 7.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Excellent standards are achieved in expressive arts.
- Improvements in standards are above the national trend at both GCSE and Year 9.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests in 2003, the performance of pupils in Year 9 was below average in mathematics and science, and well below average in English. However, in the previous year results had been much better, English being then close to the national average. The percentage of pupils in 2003 gaining the target Level 5 or more in the core subjects overall was below average, and the percentage gaining higher levels was well below average.
2. In comparison with schools admitting pupils with a similar attainment profile in Year 6 National Curriculum tests, the overall attainment of pupils in Year 9 was well above average in 2003. It was well above in English and science and very high in mathematics. As pupils enter the school with attainment well below average, their achievement from Year 7 to 9 in 2003 was good. The achievement was good in the previous year, 2002, which is shown by the value added measure, which is an indicator of progress, being above average.
3. Overall, the improvement in the results in Year 9 has been above the national trend over the past few years although there was a fall in 2003 due to the weak performance in English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.5 (32.5)	33.3 (34.8)
Mathematics	33.1 (32.1)	35.2 (34.7)
Science	31.8 (30.4)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 155 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A* - C was well below national average, and below average when compared with schools where the prior attainment in Year 9 is broadly similar. The percentage gaining five or more grades A* - G was above the national average and well above that in similar schools. The average point score¹ per pupil representing the overall performance was below the national average, but close to average in similar schools.

¹ [The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school or the national average.](#)

5. Over the four years, from the last inspection to 2002, results increased at a rate above the national trend. In 2003 the average point score fell slightly due to a weaker and more challenging cohort of pupils, but progress for this group from Years 9 to 11 was still satisfactory.
6. The percentage of pupils gaining A* - C in English was below average in 2003 and that in mathematics and science, well below average. Compared with schools having a similar range of attainment in Year 9, the performance was well below average in mathematics and science, but above average in English. In non-core subjects in 2002 and 2003, higher GCSE results were attained in expressive arts, art and design, and French. Weaker performance in 2003 was found in geography and history.

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	34.0 (43.3)	52.6 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94.0 (93.3)	88.6 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97.0 (97.0)	94.6 (97.0)
Total Average point score per pupil	33.2 (34.7)	39.9 (39.8)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	29.5 (31.4)	34.7 (34.0)

There were 109 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

7. In both Years 9 and 11, standards seen during the inspection, in lesson observation and in pupils' written work overall, are below expectation for the age. However, the weaker standards are in mathematics and science but in many foundation subjects, standards are higher. This was especially true in art and design where the quality of work was judged to be well above expectation. Standards seen in physical education in Year 9 and 11 are below expectations for the ages of pupils.
8. Pupils have entered the school with knowledge, understanding and skills below, or often well below average since higher attaining pupils have been selected to attend grammar schools. Their achievement in Years 7 to 9, and again in Years 10 and 11 is good. Achievement is very good in art and design and expressive arts and also in design and technology in Years 7 to 9. Pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in physical education especially in Year 10 and 11 but with staffing changes, there are signs of significant improvement.
9. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers. There are currently no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. There are 22 bilingual pupils who have been assessed as in need of support. In some subjects, such as mathematics, some achieve higher standards.
10. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In most cases they receive relevant tasks to meet their discerned needs.
11. Achievement of gifted and talented pupils is good. The school recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of gifted pupils. It provides them with a good range of relevant experiences both within and outside school to meet their discerned needs. It successfully identifies talented pupils in art and music. It does not yet fully support the development of these pupils' talents in performing arts and physical education.

Sixth form

The inspection has focussed on seven subjects out of the full range offered. These were English, mathematics, biology, history, music technology, and business education. Other subjects were sampled.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Of the subjects inspected, standards seen are below average in English and mathematics.
- Standards are well above average in ICT.
- Results in key skills are well above those in schools that enter students for these qualifications

Commentary

12. The results published for GCE Advanced Level (A) in 2002 were those for boys from Greenacre School; there were no entries for girls from Walderslade School in that year. Although both schools took GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) examinations, relatively few candidates were involved. Overall, results at the A Level in 2002, were well below national average for boys except in ICT, where they were well above average. Although results at AS Level in the small number of subjects were varied, the achievement of these few individual students was satisfactory.
13. In 2003, many more subjects were taken at A Level, AS Level, and for vocational qualifications in health and social care, business studies and ICT. Results are varied, and national comparators are not yet available. The majority of students gained pass grades A -E at A Level, and relatively few students (3 per cent) gained the higher grades at AS Level. Three quarters of students entered for GNVQ qualifications in health and social care, business studies or ICT gained a pass grade or higher. Overall, the achievement of students in the sixth form is good when comparison is made with the modest GCSE grades on entry to the sixth form.
14. In the current year, the range of subjects studied has been expanded. In the seven subjects inspected in full, standards seen are above average in ICT, average in history, biology, music technology and below average in English and mathematics. There is a good improvement in the standards reached by students in each year since the sixth form was established. This is shown by the observation that standards are generally higher in Year 12 than in Year 13, relative to expectation for their stage in the course. Progress in ICT is particularly good and it is also good in English and history at this point in Year 12. The few students following the music technology course are making good progress in this relatively unusual and innovative subject. Students on the advanced vocational course in business studies are making satisfactory progress.
15. Several students are entered for key skills qualifications. Results from 2003 are well above those found in other schools. The overall pass rate was high with 88 per cent pass at Level 2 but there were few Level 3 entries.

Standards in GCE A level examinations (Greenacre) at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.3	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	15.4	39.4
Average point score per student	115.6	263.3

There were 18 students in the year group. No figures available for previous year.

Standards in GCE AS level examinations (Joint Sixth) at the end of Year 12 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	58	86
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	4	34

There were 42 students in the year group. No figures available for previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes of pupils to their work are very good, and they behave well overall in lessons. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Their personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The girls have positive attitudes to school and relationships are very good.
- Behaviour in the school is good because the headteacher sets high expectations, staff work hard to ensure they are carried out and there are some very good support systems in place.
- The use of an attendance officer is instrumental in helping to improve the attendance figure, which has risen to just above the national average. Timekeeping is good.
- The use of temporary exclusions is a little high compared with the national picture, although compares well with other schools in the area.
- Monitoring of attendance is hampered by a manual recording system, which makes analysis of attendance patterns much more difficult.

Commentary

16. The girls are positive about school and enjoy their lessons. They behave well and the school is an orderly, harmonious community. Girls are very polite and helpful to visitors. Relationships are very good.
17. The school takes a firm line on any incidents of extreme behaviour and the rate of temporary exclusions is slightly higher than that seen nationally. However, the girls involved are generally only excluded once, and using fixed-term exclusions sends a clear message that certain types of behaviour will not be tolerated.
18. It is a clear sign of the girl's willingness to help others and to play their part in society that large numbers (over 130) volunteered to be trained as peer mediators. (Peer mediators help other girls who are having friendship problems) Unfortunately, only a few could be accepted onto the training course. The girls are involved in a number of voluntary activities within the community and work hard to raise money for charities. The prefect system is well established and prefects, noticeable in their maroon jumpers, carry out their roles sensibly and play an important part in helping to make the school a harmonious and well-run place to learn in.
19. The results of the Ofsted pupil questionnaire showed a significant number of negative replies about behaviour and bullying, warranting further investigation. However, the girls interviewed unanimously refuted the idea that bullying was ignored. In fact, they were adamant that it happens rarely and were confident that anyone with problems would receive a good deal of support. As there are many very good support systems in school. During interviews the girls unanimously expressed positive views.
20. Attendance rates have improved. It is now satisfactory and slightly above the national average. The school firmly believe in the importance of regular attendance, so much so that they employ their own attendance officer to monitor absences. This is working well. Her role is made more difficult because the school uses a manual system for recording attendance, which means hours laboriously trawling through registers. There is a new focus to further

improve the current figures, as the school are acutely aware of the effect absences have on the girls' ability to do well.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting Year 2001-2

Authorised absence	
School data	8.6
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	1.2

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
840
4
15
5
2
3
2
9
2
1
4
40

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
79	
1	
1	

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

Sixth form

Students have very good attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good. Attendance rates in the sixth form are satisfactory and timekeeping is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have very good attitudes to their work.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Students quickly make new friendships and settle in well.
- The attendance rate is around average and timekeeping is good.
- In a small minority of lessons, students were reticent and not keen to research for themselves.

Commentary

21. Sixth form students are polite, friendly individuals who want to do well and take their studies seriously. In an excellent design and technology lesson on engineering, students clearly enjoyed working with the teacher and spoke with some pride about the wooden model they had drawn and what they had learnt about angle projections.

22. Students quickly establish very good relationships and they enjoy each other's company. They appreciate having teachers who are new to them. They feel this is especially beneficial, in terms of staff from the other school treating them with respect whilst not having known them previously.
23. Sixth form students are particularly good role models for younger students to aspire to. They are happy to become involved in the main school life. They help with the schools' councils and are attached to form groups, listening to reading and offering friendship and support. Some are being trained as mentors, so they can support younger students in a more structured way.
24. In a few lessons during the inspection, it was noted that students were reticent at expressing their views and reluctant to research information for themselves. Whilst fairly active in fundraising for local charities, their role is limited in influencing sixth form decisions, although they have the opportunity to express their views about improvements to sixth form life through their sixth form council.
25. Students register in tutor groups at both sites and the combined attendance figure is around the average for sixth forms. Their attendance is carefully monitored and, where necessary parents are involved successfully in enhancing attendance.
26. Students for whom English is an additional language are well integrated into the work of the school. Their attitudes to work are good. Students with special educational needs have positive attitudes since they benefit from good support systems in place.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall in the school. Assessment procedures and the extent to which assessment is used are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good in many areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching and learning are very good in art and design and modern languages.
- Teachers engage well with pupils so that relationships are good and learning productive.
- There is a strong commitment to ensure all pupils are included, with good provision being made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Where teaching is very good there is very good planning and challenge to match pupils' abilities.
- Teaching of mathematics in Years 10 and 11 lacks inspiration and the use of ICT resources to enhance motivation.
- Very good use is made of ICT in music but in science there is little use of ICT for data logging.
- Planning and choice of teaching method are often unsatisfactory in business studies.
- Teaching of physical education is inconsistent, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory depending on the teacher. However, teaching has greatly improved since the appointment of a new head of department

Commentary

27. In the school as a whole, including the sixth form, the quality of teaching overall is good and leads to good learning. During the inspection, in excess of 120 lessons were observed, and of these over two thirds were good or very good. One lesson was excellent, and three were unsatisfactory, where inappropriate methods were used to motivate pupils.
28. Teachers demonstrate a good command of their subjects and generally plan lessons well. Considerable effort is made to provide supportive materials for lower attaining pupils and

ensure all are included in activities, and for higher attaining pupils to give them appropriate challenge. This aspect is not satisfactory however, in business studies and has not been adequate in physical education.

29. A particular strength in the teaching lies in the care and support provided in lessons and extended to opportunities for extra help outside of normal lesson time. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils so that their interest and efforts are maximised. Overall, teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons well.
30. The use of ICT is satisfactory overall. It is used very well in music but in mathematics, the opportunities are not always exploited and in science data logging is not currently undertaken to the extent expected in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teaching in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 also lacks the inspiration to enthuse pupils for this subject.
31. Assessment is carried out at least satisfactorily in most subjects, but the use in planning and tracking pupils' achievement is under developed. Assessment generally is unsatisfactory in science and consequently pupils are unclear about their progress, levels of attainment or how to improve. The use of assessment is currently unsatisfactory in physical education, but is a priority for development.
32. Teaching in English is good overall, but assessment is not used consistently. Information is not communicated to pupils well enough for them to know at which level they are working. Marking is inconsistent. Teaching in mathematics is good overall, but is better in Years 7 to 9. Teaching in science is good overall, although use of assessment is a weakness.
33. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and learning support staff support them well in their classes.
34. The provision of language support for pupils for whom English is an additional language, by the Medway Language and Achievement Service, is satisfactory. The limited time allocated to support pupils in the school is mainly used to work alongside pupils in lessons. This benefits those pupils who are supported but does not reach all the pupils identified as needing extra help. The assessment of the progress made by these pupils is currently unsatisfactory. Targets are not focused enough for progress to be measured on a regular basis.

Summary of teaching observed in Years 7 to 11 during the inspection in 105 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(1%)	29 (28%)	45(43%)	27(26%)	3(2%)	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.

Sixth form

The quality of the teaching in the sixth form is **good**, and leads to good learning. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in ICT are very good.
- Teaching of key skills is good.
- There is a lack of independent learning partly owing to a lack of resources in some subjects.

Commentary

35. Teaching is very good in ICT, good in music technology and history, and satisfactory in the other subjects inspected although planning and choice of teaching method in business studies is sometimes inappropriate.
36. Teaching of key skills is good. Students can attend individual workshops in each of the main key skills, and the co-ordinator shows great skill in helping individual students develop literacy skills, which have enabled students to improve their performance in their main subjects. Two students gained university places last year because of their successes in key skills. Another two students for whom English is an additional language have also been helped significantly in their key skills sessions. The co-ordinator works well with colleagues to ensure that students can provide evidence of their key skills competences within the subjects that they study.
37. Vocational courses are limited in choice but in general the quality of teaching is good. Teaching of health and social care is very good. Expectations are high and students are challenged to consider the skills that they will have to develop to enter careers in the health and social care sector. In business studies, teaching is satisfactory but planning and choice of teaching method is weak for a vocational course.
38. In English and mathematics learning is satisfactory. The methods adopted, whilst comprehensive, do not develop sufficiently the students' independence of learning. In the very good lessons, the teacher makes very effective use of the students' own knowledge. Resources are not always sufficient for this aspect of sixth form study to be effective. The provision in both libraries is limited. Textbooks to support mathematics and business education are in short supply and the lack of them forms a barrier to independent learning. In music technology and ICT, however, this aspect is generally good.
39. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in ICT. Teachers use their very good knowledge to inspire students. Homework is used particularly well and planning is meticulous. Students' progress is monitored closely and feedback used effectively to focus the teaching.
40. Overall, assessment in the sixth form is carried out satisfactorily, and contributes to the good learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons in the sixth form

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (13.3%)	7 (23.3%)	10 (33.3%)	9 (30%)	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

41. **The school offers a good range of learning opportunities in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum is satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11.** However, the range of options is quite limited in comparison with many other schools. Vocational courses remain undeveloped. Provision for physical education in Years 10 and 11 does not currently satisfy the National Curriculum, although changes are in hand to correct this deficiency. Opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities are varied. Accommodation is satisfactory for the main school but inadequate for the rapidly growing sixth form. A number of departments are low on basic resources especially in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9
 - Provision for physical education through leisure pursuits does not satisfy National Curriculum requirements.
 - Citizenship is becoming well established and is linked to personal, social and health education.
 - Additional support for pupils out of normal lessons is good.
 - Extra-curricular opportunities in the arts are good.
42. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad and reasonably balanced in time allocation for subjects. Dance and drama are offered within an expressive arts course and are popular with pupils.
 43. In Years 10 and 11, an extended core is provided with a limited range of options from which to choose. All pupils must choose double award science, a short course in ICT, a full course in religious education, French, a technology subject and a creative arts subject, so that the breadth of the curriculum is maintained. However, this restricts the options, and for example pupils cannot study history and geography.
 44. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which is now linked to a citizenship course. Careers education is satisfactory. All requirements for sex and drugs awareness education are fulfilled.
 45. Vocational courses are being explored slowly, but recent attempts at offering a vocational course linked to attendance at college and work experience, was not taken up by pupils. All pupils, however, have a work experience placement for two weeks.
 46. Good opportunities are made available for extracurricular activities. These range from choir to revision clubs but little has been provided in sport, although that shortcoming is being addressed. Provision at lunchtime and after school to support pupils who are struggling or are preparing for examinations in the near future is good and reflects the care that teachers provide for pupils.
 47. Physical education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory as it is currently provided through 'leisure pursuits', involving such activities as ten-pin bowling or self-defence classes, that do not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
 48. Staffing is sufficient in expertise to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are deficiencies in the accommodation and resources that affect the delivery of the curriculum.
 49. The library has insufficient space and resources to help pupils to learn independently but steps are being taken to improve facilities. Some of the space is used as a teaching room, and there is a considerable shortage of books to support learning. However, the provision of computers has improved since the time of the last report. The improvement in music accommodation and resources has contributed to pupils' enthusiasm and achievement in the subject. There is very little use of computers in the art rooms, which affects pupils' learning opportunities. Also, there is no use of data logging equipment in science.
 50. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Teachers and support staff modify well their strategies to meet the pupils' needs. Targets to meet their needs are not always written down to inform all who teach them and to allow teachers to judge pupils' progress when they are reviewed every term.
 51. The school's curriculum meets the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils are well included in all lessons.

Sixth form

The quality of the curriculum in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

52. Each year the school tries to expand the subjects offered and, as the sixth form grows, more courses become viable. National Vocational Qualification engineering is offered, as are GNVQs and AVCEs in business, health and social care and ICT. With advanced levels in most GCE subjects and general studies, the formal curriculum meets the needs of most students. The range of vocational courses is, however, limited and the school is conducting serious enquiries in collaboration with the local college into developing work related learning and more NVQs. The opportunities for enrichment are not extensive and the quality of personal and social education varies considerably according to the tutor group.
53. Guidance for those entering Year 12 is good and students are given several opportunities to meet the careers adviser attached to the school. The general studies courses taken by the majority of students and the successful termly conferences ensure that statutory requirements for religious education are met. Teaching assistants support the eight students with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, very well. The time given to individual students is considerable.
54. Sixth form students use all the same facilities at the main school. Their study room on the Greenacre site is well fitted out with computers and resources and a member of staff supervises the room in lesson times. There is no sixth form common room and this limits the social development and the sharing of learning experiences between students from both schools.

Care, guidance and support

Overall the provision for pupils' care, welfare and guidance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good personal support through a range of innovative avenues.
- Procedures to ensure the girls' health and safety are good.
- The way the school seeks the girls' views, through the school council, is good.
- Relationships are warm and friendly; the atmosphere is positive and harmonious.
- The girls are not made aware enough of the levels they are working at, in order that they can improve. This is particularly so for those in Years 7 to 9.
- The role of the tutor in monitoring the girl's academic progress is limited.

Commentary

55. Girls receive a very high degree of care and support for their personal and welfare needs. This is because relationships in the school are warm and friendly and there is always someone they can turn to if they need help. Child protection procedures are secure and the school operates a good level of health and safety, as also confirmed in a recent Health and Safety Executive inspection.
56. There are a number of effective and innovative ways the school provides advice and guidance. Because of these very good support structures, any types of bullying are investigated thoroughly and quickly dealt with. Support for both academic progress and personal development ranges from an established programme of mentors from the business community supporting individuals, though to counselling and advice for those who do not behave in the manner the school expects. This is through the new appointment of a behaviour support staff member, who also counsels girls needing support. Another new system involving trained Year 8 pupils known as Peer Mediators, has recently been launched and is developing into a useful initiative, especially for those girls who find it easier to talk to someone their own age.

57. The new appointment of a learning mentor provides another valuable strand to the support systems, helping to resolve issues affecting girls in Years 7, 8 and 9 preventing them from learning properly. The established 'Valued Youth' programme helps benefit Year 9 pupils who need extra support. They go into primary schools and work with specific groups of less confident pupils, which in turn, helps to raise their confidence in their own abilities and gives them a real boost. The school have recently received an 'Excellence In Mentoring' award in recognition of their good work.
58. Overall monitoring of girls' academic progress is undertaken at a satisfactory level. Form tutors operate at a mainly pastoral level and do not have a clear oversight of the progress the girls are making. The onus is on the subject teacher to monitor progress within departments. There is some monitoring of progress by heads of year, especially for those whom the school have identified as being academically more able. This is particularly so for girls in Years 7, 8 and 9 and there is also scope for improvement for the older girls, as well.
59. There is a good level of involvement in seeking the girls' views and involving them in decision-making. The school council is an active body who succeed in putting across ideas the girls feel strongly about, These often involve uniform variations such as the introduction of trousers and the state of the toilets, which they feel need considerable improvement.
60. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively monitored through the weekly meeting, chaired by the special educational needs coordinator, with support staff and through very regular contacts with teachers.

Sixth form

Care, support and guidance are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Guidance on further study and career opportunities is good.
- Good use is made of external advisers.

Commentary

61. Within Years 12 and 13 the provision of support, advice and guidance is **good**. The impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities is a strength of the school. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.
62. Students often use their appropriate school mentors but they also receive effective academic help from representatives of Greenwich University who come in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. All receive good tutorial support from the head and deputy head of the sixth form and individual class tutors. The majority of personal support, guidance and advice are shared in common with their relevant school support systems. The impartial support received on study or careers is of very good quality. Students have their views listened to and they also have a sixth form council within which to air their personal views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**. There is a good link with Greenacre Boys' school concerning the joint sixth form. Satisfactory use is made of the wider community and partnerships outside school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a popular choice, there are more parents choosing the school than there are places available.
- Very good links with Greenacre boy's school next door, involving joint arrangements for the sixth form, have considerably widened the opportunities for girls after GCSE's.
- There is useful system for seeking the views of new Year 7 parents about their expectations from the school.
- There is also a well-established tradition of making good use of members of the community as business mentors.
- Annual reports are too vague and contain more detail about what has been covered, and the girl's attitude to the subject, rather than information about progress.
- Nearly half of the parents who replied to the Ofsted questionnaire are not happy about the information they receive about progress. This is a justifiable concern.

Commentary

63. Walderslade has considerably improved its reputation in the community in recent years, largely because of the very strong lead given by the headteacher and the rapid improvement in examination results. It is a popular choice with parents and is oversubscribed.
64. Another reason for its popularity is the presence of the recently established joint sixth form, run in partnership with the neighbouring Greenacre boy's school next door. It is to the schools' credit that both headteachers have established a productive working partnership, greatly improving the girls' opportunities for further education after GCSE's. In addition, consortium arrangements with other secondary schools are opening up many more opportunities as the partnership develops. This aspect of co-operative working is a particular strength.
65. The school has a satisfactory relationship with parents. There is a useful tradition of governors asking new parents about their expectations of the school. A follow up consultation, however, is not provided to find out if these expectations are being realised. Governors have stopped sending out parent's questionnaires to other year groups, because of a tradition of low response. Governors have indicated a strong desire to widen the consultation process.
66. Over half of parents who replied to the Ofsted questionnaire (215 parents) expressed concerns about this aspect of the schools' work. This view was also echoed at the parent's meeting. Inspectors found that parents are justified in these concerns, although there are reasons, which may account for some of this dissatisfaction. The Year 7 parents evening has been postponed until the spring term. Parents were not officially told of this, although they received a calendar of forthcoming dates. Annual reports were not sent out until almost the last day of the summer term, which meant some parents had queries, which could not be discussed until the start of September. The school recognises this was not ideal and usually they are sent out earlier.
67. The school provides a satisfactory number of pre-arranged meetings to talk with parents about their daughter's progress. The headteacher stresses that teachers are very willing to meet parents at other times in the year, if parents ask.
68. Putting the contributory factors explained above to one side, attendance at parent's evenings has been falling, down to between 50per cent and 60 per cent in some year groups. In an effort to overcome this, all Year 7,8 and 9 parents will this year receive an invitation to Academic Day, which is a new initiative, where a whole day will be set aside to talk with parents and girls together, during the Spring term. Year 10 parents will have chance to speak to subject teachers in May, as usual, in addition to the 'Introduction to GCSE' evening held at the start of the year. There are always quite detailed individual interviews with Year 11 girls and their parents in January.

69. The quality of annual reports is unsatisfactory. They tell parents little about the progress their daughter is making. Instead, reports go into considerable detail about course content and comments about attitude towards the subject. As indications of target GCSE grades are not consistently provided, parents do not always know what their daughters are aiming for.
70. Parents, and involved outside agencies, are well informed on the progress of pupils through regular reviews. The school effectively deals with any concerns between the periods of review.
71. Community involvement in school life is satisfactory. A good number of mentors from the business community visit to meet with individual girls, who benefit from the extra motivational support and encouragement. This is a successful and well-established initiative, and all parties involved feel it really does make a difference. Primary links are quite restricted. There are few current contacts, except in music, where primary children have enjoyed workshops run by Walderslade musicians.

Sixth form

Commentary

72. Students in Years 12 and 13 benefit from **very good** links with other schools and colleges. Educational links with other schools and contribution to wider partnerships are very good. Management arrangements for shared or linked provision are very good. The mechanism for the transfer of students is good.
73. Students training as teachers help in local nurseries and primary schools. A similar arrangement is made for sports leadership trainees. As within the main school, mentors from Greenwich University advise students on their future. There are also productive links with Christchurch College, Canterbury. Shared/linked provision is evident in the manner with which students have been combined into one successful sixth form. The school's mechanism for transfer into careers and university are efficient and caring.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership by the headteacher is **very good**. Leadership of other key staff is **good**. The overall management of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for taking the school forward in its next phase of development.
- The heads' vision is for success and high achievement for all. Staff support this vision of an inclusive school. There is very good equality of access for all.
- Development planning, evaluation and review are sharply focused on raising standards.
- Statutory requirements are not fully met for the curriculum or for a daily act of collective worship.
- Subject management is nearly always good, with particular strengths in music, history, religious education and citizenship.
- The professional development of all staff, and the support given to training teachers are excellent.
- The recruitment and retention of staff is very well managed.

Commentary

74. The school is being very successfully led to ensure it progresses still further in its aims of success for all. The school is popular with parents who feel the leadership of the headteacher is very good. Standards have risen sharply with noticeable improvement in the higher GCSE grades. Achievement across the school is good. The headteacher is successful in establishing good relationships and effective teams. The new senior leadership team is having a positive effect on the work of the school. They give strong support to the vision of the headteacher and

in the day-to-day management of the school. Leadership by most key subject leaders is effective. They are helping to raise standards through their drive for improvement in their subjects and by creating effective teams of teachers.

75. Management of the school is good. It has good procedures for reviewing its work and progress. The links between senior managers and subject leaders are strong. There is an effective annual cycle of review supported by a programme of in-depth audit of subjects. This includes monitoring of teaching and review of pupils' work as well as data analysis. In this way the school knows its strengths and weakness and builds the school improvement plan around this information. The school improvement plan is a very effective tool for guiding the work of the school. The management of subjects is good overall. Subject improvement plans are carefully linked to the priorities identified by the school. This consistent drive for improvement by all staff makes a considerable contribution to rising standards.
76. Very effective use is made of professional development to support all staff. Every care is taken to ensure that all staff in the school receive the best and most appropriate training. They are given every possible encouragement and support to further their own development. Training undertaken relates to the needs of the school, their department and their own professional development. The benefits of that training are made available to all staff in the school. Training teachers receive regular excellent support, in order that they gain maximum benefit from their time in the school. With a clear awareness of the needs of the school, the headteacher appoints only those who would make a positive contribution to their subject and to the school. This has contributed to the overall quality of teaching, and to the retention of staff.
77. The governance of the school overall is good. Governors are actively involved in the strategic planning for future development. They have a good and developing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school partly because the headteacher is very open and forthcoming with information. In meetings they support but also challenge any proposed changes. However, the governors are in breach of their statutory responsibilities by not ensuring that the school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
78. The governor with an oversight for the provision of pupils with special educational needs maintains very good contact with the school, visiting the school very frequently to discuss provision. The management and leadership for pupils with special educational needs are good. Staff and pupils are motivated well by the special educational needs coordinator, teachers and the very good input of support staff.
79. Financial management is secure. The business manager ensures all accounting procedures are well in place. The school receives little additional funding to its basic budget and pays particular attention to applying the basic principles of obtaining best value for money. Development plans are given considerable thought to ensure financial viability.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,387,911
Total expenditure	2,464,362
Expenditure per pupil	2,678

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	105,772
Balance carried forward to the next	29,320

Sixth form

Commentary

80. The leadership of the sixth form reflects the school's **good overall leadership**. Management succeeds in ensuring the efficient running of the sixth form across two schools and linking teaching and learning with other consortium institutions. Students are well looked after and their progress is effectively tracked. They are carefully monitored and effectively managed.
81. Sixth form day-to-day management is effective. Staff are clear what their roles and responsibilities are. Students have access to them for support both in and outside lessons. Under the knowledgeable guidance of the head of sixth form, teachers and mentors, students are able to pursue their studies effectively.
82. The school expends considerable effort and energy to ensure that sixth form provision is successful. Given the short time that the sixth form has been running, these efforts are paying off.
83. The two schools work closely together to allocate a joint fund to support the sixth form. Regular meetings are held. Overall the joint sixth form is cost effective.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are dynamic and effective in driving improvement.
- Achievement of pupils is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching is good.
- Relationships and attitudes of pupils are very good.
- Higher ability pupils would benefit from greater differentiation of texts and tasks.
- The library is inadequate to support literacy within the school.

Commentary

84. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests were lower than those for mathematics and science and well below the national average but by the end of Year 9, pupils achieve very well when measured against prior attainment. They did not reflect the satisfactory trend in improvement over the last three years. Sound progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11. Results at GCSE are now satisfactory compared to national levels. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, especially in Years 7 to 9. Pupils who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Higher ability pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not achieve the highest grades at GCSE because the texts used and the coursework tasks limit their attainment. Pupils in all years make very good progress with speaking and listening skills. Work seen and pupils' achievement observed in lessons confirmed the levels achieved in examinations.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in 78 per cent of the lessons observed, the teaching was good or very good. All lessons are well planned, tightly structured and relate to clear academic objectives. The length of lessons does not allow teachers to make full use of this planning. There is often not enough time for extended writing practice to be of real value or for teachers to check pupils' learning at the end of lessons. Good examples were seen of teachers helping pupils to use learning objectives and assessment criteria to improve their literacy and speaking and listening skills, for example, when giving individual presentations on *Goodnight Mister Tom*. The best lessons demonstrate very good, imaginative use of a variety of teaching styles and study skills, for example, in a Year 11 lesson on *Of Mice and Men*. A wider range of literature and other texts than that commented upon in the previous report is now read and enjoyed by pupils. The lack of structured essay writing noted in the last report has been addressed. Pupils are now taught effectively how to use paragraphs. They respond particularly well to opportunities for discussion and debate, as seen in Year 7 lessons on persuasive writing. Pupils considered the reasons for and against the wearing of school uniform. They expressed themselves confidently, listened to each other with respect and developed arguments logically. Pupils are very well motivated and work together very positively.
86. Work is assessed and recorded accurately but grades and levels of attainment are not always written on pupils' work. The quality of marking is not consistent. Some teachers mark work helpfully with written comments specifically indicating relevant targets for pupils to address. Pupils do not correct errors of spelling or punctuation to help them improve basic skills. Clearer monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress towards targets and component grades for GCSE are needed to inform planning.

87. The strong, energetic and dynamic leadership of the head of department, together with her clear sense of direction, ensures that there is a relentless focus on raising standards. Management is efficient. Planning and documentation are impressive. Good use is made of local opportunities for professional development and the head of department's experience as a lead teacher. The training of new teachers forms a major part of the work of the department. This also restricts the time available to the head of department to develop still further the good progress made since the last report. Effective planning strategies have minimised the impact of recent staffing difficulties on pupils' learning. English resources have been added to and renewed since the last report, but require further enhancement. The curriculum is good and includes a range of learning experiences to develop skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities to enrich and extend their learning experience in addition to those already offered, such as theatre trips and revision study days. There is satisfactory use of ICT.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

88. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. Skills in reading and writing are improving quickly, but further systematic work is required on the basic skills of spelling and punctuation. The literacy co-ordinator, who is also the head of English, has worked hard to raise standards of literacy since the last report. There is a good literacy policy but it is not followed by all teachers in all subjects, particularly with regard to the marking and correction of pupils' errors in basic skills. There is good practice in some subjects, for example music, modern foreign languages, history and geography. Evidence was seen of the use of writing frames to support essay planning; identification of subject specific vocabulary, the teaching of note-taking and information retrieval skills. The library resources, a key issue in the last report, are still inadequate. They do not support the improving literacy skills of pupils.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of French and Spanish is very good.
- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Standards are above average in French in Year 7 and in Spanish in Year 9.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- The leadership of the department is good.

Commentary

89. Standards in teacher assessments in Year 9 in 2003 were above average in French. The results of examinations at GCSE in 2003 showed that the percentage achieving a grade A* to C was well below the national average. In 2002 this percentage was well above the national average. The school attributes the lower performance in 2003 to the fact that no pupils were entered for the higher tier at GCSE. This has been remedied for 2004. The standards seen on inspection show that pupils are on course to achieve at least average standards in French by the end of Year 9 and at GCSE. Standards in Spanish are above average by Year 11. Pupils' achievement is good.
90. Pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, as a result of very good teaching. The teaching is always in the foreign language and provides pupils with excellent models of spoken French and Spanish. This helps pupils to achieve good standards of pronunciation and intonation. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' ability to understand and speak in lessons and pupils rise to these challenges enthusiastically. Their attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils use the foreign language as a matter of course when they start learning. They respond to rapidly spoken instructions with understanding and quickly develop the confidence to ask

and answer common classroom questions. This is one of the main reasons why the achievement of beginners in French in Year 7 and in Spanish in Year 9 is well above average.

91. Pupils develop a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and apply these well in speaking and writing within restricted contexts. The teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. There is little opportunity for pupils' imaginative writing. The use by pupils of computers and the Internet is currently limited but is satisfactory in the examples seen. Teachers use a very good range of active strategies and pupils respond very well to the lively and friendly atmosphere in lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Assessment is satisfactory although teachers need to explain more to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
92. The leadership and management of the department are good. The newly-appointed head of department has done much to bring together a strongly-committed team and to ensure consistency in all teaching. The school has maintained a high level of performance since the previous inspection and continues to improve.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-planned programme of extra support available for all abilities and this raises attainment.
- Learning is good as a result of good teaching and support.
- Mathematics across the curriculum remains limited in its application, as was found in the previous inspection.
- Lessons run smoothly, with good relations between staff and pupils.
- The classroom assistants know the special educational needs of pupils well and their work helps to raise achievement.
- There is insufficient attention during lessons given to the relevance and usefulness of mathematics in work or other subjects.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

93. Standards of the current Year 7 were well below national average on entry to the school and, with small variations, this has been the picture in recent years. By the end of Year 9, although standards are still below the national average, they are well above those of schools with a similar intake. A significant minority have difficulty in recalling number facts and many girls find it difficult to apply number to routine problems with speed and accuracy.
94. GCSE results have been well below the national average and below those of similar schools. Last year's results were about half of the national average although one girl attained the highest grade and there was an increase in the number of grade B's awarded.
95. During Years 7 to 9, achievement is good with the large majority of girls doing better than their prior attainment might indicate. By the end of Year 9 the most able can deal confidently with algebra, they can analyse data and present graphical work to a high standard. Girls with special educational needs make good progress owing to the good support they receive. By the end of Year 11, most girls get their expected GCSE grades and a few do better. The good quality of coursework shows that satisfactory progress continues throughout but many girls find the demands of the GCSE examination course very difficult.
96. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching was judged to be good in about one-third of lessons seen and otherwise was satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared, orderly and have

clear objectives. There are good relations between staff and pupils and girls cooperate well in class. Pupils who find the subject difficult and those with special educational needs benefit from the good support of classroom assistants who know the needs of the girls. Extra help is also available for gifted and more able girls in Years 10 and 11. There are several programmes available throughout the school and these are proving effective in raising standards. However, insufficient use is made of computers to enhance teaching and learning, and insufficient attention is given to the usefulness of mathematics in work and other subjects.

97. Two curriculum leaders, one for Years 7 to 9 and the other for Years 10 and 11 jointly manage the subject and work well together. The Year 7 to 9 leader has been particularly effective in introducing strategies for improving standards using the National Numeracy Strategy, which uses teaching materials combined with a structured approach to teaching. Since the last inspection, the management and teaching of the subject have improved considerably, both of which have contributed to an improvement in standards and achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

98. The head of mathematics for Years 7 to 9 has produced comprehensive guidance on the ways in which mathematics can be used in other subjects. The implementation of policy has been slow as this was raised as an issue at the last inspection. Application of mathematics in other subjects is still little developed, but there is evidence of increased use of numeracy in some areas. Examples of effective use of mathematics were seen in geography, music and design and technology; measurement, data-handling and graph-work made a positive contribution to those subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in good achievement by pupils.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. National Curriculum levels are not always given, and pupils do not know how to improve.
- Relationships are good, which motivates pupils to succeed.
- Textbooks are not provided for pupils in Years 7 to 10, which makes it difficult for pupils to extend and consolidate their learning.
- There is insufficient use of ICT, and data logging is not possible, therefore National Curriculum subject requirements are not met.
- Visits to enrich the curriculum are limited.

Commentary

99. In 2003, the results of the Standard Attainment Tests for Year 9 pupils showed an improvement from previous years. They matched the average of similar schools, while being below national averages. The GCSE results also improved, but were still well below the national average and those attained in similar schools. This represents good achievement by all pupils, who enter the school with standards that are well below the national average. This includes those with special educational needs, who achieve with the support of the teacher and the very good learning support assistant.
100. Standards seen match those in the examinations. A good feature is that much of pupils' learning is through experiments, which they conduct accurately, use figures obtained to draw graphs, and then interpret them to draw conclusions. This has improved since the time of the last report. The three science subjects are covered equally well, the more able gaining good levels, while the lower groups have lower levels of attainment. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work, but ICT is insufficiently used. This has not improved since the time of the last report. There are good examples of its use in homework, for example, when pupils

undertook research on endangered species. Data logging, which is an element of the National Curriculum, is not part of their work, because of lack of equipment.

101. The standards seen are the result of good teaching. Teachers plan well, and the carefully structured lessons with a variety of activities keep pupils engaged in learning. The pace of lessons is brisk, so that much is covered. Questioning is probing, which makes pupils think, and the good relationships encourage pupils to question, so that they learn.
102. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching is very good. However, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not given levels based on National Curriculum level² criteria, nor do they have sufficient information to know how to improve. Also these pupils, and those in Year 10, do not have textbooks, which prevent them being able to reinforce their learning. This has not improved since the time of the last report. Visits, which make the subject real to pupils, are not a frequent part of the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management have brought about good improvement with capacity to improve further.
- Pupils' use of ICT for measuring is underdeveloped because of limited opportunities to use it in the scientific subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good because of the high standards set by teachers.
- Good use is made of information by teachers to support pupils' progress but pupils cannot presently relate this information to national grades for levels.
- Very good use is made of homework to reinforce and extend learning.

Commentary

103. ICT was first examined at the end of Year 11 in 2002 and in 2003 there was a significant increase in the number of pupils examined. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below the national average. Teacher assessments of pupil attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are well above average. They have risen from well below average in 2002. By the end of Year 9, pupils' ICT capability seen is broadly in line with national expectations and teacher assessments therefore appear high. Pupils have well developed communication, control and information handling capability but under developed measuring and modelling capability. Not enough time is allocated to this area of study to ensure that all strands and systems capabilities are fully developed. However, achievement is good when pupils' below average ICT capability on entry to the school is considered.
104. By the end of Year 11, pupils following the GCSE ICT course have well-developed systems and project management skills, which they have used to solve web based communication, data handling and spreadsheet based problems. These pupils make good progress when their below average attainment at the end of Year 9 is considered. Pupils not following a dedicated ICT course make satisfactory progress using ICT in a business and communication systems course and a range of subjects.
105. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high standards and positive working relationships with pupils whose attitudes to the subject are very good. The teachers move around the classrooms constantly during lessons to support progress and ensure that pupils know what to do to improve. Very good use is made of homework to

² [The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Year 9, are expected to reach Level 5. If a pupil is attaining Level 6 or 7 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a pupil of his or her age.](#)

reinforce and extend learning. Teachers use information about pupils' progress to support them well and pupils know what to do to improve but they cannot presently relate this information to national grades for levels and have difficulty interpreting GCSE criteria for the grading of project work. Reports to parents do not show clear learning targets for pupils.

106. The leadership of the department is good. There is good vision and good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Progress made by pupils by the end of Year 9 is now good, teaching is now good and the school has 17 computers above the number usually found in a school this size. Management is also good, national resources have been tested, are being used very well and are helping to raise standards further this year. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

107. There is very good use of ICT in music for composition and pupils communicate by email with the teacher to obtain feedback about 'work in progress'. Good use was seen in geography and business for gathering and presenting information. There is satisfactory use in most other subjects of the curriculum. The English, science, physical education, design and technology, modern foreign language, religious education and history departments use word processing, desk-top publishing, presentation software and the Internet in coursework. Further developments are required to embed the use of ICT across other subject work, in particular, within the science department who do not currently develop pupils' measuring capability through the use of data-logging equipment, and use in the art department as a creative tool. The mathematics department also needs to increase the opportunities offered. Digital projectors and interactive whiteboards support the teaching of some subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results, whilst below average, are improving sharply and pupils now achieve well.
- Pupils' technical skills in geography are stronger than their ability to write extensively, although the department supports literacy skills well.
- Teaching is generally good, although some teaching is too cautious and marking needs to be sharper.
- Leadership and management are good overall, with management being stronger than leadership.

108. Standards are average. Although GCSE results in 2003 were below national averages they were significantly above the results gained in 2002 and are improving sharply. Standards observed in lessons also indicate that pupils of all ages perform satisfactorily. Although the levels gained by 14-year-old pupils, as assessed by teachers in the school, were markedly below national averages, a review of these pupils' current work indicates that the teacher assessments were probably too harsh. Generally, pupils of all ages achieve well, particularly when teaching is good.

109. Achievement in Year 9 is good, with good progress being made by both able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. By the end of Year 11, achievement, as measured against the low standards seen when pupils first entered the school, is also good. Younger pupils' map skills, and their skills in interpreting and analysing data are satisfactory and, increasingly, they use technical vocabulary with confidence. These skills are, however, invariably stronger than their knowledge and understanding and their ability to write extensively, and whilst the school has acted directly to improve pupils' literacy skills, it should continue to target this key aspect of pupils' competence in geography across the school.

110. Teaching is good. At its very best, it is excellent and much is very good. This has been a key factor in the recent improvement seen in pupils' standards. All teachers manage pupils very well, and all lessons observed were calm and orderly, enabling pupils to make good progress as a result. No teaching seen in the course of the inspection was less than satisfactory. At its best, teachers' subject knowledge is very good. Staff know how to use their expertise to help pupils understand and use technically demanding concepts and ideas. Such teaching is exciting, brisk and purposeful and here, pupils readily respond to the challenges they are set. The department offers pupils very good fieldwork opportunities and in this respect, as well as in respect of the use of ICT, the department has made good improvements. At times, however, teaching is a little cautious, and does not always ensure that all pupils, particularly less able pupils, take a sufficiently active part in class discussions. Assessment is generally satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection but teachers need to do more to ensure that when work is marked, the guidance offered to pupils is sharp and properly followed up.
111. Leadership in geography is satisfactory. Management is good. Most of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been improved significantly. There are good schemes of work and the departmental handbook is very clear and comprehensive. Both documents help draw together teachers' work in geography very well. It regularly and formally reviews its examination success and undertakes audits of pupils' work. These audits are, however, insufficiently concerned to identify the areas where pupils struggle, so that curriculum targets and priorities may be agreed to guide the department's subsequent work. In this respect, departmental practice needs refinement.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Results are still below average but standards are rising.
- Pupil target setting is proving very effective in raising achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good and effective monitoring is in place.
- Accommodation is good and displays are excellent.
- Some teachers' use detailed formative comments but this is not yet consistent.

Commentary

112. Results at Years 9 and 11 are still below national averages but good progress is being made and standards are improving. The subject is very popular in Years 10 and 11 reflecting pupils' interest and enjoyment based on the quality of teaching and the teachers' enthusiasm. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.
113. Teaching is good because teachers have high aspirations for their pupils, who are expected to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers provide challenging opportunities, using various activities, including paired and group activities, as well as individual work, which results in some impressive work, orally, diagrammatically and in writing. Pupils show a good grasp of historical issues and good subject knowledge. Lessons include clear aims at the start and a sound review of learning at the end. Pupils respond positively to teachers and actively participate in and enjoy the lessons. Teachers use various strategies to combat low literacy levels and help the pupils improve their work including key subject words, writing frames and structured essays.
114. The head of department shows very good leadership and management skills, and has properly dealt with issues from the previous inspection. Together with a very supportive team, strategies have been put in place to raise attainment. The syllabus for Years 7 to 9 is now more relevant with new schemes of work, whilst the GCSE course has been changed to meet

better the needs of all pupils. There are well-prepared differentiated materials and tasks for students with special educational needs and for the more able. Teachers' use well structured group work and individual coaching to support pupils with special educational needs and where English is not the first language. Sound monitoring is in place including lesson observations, marking checks and book sampling. Marking is conscientious and the head of department's formative comments and target setting is a model the department should all use and is worthy of wider notice. Homework is set regularly, builds on the learning in lessons and is planned to meet the pupils' needs.

115. Accommodation is good with all of the teaching rooms located near to each other. The rooms are welcoming with good, and in one case, excellent displays. Resources are adequate, well produced and well used, although the department does need to be supported to improve resources for Year 8. ICT use is under-developed however ICT, literacy and numeracy are built into the new schemes of work and good examples were seen of the use of literacy including some good oral work from a group of less able pupils. There is a history club run by one of the history teachers and visit opportunities are provided, including to the battlefields of Belgium.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and contributes well to pupil achievement.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Assessment of pupils' work is well developed.
- The monitoring of teachers and pupils' work is well developed.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good and this ensures that pupils are provided with a very rich diet of religious education.

Commentary

116. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average in relation to the Medway LEA agreed syllabus. Given pupils' below average standards on entry to the school, these standards represent good achievement for pupils. There are some good examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. They are able to link their knowledge of religion with their everyday experiences. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work enable pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills
117. In Years 10 and 11, standards in the work seen are average. Standards in the GCSE course were well below the national average in 2003, but compared favourably with similar schools. Achievement overall is good. Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of how they can learn from religion and apply it in their lives, but do not always question or explore their own attitudes in sufficient depth.
118. Teaching is good and contributes well to pupils' achievement. The teacher's use of discussion and questioning enables pupils to express their opinions and form clear judgments about religious and moral issues. The teachers' very good knowledge of the subject enables pupils to make good progress in the GCSE course. In one Year 11 lesson, pupils show a very clear understanding of the issues involved in the Christian and Jewish attitudes towards animal rights and their ability to articulate their views is well developed. Homework is well used to allow pupils to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have clear expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed, and these are very effective in contributing to good pupil achievement. The assessment procedures provide a clear basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. The subject sets detailed targets against which it

can assess pupils' progress. In addition, pupils are clear from the detailed comments in their books about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve.

119. Curriculum leadership is very good, with a clear sense of purpose and direction. The head of the department approaches the task with enthusiasm and commitment. She has been very successful in developing a strong team approach, and is very well supported by other teachers, some of whom are specialists. The monitoring of the work of teachers and pupils is well developed. The subject is managed very well and this is reflected in the rich diet of religious education provided for the pupils.
120. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness are particularly strong. They demonstrate a clear respect for the views, faiths and traditions of each other.
121. Since the last inspection standards have improved. Good improvements have been made in planning and in the schemes of work. The hard work of the curriculum leader has achieved great credibility for the subject. The quality of teaching has also improved. Overall, the improvements since the last inspection have had a good impact on standards, pupil achievement and progress.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have improved consistently over the last three years.
- Standards at the age of 14 are similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally.
- Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work very hard.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Assessment is thorough but teachers' marking is too hard.

Commentary

122. GCSE results are improving. The number of pupils achieving A*-C grades has increased by 50 per cent since 2001. In 2003, standards were below the national average overall, but in line in food technology. Given their ability on entry to the school, these results show that pupils are achieving well. Coursework systematically covers the examination requirements, but pupils need to make better use of computers and their research needs to be in greater depth. Practical work is better than written work and is of a similar standard to that seen in most schools.
123. By the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation and is similar in each aspect of the subject. This represents very good progress as pupils' ability on entry to the school is well below average. Pupils take a pride in their work and try hard to achieve a high quality finish. They quickly develop an understanding of the design process and follow it conscientiously in all their work. Pupils are good at producing a range of initial ideas and then evaluating them carefully to identify which would be the best one to make.
124. Teaching is good overall. Teachers plan lessons carefully, taking into account the different needs and abilities of the pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. Consequently, they provide very competent demonstrations and explanations of new skills and techniques. They plan interesting activities, which pupils enjoy. Consequently they behave well, work hard and make good progress. The technician and learning support assistant who work in the department are very knowledgeable and helpful. They give lots of

support to pupils, which ensures they all achieve success and build up their self-esteem. Work is carefully marked by teachers. It identifies what pupils have done well and tells them how they could improve. However, teachers underestimate their level of attainment and need to be more generous. A good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs provides pupils with the opportunity to extend their work or catch up if they have been absent or work more slowly than others. Teachers ensure that a good range of opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills is provided for the pupils.

125. The head of department has good leadership and management skills. Standards have consistently improved, particularly in resistant materials, since his appointment. He has created an effective team of teachers who work well together and support each other. He monitors the work of the department effectively, although he is aware that this could be further improved if he observed lessons on a more regular basis. His action plan is logical but now needs to focus more on design and technology developments rather than whole-school ones. The subject benefits from specialist teaching rooms, but the food technology room suffers from too few cookers and some that are broken and urgently need to be replaced. The workshop is very well maintained. All subjects provide interesting and attractive displays of pupils' work.
126. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved considerably. Teaching is better. Higher attaining pupils are now planned for and their work is challenging. Computers are used, but still not as much as in most schools.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

127. The focus was on art and design, and music. Drama was sampled briefly during the inspection. Pupils are taught drama as a discrete subject in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum is being developed well, with some good, structured lesson planning and schemes of work already in place. Cross-curricular links with English are firmly identified and documented. Drama forms part of the GCSE expressive arts course, offered as an optional subject to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Results in 2003 for this course were excellent, exceeding the average predictions for pupil attainment. Very useful analysis of the results has been conducted. Coursework is carefully planned and assessed, with the information being used to help individual pupils to improve their work. Good use is made of ICT to aid planning and presentation of work, particularly for lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs. Accommodation is good.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average up to Year 9. They are well above average by the end of Year 11.
- Very good teaching overall supports the very good achievements of the pupils.
- The management and leadership of the department are good.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use computers and sketch books.
- Pupils show a very good enthusiasm and motivation for the subject and take up for the good range of lunch-time clubs.

Commentary

128. Pupils on entry to the school have a varied and sometimes limited experience of art. Nonetheless by the end of Year 9, standards are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Supported by very good teaching they achieve well, improving standards of their work to a high level. In GCSE examinations, standards and achievement are well above average. Very good teamwork between staff and pupils as lessons progress supports their very good learning.

129. The quality of teaching is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. The pupils show very good attitudes to their work and apply themselves well to the regularly set homework. Lesson planning is very effective, supported by a good scheme of work. Good thought is given to develop the pupils' literacy. Regular references are made in lessons to the work of artists and the pupils incorporate an analysis of the work of artists into their own designs. Excellent inclusion of all pupils in lessons aids the very good progress of pupils with special educational needs. Some of these pupils attain high grades in examinations.
130. Assessment is broadly satisfactory but the good evaluations of lessons as they progress help the pupils to understand how they can develop and improve their work.
131. At the time of inspection there was not a head of department. A newly appointed head of department does not take up post until next term. The oversight of the department has been well managed by the head of expressive arts aided in an exceptional manner by a newly qualified art teacher. Here schemes of work have been updated. There is a very good team approach to support teachers temporarily teaching the subject.
132. Computer facilities for pupils to access computers for image development as they progress with their work are unsatisfactory. The use of sketchbooks is unsatisfactory. Pupils infrequently make comments in their sketchbooks to justify and evaluate what they are doing and say how their style is influenced by the range of artists they study.
133. The present accommodation is satisfactory, but at times when numbers are large is rather cramped. Opportunities are restricted for three-dimensional works. Single timetabled periods do not allow the pupils sufficient time to develop their work. Pupils take up in large numbers the good opportunities offered by lunchtime clubs.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good as teachers make the subject interesting.
- Leadership and management are very good because of clear sense of direction and priorities for development.
- The range of extra curricular activities contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils do not sufficiently understand how to improve their own work and compare their progress to national standards.
- Using ICT allows pupils to compose effectively.

Commentary

134. Standards of attainment for pupils at the end of Year 9 are average. Only a few pupils took GCSE examinations in 2003, which was the first time after a gap of several years that pupils had been entered. Pupils' attainment was generally better than in their other subjects. However, because of generally weak performing skills, overall attainment is below average for pupils at the end of Year 11.
135. Pupils' musical ability is below average at the start of Year 7. Consistently good and challenging teaching means pupils make good progress. Achievement is good by the end of Year 9. Those pupils who study music in Years 10 and 11 often start with below average standards. Despite considerable variations in performing and composing skills, combined with some pupils' low self-esteem, achievement is good for all pupils including those with special educational needs.
136. Teaching is good. Some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. The musical knowledge, challenge and high expectations by staff ensure that pupils enjoy their lessons

and are motivated to do their best. They are individually challenged through detailed planning that links and develops musical skills and knowledge systematically. Teachers' enthusiasm combined with good working relationships keeps all pupils involved. At times less competent pupils rely too much on their teachers to provide answers for them. Regular written evaluations which are marked in great detail, means that pupils review and reflect on their learning and develop their literacy skills. Pupils learn how to express opinions and give mature and thoughtful answers describing their work. By Years 10 and 11 they use musical language successfully when evaluating and describing their compositions. Because pupils use ICT regularly they are competent users of computer programs to explore and refine sounds.

137. Through the various extra curricular ensembles, pupils enjoy the social opportunities of making music together in the school and local community.
138. Leadership and management are very good. Teamwork is strong and there is a consistency of approach combined with a clear sense of direction and purpose. Teachers give freely of their time and support each other. Assessment of pupils work helps teachers plan carefully. However, pupils need to take more responsibility for setting their own targets and comparing progress to national standards. The department provides a good musical environment for pupils and improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management are bringing about noticeable improvement.
- Good attitudes and behaviour of pupils are supporting this improvement.
- Provision for talented pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is too variable, however, the school is tackling this.
- The provision for core physical education in Years 10 and 11 does not currently fulfil the National Curriculum requirements.
- The GCSE course is now well established and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Commentary

139. The first group of pupils will complete the GCSE course in 2004. Standards of work seen are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teachers prepare carefully and pay good attention to the syllabus in their planning. Teachers' assessments in Year 9 show average standards but in recent years when assessing pupils' work, teachers have not interpreted National Curriculum standards with sufficient accuracy. Standards of work seen are below average. In general lessons in Years 10 and 11 standards are below average because the curriculum is too fragmented. The choices offered do not meet requirements for studying activities in depth.
140. Pupils in Year 7 enter with below average standards and their experience of activities differs widely. Currently, standards remain below average in Year 9. However, standards are improving quickly, pupils are making good progress in lessons. Much has been achieved since the beginning of term through better curriculum planning and good teaching in some groups. In some activities, standards are approaching average, particularly in gymnastics. Dance is part of creative arts but contributes to the curriculum and achievement in physical education. Overall, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In general physical education lessons in Years 10 and 11, achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils choose from a range of activities that do not always meet National Curriculum requirements. The optional nature of these courses does not ensure the consistent development of skills, knowledge and understanding.
141. Teaching is satisfactory overall but is inconsistent and varies from very good to unsatisfactory. The school is taking appropriate steps to improve unsatisfactory teaching. There are examples

of very good teaching. The best lessons are well planned to develop knowledge and understanding as well as skills. Teachers support pupils well, they build their confidence and encourage them to do their best. Pupils have good attitudes and always behave well. When good teaching builds on these good attitudes progress is good. Lessons are very long particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 9. In some, the pace of learning is too slow because teachers do not plan a wide enough range of activities for the time available. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the work does not challenge and motivate pupils to improve.

142. Leadership and management by the new curriculum leader are good. There has been a noticeable improvement since the beginning of term. Improvement on the issues identified at the last inspection is satisfactory. There is a very clear vision and plan for improvement. This accurately identifies the weaknesses in the subject. The subject leader, who is actively supported by the school, is implementing the plan effectively. Schemes of work are in place and new assessment systems regularly involve pupils in evaluating their progress using National Curriculum levels. Talented pupils have not been identified. Clubs have been restarted but as yet there are no competitive games or routes to representative competition for these pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Methodical teaching ensures that most students are well prepared for examinations.
- Students develop and apply good IT skills to a range of office applications.
- There are few opportunities for students to develop a wider range of business skills.
- Teaching strategies are limited and do not promote independent learning.
- Most students respond well to their business courses and see the relevance of their course to future career options.
- Links with local businesses are under developed.

Commentary

143. In 2003 38 per cent of those students entered for the business and communication studies GCSE achieved C grades. There were no higher grades and these results are lower than those achieved nationally but broadly in line with results from other subjects. This was the first time that students had been entered for this examination.
144. The numbers of students taking this subject have grown and there are now three sets in year 10, and their attainment is satisfactory. Examination of student work and class observations show that students are making reasonable progress in developing the skills required for success in this subject. Most are able to use spreadsheets and make good use of word-processing skills to make their work attractive and vocationally appropriate. Students respond well to the opportunities to develop their ICT skills and appreciate the future value of having a better understanding of topics such as insurance. Business skills, however, are less well developed and most students showed a lack of sophistication in their understanding of how businesses actually work.
145. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All lessons are methodically planned to meet assessment requirements. Teachers work hard to make sure that students understand tasks given. At the time of the inspection there was little evidence of group and paired work, and too few opportunities for students to take more responsibility for their own learning. Teachers make good use of work experience to improve student understanding of how businesses actually work and those from the top set are given the further opportunity to develop their understanding of how businesses actually work by visiting BA Systems at Rochester. This opportunity is not extended to those in lower sets. In better lessons teachers are able to

communicate their enthusiasm for their subject, but most lessons lacked the extra spark and interest that often characterises effective business teaching.

146. Two part time teachers, assisted by a graduate trainee, undertake the bulk of teaching. They support each other well but overall responsibility is with the head of ICT who does not teach business courses. This limits the effectiveness of leadership and management, which is judged to be unsatisfactory. Inadequate attention has been given to refining effective schemes of work and the development plan is not very ambitious. Targets set for improvements in exam results are too modest and the heavy weighting given to ICT limits the development of business skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and makes a clear contribution to pupils' achievement and conceptual development.
- The monitoring of citizenship is used well to develop the subject further.
- Very good leadership and management of the subject ensure that pupils are provided with a rich diet of citizenship education.
- There is very good planning and organization of the curriculum.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in school and community based activities.

Commentary

147. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average. Pupils are developing well in their knowledge and understanding of responsible citizenship.
148. Standards in lessons and in the work seen in Years 10 and 11 are average. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of concepts such as rights and responsibilities, justice and fairness and can relate these to their own and others' experiences.
149. The school is committed to the provision of citizenship education and sees it as integral to pupils' personal development. The programme has been developed very well and significant steps have already been taken to deliver this aspect of the curriculum. Careful thought and attention has been given to how to deliver this aspect of pupils' personal development and a small team of skilled teachers ensures that pupils make good progress. Citizenship education is taught as a discrete subject alongside the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. It is not, as yet, fully supported by related themes and topics covered in other subjects with the exception of religious education who make a significant contribution. Pupils have additional opportunities to develop an understanding of responsible citizenship and the democratic process through activities such as the school council. This aspect of citizenship has yet to be fully developed. The use of citizenship themes, such as economic and political literacy, has been introduced well. These activities provide a good basis to enable pupils to develop a clear awareness of what it means to be a responsible citizen.
150. The good teaching challenges pupils to develop their own attitudes towards citizenship well. In the lessons observed, the teachers' good knowledge and confidence enable pupils to develop important citizenship skills of analysis and evaluation. The good use of questions and range of styles enables pupils to think about their own responses to issues.
151. The very good leadership and management of the subject make a significant contribution to pupils' progress in the area. The teaching of citizenship is very well supported by a

comprehensive scheme of work and clear assessment procedures that enables the coverage of topics to be recorded. Monitoring of the work of the subject is well-established. Citizenship make a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils both in terms of the curriculum on offer and teaching styles that encourage pupils to develop attitudes and values. Very good progress is being made in the development of citizenship and this provides a very firm base for further improvement.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry, and performance information for the courses that were completed in 2002.

GCE AS level courses (Joint Sixth)

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B	
		School	England	School	England
Biology	7	29	82	0	33
English	5	80	94	0	38
Art	5	80	90	20	43
Design and technology	6	67	89	0	32
French	5	40	85	0	35
ICT	23	83	78	8	21
Geography	6	83	88	33	36
Media Studies	4	100	N/a	0	N/a
Performance Studies	2	100	N/a	0	N/a
Psychology	1	0	83	0	32

GCE A level (Greenacre) and VCE courses (Joint Sixth)

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B	
		School	England	School	England
ICT (AVCE)	4	100	84	0	25
Business Studies (AVCE)	8	13	96	0	33
Art and design	5	80	95	40	49
English literature	5	100	99	0	44
Geography	5	100	97	0	40
ICT	9	100	89	22	22

Level 2 Vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business GNVQ	4	100	N/a	0	N/a	0	N/a
Health and social care GNVQ	2	100	N/a	0	N/a	0	N/a
ICT GNVQ	3	33	N/a	33	N/a	0	N/a

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision for English literature is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and all students attain a pass grade at both AS and A2 levels.
- Students' positive attitudes to the subject and very good classroom relationships contribute well to their good achievement.
- Some of the teaching is not challenging enough and is not developing students' independent learning skills sufficiently.

Commentary

152. Standards attained by the five students in the A2 examination in 2002 were well below the national average, but all students received a pass grade. In 2003 only four students from the two schools were entered. Again, all passed but because of the low entry, comparisons with national standards are unreliable. In the much larger joint entry for AS in 2003, in which male and female students were taught separately, results were well below average.
153. Standards of work seen are below average overall, though those in Year 12, currently comprising only female students, are improving rapidly. Most students can speak confidently when required and contribute well to class and group work. Standards of writing are less secure because of students' limited vocabulary and the inability of all but the most able to synthesise commentary and quotations effectively. Writing is often in an inappropriate narrative style because students respond strongly to plot and character, but often forget that these are literary constructs: hence they are not analysing the writer's techniques and style and, therefore, they cannot attain the higher grades. Additionally, although many students can identify a suitable range of literary terms, they have difficulty commenting upon their effectiveness in their texts.
154. Achievement is good overall. It is better in Year 12 than in Year 13. This achievement is aided considerably by students' positive attitudes to the subject and the very good relationships, which exist both between students and with their teachers. However, many students are too reliant on their teachers and are not developing as confident, independent learners because they are not inquisitive enough, and are not given sufficient choices in their assignments or opportunities for personal research. For example, students in Year 12 are relying too much on interpretations contained in a study guide to *Measure for Measure*, instead of developing their own.
155. Male and female students are now taught together in Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In some lessons they are very good. In the best lessons, the teacher makes very good use of the assessment objectives to guide students' responses and to ensure that they know what is expected of them. Each student is regarded as a valuable resource and the teacher makes very effective use of their own knowledge and experience to help them associate with the themes and texts being studied. In the less successful lessons, the teacher is seen as the provider and expert and students are not encouraged to engage closely enough with their texts, especially with language and imagery. In these lessons, exercises on the use of literary terms, for example, are not put within the contexts of the books being studied: hence although students are able to identify literary terminology, they do not apply it to their own texts or, very importantly, comment upon how it influences a reader or audience. Some marking is very good and teachers' comments are clearly linked to the grade level descriptors, but this is not always the case.
156. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new courses have been well implemented, in spite of some staffing problems, and are jointly managed. There is commitment and

enthusiasm from both schools and they are looking for ways of improving provision further and encouraging recruitment to the courses. The schools are still developing systems for the sharing of best practice and the effective monitoring of teaching and assessment, as well as looking at ways of promoting students' self study and their independent learning.

Languages and communication

157. English literature: Standards are below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, though some of the teaching is very good. Students show good commitment to the courses, and those in Year 12 are making good progress, however, students are not developing well as independent learners.
158. Media studies: One Year 13 lesson, together with students' work, was sampled. Overall, standards are well below average. Teaching and learning are good. Staffing problems, which depressed standards and achievement last year, have been resolved. Students rely too much on their teachers and are not effective independent learners. Resources for practical work are limited.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered pure mathematics and statistics at AS level; also, the application of number unit which forms part of a Key Skills programme.

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching programme has been well-planned to match the previous experience and needs of the students.
- There is good measure of support for individuals.
- Classroom teaching is structured to take account of the wide range of prior attainment of the students.
- The use of private study is underdeveloped.
- The use of computer technology is underdeveloped in teaching and learning.

Commentary

159. This is the first year of the AS course in its present form. The course will operate over two years, but students will be entered for examination modules earlier if their work shows that they are likely to succeed. There is insufficient data available from previous years to make examination comparisons with national averages.
160. The students' background in mathematics is not strong and most have not studied the higher tier course at GCSE. As a consequence, the teacher has to ensure that this work is taught and understood before embarking on some aspects of the AS work and attainment therefore is below national expectations at this stage. Skills in algebra and knowledge of routine trigonometry are not sufficiently secure at this stage to allow the teacher to proceed to more advanced ideas at any great pace. Two students have a stronger background in mathematics and their attainment is in line with national expectations.
161. Written work shows appropriate coverage of AS topics to date, with students showing competence in inequalities, identities and turning points. In statistics, they are confident with the routines of data-handling and can compute and interpret coefficients of correlation. They have made sufficient progress with the AS work to show that achievement to date is satisfactory.
162. Teaching is good. The teacher explains the work thoroughly and ensures that students' individual needs are met by constantly checking for understanding and by giving good

individual support. Assessment of work is done mainly in class, with written comments on students' files, which show how improvements can be made and how work should be presented. This procedure is backed by homework assignments and routine tests.

163. The course has been well-planned to suit the students' diverse needs, but there are not enough books or software to support individual study or to enhance basic curricular needs.
164. The course overall provides a good basis for the use of mathematics in other subjects. The statistics course makes a strong contribution to numeracy.

Application of number

165. This subject forms part of a Key Skills course. In order to achieve an award, students must pass a test at either Level 1 or Level 2 and compile a portfolio of work, which shows competence in number. Last year, all 14 students who entered for Level 1 passed and 21 out of 23 passed Level 2. The portfolios met the standards of the awarding body.
166. The students currently studying the course have already shown competence with designing and making containers, which they have adapted to suit the needs of their vocational area or other area of interest. Their work on an assignment based around planning a holiday shows similar competence.

SCIENCE

The science department offers both AS and A Level human biology and AS Level physics.

The focus of the inspection was on biology, but physics was also sampled.

167. In the physics lesson observed, the teaching was satisfactory. The students were involved in whole-class discussions relating to the joint solution of problems in momentum theory. The attainment of the present A Level group is close to the expected national level. The students have made satisfactory progress from their GCSE examinations. There is a good relationship between the teacher and students that gives rise to a constructive learning environment. The small number of students in the group, and the recent introduction of the course make comparisons difficult.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and the ability to make clear explanations of abstract concepts through modelling.
- Teachers have a high commitment to support the learning of post-16 students at all times.
- Teachers have professional and business-like relationships that instil high challenge and expectation.
- Teachers are skilful in developing confidence in the students' ability to develop and apply their science.
- The students' attitudes to learning are positive and relationships are very good.
- There is a significant lack of specialist resources and equipment to enable students to work successfully on their own.
- There is a lack of opportunities to develop in-depth independent learning strategies.

Commentary

168. In 2002 and 2003 AS Level was the only course available. In the current year AS and A2 Level groups are in place.

169. The 2002 results and the provisional 2003 results show that the AS Level examination results have remained below the national average. This is a consequence of the ability of the intake being skewed. Numbers taking the subject have been too small to make reliable comparisons between groups of students. However, students with good grades at GCSE generally achieve results on or above expectations at A Level. Numbers taking the AS examination in 2002 were small, but increased in 2003. Numbers in both current AS and GCE A Level are maintained at a viable number through the joint sixth form arrangements. Students' results overall were in line with expectations and those with better GCSE results exceeded expectations. While no students who followed AS in 2002 proceeded to A2 in 2003, all of the students, who achieved good grades at AS Level in 2003, continued into the second year of the A Level course.
170. The standards of work seen in lessons and in students' work compare well with the national average.
171. While most students currently in Year 13 are achieving well in relation to their GCSE and AS results, a minority failed at AS, and intend to re-sit the examination next year. All students respond very well to the good teaching and well-structured course. In one lesson seen, the students' existing knowledge of the structure and function of the eye was effectively probed by the teacher and developed using examination-type questions that had to be answered within short time limits. Their responses were discussed in detail and any difficulties were resolved with the help of other students and the teacher. This resulted in all the students producing good written answers that could be used for revision.
172. In Year 12, students have made good progress beyond GCSE and show good knowledge and understanding of the first AS module on biochemistry. In one lesson they were able to apply their knowledge of molecular theory, kinetic theory and the properties of enzymes to explain the results of an investigation. In another lesson they showed good understanding of cell division through the analysis of microscopic preparations, which they then used to prepare and present commentaries to their peers. Immediate feedback was provided to generate further improvements.
173. Teaching is good overall and so students learn well. The teachers have very good subject knowledge that they keep up-to-date. They show enthusiasm for biology in their teaching, relating theories to students' knowledge and describing events in the development of the subject. Teachers set out the objectives clearly, conduct lessons at a good pace and have high expectations. Students are actively involved throughout the lessons, concentrating well and readily engaging in discussions with the teachers. As a result of the small numbers, teachers have very good knowledge of individual students' abilities. They use this knowledge, together with the results of ongoing assessment, to plan lessons effectively and this ensures that all students make good progress.
174. Students work well in lessons and so they make good progress. They enjoy the subject, relationships with each other and their teachers are very good and they feel well supported. They readily discuss learning difficulties both during and outside lessons with their teachers, who are approachable and responsive. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop strategies to improve their knowledge.
175. Written work consists mainly of notes and answers to structured questions that follow up the theory and practical work done in lessons. Marking of questions is thorough and the small teaching groups enable any problems to be discussed with individual students. All students have appropriate textbooks and are supported by additional worksheets.
176. The subject is well led and there is a commitment to improvement. Both physics and biology are well led by the specialist co-ordinators, through the head of science at Greenacre School. Good relations are maintained between the post-16 partner organisations ensuring a broader intake of students. Good use is made of assessment data to monitor and evaluate the work of the students. Severe limitations are placed on practical work by the shortage of suitable

apparatus for advanced level work. Several major pieces of equipment are old and in need of replacement. The technical staff work hard to maintain this equipment and this places an additional burden on the relatively small amount of technician time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve above average standards because of the very good teaching.
- Students are involved very well in using systems to monitor their progress and identify how they need to improve.
- Students are not able to use ICT fully in the learning of all subjects of the sixth form.
- Students express themselves freely in the secure and supportive learning environments created and they have very positive attitudes.

Commentary

177. A good range of courses is offered in the sixth form to suit students' previous learning. Students all have opportunities to develop their ICT capability either through examination courses or by following key skills programmes in ICT. A-Level results in 2002 were above average and in 2003 more students were entered but results are below those of 2002. A new vocational A Level course was first examined in 2003 but these results cannot be compared with national averages. Standards seen for students following the A Level course are above expectation. This represents good achievement when students' broadly average ICT capability at the end of Year 11 is considered. Students are well motivated and have a positive approach to their learning in the wide range of study contexts provided. A GNVQ intermediate course is offered to students who did not follow a course of study in Years 10 and 11 or for those who did not gain a grade C or above. Students on this course are making satisfactory progress and there is a good retention rate for all courses.
178. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that allows them to link all interactions with students to other aspects of the subject and to examination expectations. The very competent teachers are also very keen to maximise the potential of ICT and text based resources for the benefit of their students. Teachers monitor student's progress very well in lessons and through marking of work, indicate clearly what students need to do to improve further. Good use is made of ICT systems to communicate with students, send them resources and involve them in identifying how their current progress links to their overall final grade in the subject. Students' attitudes and behaviour in this area of study are very good. They work with a high degree of independence and they communicate clearly in the secure and supportive learning environments created. Very good use is also made of homework to extend learning.
179. The leadership and management are very good. The head of ICT has very good vision and innovative leadership of the curriculum with excellent role model qualities for teachers and students demonstrated through teaching standards. The curriculum is good and constantly re-evaluated. There are very well established management systems to support students with their studies. Students have very good access to ICT resources in lessons and negotiate access to these outside of lessons.

ICT across the curriculum

180. There is very good use of ICT in the teaching and learning of ICT courses, good use was also seen in history, music, business education and satisfactory use in English. Students use the Internet and word processing within coursework and use presentation software often to illuminate the talks they give to the class on their studies. There is, however, unsatisfactory use by students in mathematics and in biology. Students are not given the opportunity in

particular to use data-logging equipment in their experiments. There is some good use of digital projectors generally in teaching and learning.

HUMANITIES

The focus was history but religious education was sampled. Standards in AS Level religious education are below average. Teaching is satisfactory and enables students to develop some independence in their learning and research. Furthermore, their skills of analysis and evaluation are being developed. Students' learning and achievement are satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching with a variety of well planned, stimulating activities ensures students make good progress.
- Students are encouraged to work independently and effectively through group work.
- The students' very positive attitudes to their work help them to learn well.
- Students' skills of structuring extended writing analytically and coherently are undeveloped.
- The sharing of good practice through more formalised monitoring of teaching is undeveloped.

Commentary

181. The AS GCE course is being taught for the first time with the current cohort of Year 12 students. Therefore, it is not possible to make comparisons with the previous report or examination results. Standards in work seen of the current students are average. This represents good achievement as they began the AS course with attainment that is below average.
182. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of the periods under study. They show good skills of individual enquiry and record evidence well from a range of sources. Essays are generally well researched, especially by the most able students, who are developing sound skills of detailed analysis and mature essay construction. However, these skills are less developed in students of other abilities. Most students lack an awareness of the views of a variety of historians, as their reading is quite limited. Students generally articulate ideas with growing confidence and most defend their views effectively. This has been encouraged by stronger emphasis on group research work and presentations, such as those on the rise of the Nazi party and the French Revolution.
183. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to thoroughly plan a variety of tasks, often based on a range of stimulating resources. There are opportunities for students to study by themselves on challenging enquiries, often in groups. This is developing their skills of critical analysis and independent thought so that they are ready to challenge the arguments of others. The thorough marking and target setting for improvement, also promote their progress, though critical checking of essay style is undeveloped. Teachers take advantage of students' strong motivation and very good attitudes to learning, which enable them to teach effectively. This produces very good working relationships in the classroom and an atmosphere where students are ready to participate in discussion.
184. The two co-ordinators of the subject provide a clear vision and direction. They are both committed to improvement, set high standards of teaching and expectations and work well together. However, the systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching through mutual classroom observation are undeveloped. This inhibits the sharing of good practice.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Music technology

Provision in music technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses areas

- Teaching is good and teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- Students' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment.
- Accommodation is cramped and resources are limited due to the increase in the subjects' popularity.
- Students support each other in practical work.

Commentary

185. Students took AS music technology for the first time in 2003. Results were below average. Both students have continued studying at A2 Level. Current standards of work seen from Year 13 students are still below average, but they are average in Year 12. For the more competent students in Year 12, standards are above average.
186. Most students have not studied music for GCSE examination so their achievement is good. They are competent when using equipment and able to be critically supportive of other's efforts, and help each other to make progress. They can compare pieces of equipment and relate current work to that done using previous equipment and methods of recording and editing. However, their use of musical terminology and theory is weak. They struggle to recognise key changes and pieces of music in different styles.
187. Teaching is good. Teachers use their wide range of professional expertise to good effect in practical and theoretical lessons. Planning is thorough and gives students an opportunity to present information to the group, which contributes to their key skills portfolio. This activity helps them research independently so that they do not always rely on the teachers to guide them. There is a good balance of activities, allowing students freedom but with apt support when necessary. Teaching is sensitive to individuals' needs, yet demanding to ensure that they think for themselves and come up with their own solutions. As a result students are well motivated and enthusiastic about technology.
188. The course is led and managed satisfactorily. However, at present there are no clearly defined roles to ensure someone takes responsibility for developing the subject. Informal arrangements are working smoothly with strong teamwork and a shared commitment to the subject. Students' progress and their attendance are being carefully monitored. There has been considerable investment in equipment but with the growth of student numbers more is needed. Accommodation is cramped in one building and this restricts the access students can have in order to work on their material out of lesson time.

BUSINESS

Business education

Provision of business education in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Methodical planning ensures that students are well prepared for external and internal assessments.
- Teachers work very hard to ensure that individual students are well supported in their learning.
- The reliance upon a limited range of teaching strategies results in lessons, which lack challenge and interest.
- Students work well together and are supportive of each other.

- Because of the limited time devoted to vocational courses students have few opportunities to become independent learners.

Commentary

189. In 2003 93 per cent of students taking the three unit AVCE in business passed the course which is better than national standards, but no students achieved A or B grades. The pass rate for the four students taking the six-unit course was 100 per cent but there were no A, B or C grades. GNVQ Intermediate business results were worse than would be expected nationally with a low pass rate and no merits or distinctions.
190. Achievement of students on all business courses is satisfactory. Lesson observations and examination of student work show that almost all students make progress in developing business skills which have to be developed to meet assessment requirements. Although hesitant, most students taking the intermediate GNVQ course are able to deal with simple cash flow questions and most have sufficient numerical skills to complete simple calculations. They are able to apply these to simple applications such as realising the importance of cash flow forecasts to business decision-making. Students on this course with low levels of confidence and weaker literacy and numeracy skills make little progress, and foundation level work is more appropriate. Better-motivated students in this group are helpful and supportive of their lower achieving peers, including those with severe physical disabilities.
191. AVCE students are able to see the links between their studies and actual business practice. In the first year of their course they undertake in-depth examinations of companies of their choice and are able to apply simple models of input output analysis to the productive process involved in both retailing and manufacturing. Some have only a superficial understanding of the importance of quality systems while a minority are able to understand the importance of such business functions on profitability and performance. Second year students make good progress in tackling more challenging tasks relating to financial management and control.
192. Teaching and learning on business courses are satisfactory and teachers do well to ensure that students are well prepared for examinations. Test requirements are carefully analysed and this enables teachers to provide good support to students. However, in their anxiety to ensure that students are well prepared teachers rely on a narrow range of teaching strategies. There is little group or paired work and too few opportunities for students to develop more extended verbal responses or to take more responsibility for their own learning.
193. AVCE students spend around five hours per week in business classes and this severely limits opportunities to develop research and higher-level evaluative skills necessary if students are to get better examination grades.
194. Management of student learning is competent and schemes of work have been developed which incorporate a good range of different learning activities and the integration of key skills. More effective leadership is needed to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and to ensure that these important vocational courses make a fuller contribution to the curriculum offered in the newly established sixth form.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	3
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
Overall standards achieved		3
Pupils' achievement	3	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
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	5	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	4
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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