

INSPECTION REPORT

UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Uxbridge

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102444

Headteacher: Mr P Lang

Lead inspector: Mr D B Evans

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 November 2003

Inspection number: 261872

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 to 18 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1168
School address:	The Greenway Uxbridge
Postcode:	UB8 2PR
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Waine
Date of previous inspection:	30 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Uxbridge High School is a specialist technology school in the borough of Hillingdon. It serves a large catchment area and a high proportion of students have experience of a troubled or disrupted family environment. The school works closely with a local Leading Edge secondary school and is linked to the national Excellence in Cities programme. It has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award. There are 1168 students on roll including 134 students in the sixth form. There are slightly more boys than girls in most year groups. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of students for whom English is not their mother tongue is high although there are very few who are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The main groups of languages are Somali, Panjabi and Urdu. The number of students with special educational needs or who have a Statement of Educational Need is in line with the national average. The main areas of educational need are dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural needs. The school's specialist Learning Centre on site is linked to the Hillingdon Excellence in Cities initiative. Currently 16 students, mainly with behavioural difficulties or poor attendance, are on the programme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1049	Brian Evans	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector	
15472	Paul Andrews	Team inspector	Music
8076	Terence Bendall	Team inspector	Design and technology Design and technology (sixth form)
28178	John Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
1249	Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Special educational needs Biology (sixth form)
32211	Brendan Geoghegan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Information and communication technology (sixth form)
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business studies
3643	Derek Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Mathematics (sixth form) Physics (sixth form)
31772	Alan Kelly	Team inspector	Citizenship History
27296	Akram Khan	Team inspector	Chemistry (sixth form) Science
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design Art and design (sixth form)
11968	Ian McGuff	Team inspector	Physical education
1526	David Meaden	Team inspector	Media studies
20825	Brian Ogden	Team inspector	Geography
19214	Geoffrey Price	Team inspector	English
32185	Margaret Turnbull	Team inspector	Religious education
15372	Patricia Walker	Team inspector	English (sixth form)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Uxbridge High School is an effective school and gives satisfactory value for money. It has a number of good features. Overall, students achieve the standards expected of them given their attainment levels on entry to the school. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are rising. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported well by governors and staff, has a clear vision for the future and management strategies are focused well on meeting the needs of all students.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Strategies for improving students' basic skills are having a positive impact on standards in all years.
- The leadership skills of the headteacher are very good.
- Attendance is well below the average.
- The Special Educational Needs Unit provides good support for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and for those with attendance problems.
- The school is making good progress towards meeting its targets as a specialist Technology College.
- National Curriculum requirements for citizenship are not met.
- Links with other educational institutions are very good.
- The head of sixth form carries too heavy a management load.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1998. Standards fell immediately after the last inspection mainly because of a difficult period when the school had no substantive headteacher. However, in the last two years good progress has been made in responding to the key issues identified in the last report. The school development plan is firmly linked to financial planning. Good practice in assessing students' progress is now more consistent across subjects and provides a sound basis for identifying individual needs. A good range of opportunities have been introduced for celebrating and valuing the school's cultural diversity. Students' independent learning has been enhanced by a significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT). However, there is no provision for a daily act of collective worship and statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form are not met. Attendance remains well below average.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9. The 2003 GCSE examination results are not yet officially validated in terms of national and similar school comparisons.*

Students achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Overall, their attainment on entry to the school is below average. By the end of Year 11, the overall trend over the past five years in GCSE examination results has consistently been below the national average. Students of all abilities make below average progress through Years 10 and 11 compared to schools with similar intakes. In 2003, most students achieved at least one GCSE A*-G grade but, overall, GCSE results fell below the local education authority's target. Results in 2003 GCSE examinations in mathematics and science were higher than in English. Inspection evidence shows that GCSE grades are set to improve significantly in 2004. Students' application of ICT skills in Years 10 and 11 is good. In national tests at the end of Year 9, the overall trend (1998 to 2002) was below the national average. English test results in 2003 showed improvement but remain below average. Mathematics test results in 2003 were a significant

improvement over those in 2002 and match the average for all schools. Students' performance in science in 2003 showed a similar improvement to that in English and mathematics. A focus on spreading good practice in teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 has led to higher student achievement in the core subjects. Inspection evidence shows that standards are generally below average and that students are achieving satisfactorily. Students' ICT skills are in line with national expectations. There are no significant differences in achievement of students from minority ethnic groups. Overall, girls achieve better than boys although the gap is narrowing. Students with special educational needs make good progress and the school is in the early stages of implementing an extended programme for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. Students with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. GCE A level results have fluctuated over past years. They were above average in 2001, well below average in 2002 and the 2003 results were much improved and one in four candidates achieved an A or B grade. Inspection evidence shows that standards for the current cohort of Year 13 students are close to the average.

Students' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around the school are generally satisfactory. Attendance is well below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the proportion of good or better lessons has improved since the last inspection. Lesson plans emphasise the matching of tasks and activities to students' attainment levels. Key skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT are taught well and are important factors in students' ability to sustain concentration and support one another in their learning. In Years 7 to 11 just over half the teaching was good or better. In a small number of lessons teaching and learning were unsatisfactory because of the poor behaviour of a small number of students. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. Resources are good. The curriculum, including an extensive extra-curricular programme, is good in most respects but unsatisfactory overall because the National Curriculum requirements for citizenship in Years 10 and 11 are not met. Assessment data on students' progress are comprehensive and their use by teachers for planning is satisfactory but improving. The school cares very well for its students. The school works well with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher in his first years at the school has been very good. He has recovered the confidence of parents and the community after the period of uncertainty when there was no substantive headteacher. The new senior management team works well together as a team and seeks to enable every member of staff to contribute to the school's aim of 'making success happen'. Management systems are satisfactory overall and include a strong emphasis on effective self-evaluation procedures. The growth in sixth form numbers requires a greater delegation of management responsibilities. The coherent school development plan covers all aspects and subjects of the school. The governors are efficient and contribute to the further development of the school in an informed and supportive way but must ensure that statutory requirements are met. Financial controls and management of resources are very good.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views on the main school and on the sixth form are positive overall. They believe that the school is well run and that their sons and daughters make good progress. Similarly, students in their questionnaire responses affirmed that they were taught well and were always expected to do their best.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- attendance.
- to spread good practice in teaching and learning more consistently throughout the school.
- the quality of management of the sixth form.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- meet National Curriculum requirements for citizenship.
- meet statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form.

THE SIXTH FORM AT UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

The sixth form roll is growing. There are 134 students on roll which is below the national average. The school is introducing more vocational courses into its curriculum offer.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective sixth form which gives satisfactory value for money. Standards vary from year to year but currently standards in A level are close to the national average. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is aware of the increasing pressure on management because of the rise in student numbers. Every effort is made to meet the needs of all students. Management systems which monitor students' progress are satisfactory. Course retention rates are high.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
- Students contribute well to school life and help to run some extra-curricular activities.
- The head of sixth form has insufficient time to carry out her responsibilities fully.
- Many sixth formers support younger students by acting as their 'buddies'.
- Attendance is below average and punctuality is poor overall.
- The views of sixth formers are valued and responded to.
- The nature and scope of vocational courses need to be reviewed.

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 is good . Standards are close to the national average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are consistently good.
Mathematics	Provision is good . Standards are close to the national average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Leadership and management are good.
Biology	Provision is satisfactory . Standards are broadly average. Students make good progress in some topics and unsatisfactory progress in others because of the variable quality of the teaching and learning.
Chemistry	Provision is unsatisfactory . There is a marked contrast between Years 12 and 13 in students' achievement and in teaching and learning.
Physics	Provision is very good . Numbers are small but standards are well above average. Teaching is very good and students have good independent learning skills.
Information and communication technology	Provision is very good . Standards are above average.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is satisfactory . Standards are average. Students achieve satisfactorily.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art is satisfactory . Broadly average standards and students achieve satisfactorily. Provision in media studies is good . Standards are above average.
Business	Provision in business studies is satisfactory . Standards are average.

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

Students receive satisfactory advice, guidance and support. Assessment is used satisfactorily to monitor and support students. Personal support is very good for students and highlights their particular strengths and weaknesses. Enrichment for sixth-form students is satisfactory. Most departments have good links with universities and draw upon external expertise to advise students about courses on offer. Most opportunities for enrichment come from within the personal, health and social education programme: outside speakers are invited to speak to students about the importance of making informed applications to universities. Representatives from various Gap Year projects have also spoken to Year 12 and 13 students and speakers from charity groups, such as Amnesty International, Action Aid and Christian Aid, address students to raise awareness of social responsibilities. The ICT and business studies departments have established good links with Hillingdon Business Education Partnership and speakers are invited into the school on a regular basis. The art department organises visits to galleries and museums.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The head of sixth and her tutors work hard to meet the needs of individual students and their success is reflected in the increasing numbers of students staying to follow post-16 courses. However, the head of sixth form combines her role with that of head of geography and carries too heavy a management load. Financial arrangements are good. Monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and state that they receive good quality support and guidance. The sixth form enrichment programme and careers education provision have been improved following consultation with them. However, a number of students report that tutor groups are too large and that their tutors do not always have sufficient time to address their needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects

Overall attainment on entry is below average, standards are below average and students achieve satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught well and have contributed particularly to the recent marked improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average.
- Sixth form standards are average.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31 (30)	33 (33)
mathematics	34 (33)	35 (34)
science	32 (31)	33 (33)

There were 207 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The average points score per student in national tests at the end of Year 9 results shows a significant improvement over those in 2001 and 2002 when the overall trend in standards was below that nationally. The school is making good progress on raising standards in Years 7 to 9. Relevant training has taken place to enable staff to teach more effectively. Evidence suggests this has had a positive effect on teaching and learning. In national tests in Year 9, standards rose significantly in 2003: in mathematics, they were above average and in science they were average with higher attainers attaining well above the average compared with similar schools. In English, standards are below average but showed improvement over 2002. In all three core subjects there is a range of initiatives, including the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning, booster classes, projects on gifted and talented and a greater range of learning resources. However, the literacy strategy is not yet effective in all subjects or lessons. In geography, for example, low literacy skills restrict access to the full curriculum and limit progress in the subject.
2. The achievement of students with special educational needs across all years and most subjects is good. Taking account of Individual Education Plan reviews, the achievement of specific targets, value-added analysis and the quality of in-class support during observed lessons, most students with special educational needs make good progress given their starting points and degree of learning difficulties.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	33.5 (36.8)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	88.5 (90.9)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	93 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student	33.5 (34.8)	39.8 (39)

There were 183 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Since the last inspection the trend in the proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE A* to C grades has been below the national average. However, inspection evidence shows that students in Year 11 are on course to meet its targets in 2004 and achieve overall much higher average points scores than in previous years although remaining below the national average. The average points score per student was below average in 2002 and below the average for schools with similar intakes. GCSE standards in mathematics in 2003 were below average and similar to those in science and better than those in English. Boys and girls achieve well where teaching and learning strategies are adapted to both their needs. Students from ethnic minority groups achieve satisfactorily. Strong curriculum management in mathematics has enhanced students' achievement. The quality of teaching and learning in GCSE science is good. Students' ICT skills are average.

Sixth form

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	100	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	27.5	39.4
Average point score per student	74.8	78.6

There were 43 students in the year group.

4. The average points score achieved by students entered for the A, AS and VCE examinations was above average in 2001 and well below average in 2002. Results improved again in 2003 with a higher proportion of A and B grades achieved although national comparisons are not yet available. Inspection evidence for the subjects inspected in depth shows that students achieve very well in A level ICT and physics. Standards in these and other subjects are underpinned by good teaching and positive attitudes to learning by students. In a number of subjects, for example in chemistry, there is a marked difference in achievement between Years 12 and Year 13.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is well below average. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory overall. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The monitoring of attendance and the follow up action to improve attendance in Years 7 to 11 is good.
- The majority of students behave well and they have good attitudes to learning.

- The extra-curricular activities including the international day, citizenship week, school productions, the clubs and trips enrich learning and personal development.
- Attendance from Year 9 upwards is well below the national average and unauthorized absence is high at more than twice the national rate.
- There is a high rate of fixed-term exclusions reflecting poor behaviour by a small minority of students.

Commentary

- Two inclusion officers have been appointed to follow up on absentees rigorously and have had success in returning many students to a more regular pattern of attendance. Good progress especially has been made in some cases where there are attendance reports in operation or when students have been supported in the school's Learning Support Centre. Nevertheless, low levels of attendance are seriously hindering the learning of a significant number of students, particularly girls, in Years 10 and 11. Punctuality is an issue. Some students arrive late into lessons from break times. Good systems to reduce truancy are in place but continuing efforts to improve both attendance and punctuality are necessary.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	10.2
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.

- Attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory overall. They are particularly good in science, ICT, art, drama and history lessons. However, in a number of Year 7 to 9 lessons a small number of immature students disrupted learning by making silly comments and disturbing others. Students' questionnaire returns indicated seven out of ten of students did not think behaviour is good. The school has a high rate of fixed-term exclusions. However, the rigorous use of the school's sanctions contributes to the high number of fixed term exclusions and the school has effective procedures to re-integrate students. There have been no permanent exclusions in the current academic year.

Ethnic background of students

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 Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani

No of students on roll
780
9
18
11
4
12
12
123
44

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
106	3
47	1
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
2	1
17	0

Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	53	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	14	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	0	0
Black or Black British – African	28	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	7	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	17	5	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

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

7. Spiritual development is satisfactory and is fostered in well-prepared and thoughtful assemblies and in other areas of the curriculum. However, the school does not comply with the statutory collective worship requirements. Provision for moral and social development is satisfactory. Most students treat others with respect and take responsibility for themselves and others. On occasions small groups of students around the school and in lessons do not respond well to the school's code of behaviour. Most subjects of the curriculum explore moral issues - for example, there are opportunities to discuss moral issues in the humanities subjects. A number of subjects offer good opportunities for personal development and English, drama, religious education, ICT and science are particularly strong. Students' cultural development is good. Students learn to understand their own culture and prepare for a multi-cultural society. The international day was a very successful day when the rich mix of cultures in the school was celebrated. Students and parents strongly confirmed that this helped to increase their understanding and appreciation of the whole school community. Appreciation of the art, drama, music and creativity of people of different cultures is encouraged and the key beliefs and practices of the six main world faiths are studied in religious education. In history, students learn to appreciate how other people in other times and cultures may have felt.
8. Students with special educational needs have positive contacts with learning support staff, including contacts at break and lunchtime, and make good progress in terms of confidence and personal development. Support staff know the students very well and are trusted by them. Students come to enjoy the overall supportive atmosphere. Staff find time for more extended and detailed support on social, personal and academic matters as needed. This is overall a very good feature of the influence the school exerts for students with special educational need.

Sixth form

9. Students have satisfactory attitudes to learning. They enjoy the 'college freedom' system and feel that they are trusted to study and develop independence in their learning. Students are keen to participate in school life and helped to run some extra-curricular activities such as the dance club last year. Many are peer mentors and buddies to younger students and are impressive. They help with parents' evenings, acting as good ambassadors for the school and hosted the recent presentation evening. Attendance procedures are not rigorous enough to follow up on students who either do not attend classes regularly or who are not punctual. Some attention is given to individuals with the worst attendance records and this is proving moderately successful. The common room causes some frustrations because of its small size. The behaviour of some Year 12 students is occasionally immature.
10. Students have ideas on how to develop the pastoral system and sixth form facilities. A small number of students participate in the sports leader programme, the photography course and in

the proposed first aid course. Students would like more opportunities to be enterprising and take on greater responsibility.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

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

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning and the quality of assessment of students' work are **satisfactory**. They are **good** in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are improving.
- The teaching of basic skills is good.
- Support staff are effective and have a good impact on learning.
- In a number of lessons, learning is unsatisfactory mainly because of ineffective classroom management and teachers' low expectations.

Commentary

11. Initiatives introduced by the headteacher and senior staff which build on good practice within the school has led to higher achievement in most subjects. However, the high staff turnover and frequent use of relief teachers leads to a number of inconsistencies in teaching styles. Newly acquired status as a specialist technology school has further broadened teachers' perspectives on the curriculum. Students use ICT to develop their communication skills and to make presentations on a number of issues. The overall strategy for improving students' learning gives established teachers a clear framework within which to constantly evaluate their teaching skills. Many students respond positively to the high expectations set for them in their work. In the best practice – for example, in mathematics - assessment data is carefully used to monitor students' progress and to identify relative weaknesses in achievement in specific areas of their work. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Overall, the teaching of basic skills is good. Teachers focus well on the needs of ethnic minority groups.
12. The qualities of both teaching and learning are satisfactory in relation to provision for students with special educational need. Withdrawal lessons are taught well and students learn well. The extent that subject teachers provide different strategies and materials to help students with special educational need to learn is satisfactory, with variation from unsatisfactory to good. Support staff are effective and have a positive impact on learning. In mainstream lessons there is good provision for students in modern foreign languages, physical education and history. It is broadly satisfactory in other subjects but with some weaknesses - for example, in design and technology where suitable materials are under-used, in science where too little feedback is given about how to improve and in geography where students' difficulties with basic literacy are not fully resolved. The provision for gifted and talented students has been initiated well over the previous year. The co-ordinator has set up a register based on data about attainment. This list of students is well known to departments along with a good set of general strategies that subject teachers can use to improve achievement for gifted and talented students.
13. The table below highlights the fact that over five in every ten lessons observed during the inspection were graded as good or better. There were no significant differences between the proportions of good teaching in Years 7 to 11. Lessons that were either just satisfactory or were unsatisfactory were characterised by inappropriate expectations or lack of pace and students thus made less progress. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by ineffective classroom management where a small minority of students disrupt the learning of others in the lessons. In good lessons, students make good progress and showed good achievement

patterns over time. In one in every ten lessons teaching was very good and students made much better than expected progress and achievement was very high.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 162 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16 (10%)	67 (41%)	63 (39%)	14 (8%)	2 (1%)	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. Percentages are rounded up and therefore may not add up to a hundred.

Sixth form

14. Sixth form teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons observed included a proportion of very good lessons. Relationships between teachers and students are good and most students display maturity in their approach to A level work.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory overall because, although in all other respects the curriculum is satisfactory, the requirements for the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11 in citizenship are not met. The curriculum is enriched well by extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wider curriculum has built on the cultural diversity of the student population and now celebrates the broad spectrum from which their experiences can be shared.
- The implications of the new arrangements with increased flexibility for the 14-19 curriculum need greater exploration with appropriate planning to make sure the needs of all students can be met. These are currently under consideration for students in Years 10 and 11, together with creating a broader range in the sixth form.

Commentary

15. There is a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good balance between core subjects and options. There is a coherent programme of personal, social and health education including careers education. However, there is an incomplete scheme of work therefore not all strands of the citizenship curriculum are taught. Work experience is organised well for all students in Year 11 and provision for work-related learning is expanding. The development of a broader vocational 14-19 curriculum is at an early stage and has been given a boost by the school's designation as a specialist technology school. There are encouraging signs for the development of the engineering and business courses. The substantial investment in ICT hardware has led to higher levels of ICT skills across all year groups.
16. Since the last inspection thorough attention has been paid to using the rich cultural diversity of the student population to develop the wider curriculum so that it is now comprehensively celebrated. There is a coherent programme of personal, social and health education. Careers education and guidance have improved with the Connexions service making a valued contribution. Extra-curricular activities are broad in coverage, for example: sport, music, dance, theatre, chess and enrichment visits into and out of school from fieldwork to visiting speakers. Increasing community involvement and the liaison with neighbouring Brunel University or the activities of the Excellence Cluster, which the school leads, extend opportunities, more so in the upper years. This range develops learning in a broader sense and supports the positive ethos the school is seeking to develop.

17. The quality of accommodation is under pressure with the rising roll of the school. The library is small for the size of school. The school was fully staffed at the time of the inspection but turnover has been high and, in common with many of its neighbours, the school continues to face major difficulties with the recruitment and retention of staff. There is an impressive dedication towards improving attainment and recruiting quality staff spearheaded by the headteacher and senior staff but staffing difficulties have at times made curriculum development more difficult. Resources for students with special educational needs are good.

Sixth form

18. The sixth form is growing in number but as yet offers a standard menu of courses to GCE advanced level with only AVCE in business and GNVQ Intermediate in engineering. AS level may not be followed by A level and some courses have very small numbers, fewer than six, which reduces intellectual interaction and student development and questions viability. Entry to courses is based on a minimum of five grades C or above at GCSE for A levels, 4 or more for AVCE courses. Careers education and guidance has improved to direct talent most appropriately with the head of sixth form playing a crucial role in the pastoral well-being of students but also in progression to Higher Education or employment. This curriculum range is limited but the school is to review its sixth form provision to attract and retain a greater number of students from more diverse ability groups in order to promote progression within the 14-19 curriculum perspective. In September 2003, eight students joined the Uxbridge sixth form from other schools which is seen as a welcome new development. The sixth form curriculum does not comply with the requirement to provide religious education for all students.

Care, guidance and support

Students' care, welfare and health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's inclusive approach to helping and supporting a range of students with complex needs is a key strength of the school.
- The management of health and safety is very good and all the routine checking systems and risk assessments are carried out thoroughly and addressed quickly.
- Tutor time is inconsistently used.

Commentary

19. The school gives a high priority to ensuring students are cared for and any barriers to learning are lifted. Most students feel that they would have someone to turn to if they felt troubled. They were full of praise for the support and guidance heads of year, the peer mentoring system and most of the tutors offer. Students with the worst behaviour and attendance problems are given high quality help and support in the Learning Support Centre and some make dramatic improvements. Year 11 students on the extended work experience programme achieved good GCSE results and were offered employment last year.
20. Effective academic and personal development monitoring enables students' achievement to be measured and any underperformance detected. Those students are helped to resolve issues, organize their work and manage their time better. Many Year 11 students are mentored and receive encouragement and good advice for their GCSEs and they are pleased with this help and support.

21. The arrangements for child protection and for students in public care are good and all the requirements are met. The careful and sensitive monitoring and support for individuals is commended. There are good welfare facilities and high quality care is administered by the Inclusion Officers.
22. The arrangements for induction are good. Year 7 students were pleased at how quickly they had settled and mastered the daily routines and complex campus in the short time they had been at school. They praised their sixth form buddies who have been helpful. Careers education and guidance is satisfactory and improving. Guidance for Year 9 GCSE options is good. The oldest higher ability students called for more individual impartial advice for their post-16 options to help them map out their career paths more effectively.
23. Provision for students with special educational need is based on good procedures for assessment, review and identification. The procedures are very thorough, and are used well. Students' progress is reviewed regularly. Targets set in Individual Education Plans are clear. Parents and students are involved suitably in their use, including guidance to students at the termly reviews. The targets set provide satisfactory advice to teachers about what to do to provide useful help to the students.

Sixth form

24. Students enjoy being in the sixth form and they say that their teachers provide good personal and academic help and support. A number of sixth formers felt that their tutors and head of sixth form were overstretched and not able to devote sufficient time to individuals to give good quality support and guidance. Year 13 students would prefer not have mixed tutor groups with Year 12 students and feel that their pastoral needs would be met better within their own year group. The signing in and out procedures are too vague and are not practised. The views of sixth formers are valued and are helping to shape the improvement of sixth form provision. A recent sixth form questionnaire was analysed and shared with students and action has been taken to address issues raised. The enrichment programme and careers education provision has been improved in this way. Sixth formers would like to extend the remit of the social committee to raise other sixth form issues and give them a more effective 'voice' in the school. The induction arrangements are good and students praised their induction activity day. Year 13 students felt that they needed more help and advice for their UCAS university applications.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory and links with the wider community are good. The links with other schools, colleges (especially Brunel University) are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information in the form of regular newsletters, booklets and prospectus are very good.
- Parents have some good opportunities to be involved in the school and find the school very approachable.
- Links with the primary feeder schools are good.
- Links with local people, the local Hillingdon Education Business Partnership and businesses that support the careers education and the Year 10 work experience programme and business and media studies groups are good.
- School reports contain insufficient personalised information about progress, identifying weakness and giving advice for improvement.
- The school has the confidence of all communities.

Commentary

25. Parents receive good quality essential information about the school and their children's progress through consultations and regular contact. Although there are good opportunities to attend meetings and social activities only a few parents are involved in school life beyond helping with homework. The school's efforts to involve parents are not always rewarded by parental contributions.
26. Procedures to deal with any concerns or complaints are effective. The views of parents are not formally sought but staff, the Friends of Uxbridge High School and the parent governors informally gauge parents' opinions and these do influence school improvement effectively. The parent governors play a very active role in driving standards higher and improving many other aspects of the school.
27. The school works in close co-operation with local schools and colleges. There are good links with contributory primary schools and these ensure students' transfer goes smoothly and students settle quickly. The main feeder schools also have some good technology links with the design and technology and ICT departments. The school benefits strongly from its involvement in local Excellence in Cities Cluster as, for example, in the appointment of learning mentors. There is close cooperation with a local Leading Edge school for sharing resources and good practice in learning. Links with colleges and Brunel University are good.
28. The local 'Safer Schools Project' includes a Police Officer spending two days a week in school. She provides high quality help to deliver aspects of citizenship and in supporting students at school and in the community.
29. Partnership procedures are good on behalf of students with special educational need. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed about the progress made by their child, for example by regular reviews of progress and target setting for future provision. The school has good links, used well, with external agencies who provide the support for certain students with additional special educational needs.
30. Parents of students with statements of special educational need are suitably involved in annual reviews, including provision of satisfactory reports from the school and relevant external agencies. Annual reviews for students with statements of special educational need are held at the correct intervals, including proper provision for 14 plus Transition Reviews. Termly reviews are held, and parents informed of the outcomes for students placed at School Action Plus level by the school. Sufficient data and background information is collected through good contacts with key primary schools, so that there is a good basis for initial decisions about provision. The full range of external agencies are consulted and used thoroughly including health, social services, and support agencies.

Sixth form

31. There are a number of links with the community and there are plans for extending the enrichment programme to include a community focus. Students have signed up to help local senior citizens with their Christmas shopping and will be gift wrapping Christmas presents in a local store as a fundraiser.
32. Links with other schools and wider partnerships are good. Links with post-18 colleges are effective and are made on a 'needs' basis for individuals. There are good links with Brunel University for learning enrichment across a wide range of subjects. Links exist with local businesses for supporting business studies and the GNVQ engineering courses are developing well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good but the school must ensure compliance with all statutory requirements. The headteacher gives very good leadership. The governing body gives good service to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school development plan is a working document which effectively focuses the work of governors and managers on improving the quality of education.
- School improvement projects are having an impact on standards and students' achievement.
- The school evaluates its performance well and takes action to address subsequent weaknesses.
- Statutory requirements are not met fully for citizenship in Years 10 and 11, for a daily act of collective worship and for the provision of religious education in the sixth form.

Commentary

33. The headteacher's very good leadership is enabling the school to make good progress after a period of high staffing turnover. This is shared by governors, staff and parents. Standards are rising. A well-constructed school development plan is providing staff at all levels of responsibility the opportunity to further raise standards. On his appointment just over two years ago, the school was not held in high regard by the local community. Strategies for addressing a number of issues still outstanding – for example, full implementation of the National Curriculum for citizenship - are being addressed.
34. The school's systems for reaching decisions, devolving responsibility and ensuring good communication are good. The new senior management group is establishing itself well as a team. The quality of leadership and management in subject areas and in pastoral areas is satisfactory. Performance management systems are effective and supportive.
35. The governing body brings a wide range of experience and expertise to the school. For example, the school's successful application to become a specialist technology school involved extensive input from governors with appropriate expertise. The governors support the headteacher and staff well in extending the range of projects and initiatives which are proving beneficial to students' learning. The governors do not fulfil all their statutory responsibilities but these weaknesses are recognised by governors as high and immediate priorities. The governing body's procedures for strategic planning, monitoring the quality of education and financial management and control are very good.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,938,543	Balance from previous year	47,083
Total expenditure	3,940,922	Balance carried forward to the next	67,312
Expenditure per student	3,374		

36. The business manager and finance officers are very efficient, use management information systems effectively and advise governors on the correct use of specific funds such as those for students with special educational needs. Audit reports show good financial control. Governors apply the key principles of best value effectively for the benefit of staff and students and these are confirmed by the rising standards in the school. For example, the school's specialist status was achieved through careful consultation with all parties and focused on further improving the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects.

37. Provision for students with special educational need is led well, and is managed very thoroughly. More can be done to ensure management of issues within departments is fully effective. The thoroughness of the management by the special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that provision is effective.

Sixth form

38. The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form by senior managers is satisfactory. However, the head of sixth form carries too heavy a load. Overall, there is a good relationship between the sixth form and the main school. The leadership and management provided by subject leaders are satisfactory. All sixth form funding is strictly allocated for its purpose. The sixth form is cost-effective and does not draw resources from the main school. Course provision is determined by the students' choices, balanced by the stringent annual costing of individual courses to ensure that all are financially viable. The principles of best value are strictly applied in relation to all expenditure in accordance with practice in the school as a whole, with a particular emphasis on the close analysis of students' performance in external examinations in comparison with that in other schools.

Progress towards meeting Technology College targets

39. Overall the school has made good progress towards meeting its targets for the Technology College bid, although some targets still require more work. In design and technology there has been very good progress with links with local schools, universities and companies. New sixth form courses have been established. Further work is required to raise standards and to make greater use of ICT. There is not enough use of ICT in design and technology. In mathematics, some targets have been met, and action has been taken on all of them, but further action is needed to extend the numeracy framework, to further develop independent learning skills, and to increase numbers of students follow A level courses. In science, good progress has been made to raise standards at the end of Year 9, but further work is required to raise standards at the end of Year 11. Progress towards meeting other targets has been satisfactory. In ICT, targets for attainment at the end of Years 11 and Year 13 have been exceeded, but the target of raising attainment at the end of Year 9 has not yet been met. Most other targets have already been met or are in the process of being met.

WORK OF THE SEN UNIT

Learning centre

The Learning Centre is supported by the Hillingdon Excellence Cluster which links it to the national Excellence in Cities programme. Students are referred to the centre for six-week blocks. The service is only for students on the school roll. Referred students have a mix of learning difficulties, predominantly about their behaviour and attendance. Students, mostly those in Years 7, 8 and 9, work in the Centre for just a few periods per week. The rest of their time is in mainstream lessons. At present 16 students are on the programme. Last year the number reached 30 at some stages of the year.

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective action to improve behaviour and attendance for students for whom staff have serious concerns.
- The integration of the work of the centre staff with that of other staff working to promote attendance and good behaviour.
- Good teaching ensures students are influenced positively during their time with the centre.

- Involvement of parents is good.
- Some teachers who refer students to the centre do not provide appropriate academic work for them to follow.

Commentary

40. The short periods of referral to attend the centre are good value. Students are influenced well toward making better efforts to behave appropriately. Students accept the influences of the staff. The key influence is that the referral sessions focus strongly on how the young person can achieve better. Staff teach the students to manage their own behaviour, such as how to manage their anger, and how to sense and then avoid imminent outbursts. A further good feature is that the school is well underway to extend the range of the behaviour modification strategies. The work of the centre is already augmented and secured well by the further influences from the school's Inclusion Team: for example, the Learning Mentor and the Inclusion Officers.
41. Overall achievement is good. The progress in subject learning during referral varies widely. Some students complete tasks which replicate effectively what is covered in the missed lesson: this is good in terms of the students' poor work rates before referral. In some sessions the work set for students is too easy and expectations are not high enough. However, a number of these students made minimal progress in main school lessons before referral. Overall achievement is good because of the strong progress in behaviour, learning and attendance. Records of the most recent cohorts show two-thirds made good improvements from situations which caused serious concern; and several made very good improvements. Current achievement, principally progress in terms of behaviour and attendance, maintains this good record.
42. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory. The work offered to students is planned by subject teachers who make the referral. This varies in quality from tasks which are matched students' attainment level to work being set which does not challenge individual students. The teaching of the staff in the centre is good. They make good use of the work set by others. They encourage students very well. For example, they insist firmly that students behave well. Students comply well both over their own behaviour, and because they work on at moments when one of the class misbehaves. The staff give students clear judgements about how well they are working, immediately and effectively. Also they make sure students know how to improve, especially over strategies students can use to manage their own behaviour.
43. Leadership and management are good. The senior team have made the centre one part of a set of arrangements which maintain behaviour and attendance, even for students who cause concern. The centre manager maintains a rigorous referral system. Only students who are causing serious concern are accepted. Parents and students are beneficially involved in the processes, both referral and via the weekly tracking of the way each student is working in centre and main school lessons. Students themselves understand their situation. Staff guide them well about how to do well. The provision benefits from the extra staff brought in this year. Not enough use of ICT is made as a tool for learning. The current situation is more effective than last year both in the daily running of the work during referral, and because of the well-integrated work with the overall inclusion team.

English as an additional language

Provision for students with English as an additional language is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- Support for students in the early stages of acquiring English is good.

- Good practice needs to be more widely disseminated among teachers.

Commentary

44. The co-ordinator has set good priorities for the use of available resources which meet students' needs. As a result, most students make good progress because they quickly develop sufficient fluency in English. They make good progress in learning the language and achieve well in their tests and examinations. The very few students who are at an early stage of acquiring English receive well-structured support. The data compiled by the department and passed to subject departments on students' attainment in English are updated regularly and include helpful detail. Support for newly arrived students with very little or no English is provided very early in their school career. However, good practice is not disseminated widely enough for all teachers to ensure that the English spoken by both teachers and students in lessons is always clear enough to be understood by all. Leadership and management of this aspect of learning in school are satisfactory.

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 **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In 2003 the performance of Year 9 students in national tests improved.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but there is a significant number of very good lessons.
- All groups of students achieve satisfactorily.
- Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

45. Standards in English are below average by Year 9 and by Year 11. This is reflected by test and examination results. 2002 results in national tests for students in Year 9 were well below the national average. 2003 results show encouraging improvement but remain below the likely national average. English and English literature GCSE examination results for 2002 were below national averages. Results for 2003 are below those for the previous year.
46. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Students join the school with below average levels of attainment in English. By Year 9 they make the progress expected of them but remain below average standards. By Year 11 students' work is still below average. Students from different ethnic backgrounds and those whose mother tongue is not English achieve as well as other students. Those with special educational needs make steady progress when they receive additional support in the classroom. Most students work hard but a minority achieve below their capabilities. Reading skills in Years 7 to 9 are below average. Students generally understand the meaning of what they read, as seen in Year 9 students' good understanding of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', but many students lack fluency when reading aloud. The presentation of written work is generally satisfactory but accuracy is often below average. A number of books contain unfinished work. By Year 11 most students use drafting and re-drafting effectively to improve the quality of their written work. However, in essays such as those on John Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' a marked difference is evident at all attainment levels, between the work of the best and the least well-motivated students.
47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best teaching is well planned and challenging. Teachers manage their classes skilfully to ensure that all students are fully engaged in activities. In a very good Year 11 lesson the teaching was planned and challenging and students wrote well a comparative essay on two poems. The teacher gave them a good model to follow on the whiteboard and then set them in small groups to draw up an essay plan. The resulting notes and discussion showed just how well students learned. In less successful lessons teachers have lower expectations of students. Tasks can be uninteresting or unrelated to one another and in such lessons the behaviour of a minority affects learning.
48. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Teachers work together well. Marking is conscientious and homework used effectively. Lesson plans for students in each year are being revised to give teaching more consistency across the department. However, since the previous inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory because neither teaching nor standards of work have improved overall.

Drama

49. Provision in drama is good. By Year 9 students work at average levels. This is good achievement considering their standards when they join the school. By Year 11 students taking the GCSE course also achieve well compared with their standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10. GCSE examination results for 2002 were below the national average but were among the best in the school. In 2002 all but one candidate achieved their best or second best results in drama. Results for 2003 were very similar.
50. Students in Year 7 to 9 are confident and resourceful when working together, as seen in a very good Year 9 lesson where students effectively re-created the shipwreck scene from Shakespeare's 'The Tempest.' Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. Teachers plan lessons carefully according to well-balanced and stimulating programmes for students in each year. Students enjoy the practical work in drama lessons and learn quickly. Additional opportunities for learning outside the classroom in regular school productions and drama clubs help to raise students' standards of work. Good leadership and management of the subject are helping to raise standards of teaching and learning. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Standards of literacy are below average. Students are competent speakers when working together in small groups. They read aloud in English, science, history, geography, ICT, design and technology but often tend to be hesitant when they do so. Reading levels are generally below average but students cope with the demands for reading in all subjects, although they struggle with some scientific terms. Good numbers of students make use of the library for research and private reading outside lessons. Students write with below average accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation. In most subjects the range of opportunities for writing is narrow. However, in many subjects teachers support students writing by making suggestions for structuring work, by focusing on important vocabulary and by marking students' work for inaccuracies of English. The school has made progress in its strategy for raising literacy levels.

Modern foreign languages

French is provided through Years 7 to 11, and German and Spanish are offered from Year 8. French was inspected in detail, and Spanish and German were sampled. The standard seen in the German lesson was satisfactory, but there was little opportunity for students to interact with each other. Recent results at GCSE in German show significant improvement following two years of decline, although they remain well below national averages. Girls performed better than boys. The standard seen in the two Spanish lessons observed was satisfactory, although in one lesson poor behaviour prevented effective learning from taking place despite the best efforts of the teacher. Results at GCSE in Spanish were poor in 2003, and represent the third consecutive year of decline. Girls performed better than boys. In the main, it is lower attaining students who have opted for Spanish in the past. There is also a small number of excellent results at GCSE in community languages, notably Persian and Arabic, and a small group of native German-speaking students sat AS Level German in Year 11, achieving a 100 per cent pass rate. No students have been entered for a modern foreign language A Level examination for two years.

The modern foreign languages department has suffered from exceptional levels of turnover of teachers and the lack of specialists. Last year, some classes had no specialist language teaching for the entire academic year. The situation is now more stable, and the new head of department is in the process of establishing an effective team. She is recently appointed to the post, and has made significant progress in a short space of time in the face of inheriting such a difficult situation. There is a drive to adopt more coherent approaches to preparation and teaching, systems are now in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and tracking student achievement, and staff are beginning to

share good practice. The new staff are also in the main new to the profession, and thus are relatively inexperienced.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed.
- There is a high level of linguistic expertise among staff.
- There is some good matching of activities to the needs of learners.
- Results have declined in 2003.
- There are some examples of good feedback to students through marking, but this is not yet consistent across the department.
- The range of teaching approaches is not broad enough, and insufficient attention is paid to the different ways the students learn.

Commentary

52. The standards reached by students in Year 9 in French in 2003 were well below those reached nationally. Girls performed better than boys, but only by a very small margin. Standards reached by students in Year 11 in 2003 in GCSE were well below the national average, and results have declined since 2002. Despite this decline, achievement remains satisfactory. Girls do better than boys. All students who took the Entry Level certificate in French in 2003 achieved a pass. Standards seen in lessons were below average, but this represents some improvement. Students can understand well both speech and writing, but are more reticent when speaking themselves. Lower attaining students acquire reasonable levels of vocabulary, but poor retention skills mean that sometimes basic work has to be repeated without significant progress being made. Teaching and learning were satisfactory overall, but there were instances of chatting and lack of interest in some younger classes which became distracting. This meant that teachers spent a lot of time on class management. This was, however, balanced by some thoughtful planning and good matching of activities to the needs of the learners. There were some very good examples of feedback to students through the marking of exercises. Students are told which levels they are working at, and what they have to do to improve further. However, not all teachers use this approach consistently.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject performance is monitored well and appropriate action is taken.
- Provision for students with special needs, and support for them in the classroom, is good.
- The work set in lessons is sometimes too easy or too difficult because assessment is not used well to respond to students' learning needs.
- There is underachievement by the high attaining students in Year 7.

Commentary

53. Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were a significant improvement on those of 2002, matching the national average for all schools and well above the average for similar schools. Standards at the end of Year 11 in 2003 for the number of students with grades A* to C were well below average. Performance overall was similar to science and better than English.

54. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 9 reflect the results of 2003. Year 9 students handle simple percentages well, ten per cent of a number, for example. They find more difficult examples, such as sixty-one per cent of a number, more difficult, as some of them do not know the arithmetical processes well enough. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. In Year 7 the work set on fractions is too easy for some students, particularly the high attaining students, who underachieve as a result. Individual support for students with special needs by learning support assistants is good, working effectively with counters to explain division, for example. Such students achieve satisfactorily. In Year 11 standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory because of the severe staffing difficulties experienced by the department in the recent past, and the current well below average attendance. Higher attaining students in Year 11 solve difficult problems in trigonometry. Average attaining students have not yet learnt basic formulae.
55. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. Teaching is sometimes good. There are examples of very good and poor teaching. In the very good teaching seen students are achieving well, due in part to the good use of lesson time. Their exercise books are neat and regularly marked, showing good progress. Curves are drawn smoothly and accurately, showing good attitudes to study. Gifted and talented students have extra work to do using computers, good practice. In Years 7 to 9 the application of the National Numeracy Strategy in the planning of lessons ensures a satisfactory learning outcome. The start and end of lessons overall lack rigour and excitement, particularly when there is no oral work. In a minority of lessons the work set is too easy. Occasionally the work set is too difficult. This is because the use of question and answer techniques is not good enough for the teacher to focus the next stage of learning on the needs of students. In the poor teaching it is the management of students that is poor, resulting in poor learning.
56. Leadership is satisfactory, providing a focus of support for teachers. Management is good, as it has maintained the subject through a period of significant staffing difficulties. Some difficulties remain. The monitoring of performance data is good, having led to appropriate training for teachers and an increased level of stability of staff within the department. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, as standards at the end of Year 11 have declined, for example. Standards in Year 10 indicate that standards are beginning to recover as a result of this good response by management.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Students' mathematical skills are satisfactory. Appropriate staff training has taken place. In Years 7 to 9 students can represent experimental data graphically in science. In information technology spreadsheets are used with formulae. Students can estimate accurately and check their answers by calculation. Skills are not always used effectively in design and technology and in geography the lack of ability to plot coordinates inhibits progress in the study of latitude and longitude. In Years 10 and 11 high attaining students in science solve problems with forces, energy and electrical energy using mathematical models and formulae. Formulae are used satisfactorily in design and technology. Teaching across the school is satisfactory overall, with there a number of missed opportunities for greater understanding in subjects, in the study of ratio and proportion in art, for example.

SCIENCE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching methods using elements of the National Science Strategy contribute to effective learning.
- The quality of teaching in Years 10 to 11 is good.
- The monitoring of standards in science is good.

- The relationships between staff and students are positive.
- The use of homework to promote independent learning is inconsistent.
- Marking of students' work does not include enough written comment to be helpful.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

58. Students enter the school with below average standards in science. In 2003, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are below the national average but are close to the LEA average and well above the average for similar schools. The boys performed significantly better than girls and students from ethnic minority backgrounds performed slightly better than their indigenous white peers. The performance in science was better than that in English and closer to that in mathematics. In 2002 GCSE results at grades A* to C were well below the national average for all schools and average for similar schools. Provisional GCSE results for 2003 show a slight improvement over 2002. Continuity of learning and standards of achievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are affected adversely by continuous staffing problems and unsatisfactory rates of attendance.
59. In Years 7 to 9, the National Science Strategy, adopted successfully, has contributed significantly to much improved standards and achievement overall is satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, inspection evidence shows that most students have learned new skills, increased their knowledge of scientific facts, improved their understanding of scientific concepts and have made satisfactory progress in investigative science. Higher attaining students show good understanding of physical processes, life and chemical reactions involving acids and alkali. They are exposed to considerable efforts to improve their investigative skills. Some competent practical work was seen. Students in Year 8, for example, designed a 'fair test' and demonstrated good understanding of the effect of different variables on yeast activity.
60. Standards attained by students in Years 10 to 11 are below national expectations but their achievement is satisfactory relative to their attainment. Higher attaining students show good understanding of scientific concepts such as the structure of the universe, the reactivity of metal, mineral cycles and the environment, effects of pollution, blood glucose, hypoglycemia and insulin. Overall, practical work is well integrated into the teaching programme. However, students are not encouraged to make hypotheses and to evaluate results in scientific terms. Most students cope well with extended writing as part of GCSE coursework assignments. Higher attaining students, throughout the school, speak confidently, discussing experimental work with a good degree of accuracy. Lower attaining students in a Year 10 class discussed sensitively several issues associated with drug and alcohol abuse. More generally they tend to be more restricted in range and their use of scientific terms is not secure. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily for scientific calculations, for example, when solving problems on motion, forces and energy.
61. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. The teaching observed was at least satisfactory in all but two lessons, in which it was unsatisfactory. Teachers make use of their good subject knowledge to provide very effective explanations and to ask questions which challenge students to explain observations or assess students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers usually identify appropriate learning objectives which enable students to make good progress in improving their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. To achieve this teachers ensure that in the majority of lessons, planning, organisation and classroom management are effective and that lesson contents match the students' needs. In some lessons electronic white boards are used to good effect to support teaching and learning. The ICT, whilst being built into the department scheme of work, is, in practice, used insufficiently as an everyday teaching and learning tool. With few exceptions, students have good attitudes to learning. They work productively and co-operate well when carrying out practical work in small groups, with most students working with a sense of commitment. A number of lessons, however, are over directed by the

teacher. In these, insufficient opportunity is provided for independent learning. In the unsatisfactory lessons seen, much time was wasted in challenging the unacceptable behaviour of a few students which hampered the progress and achievement of many.

62. Use of homework to promote independent learning is inconsistent. Often mundane tasks are set requiring repetition of work started in the classroom. The department does not have a consistent approach to marking students' work. Comments designed to help students to improve their work are infrequent. Regular testing does take place and these tests and GCSE coursework assignments are marked thoroughly using appropriate examination criteria. Reports issued to parents provide useful information on attainment, attitudes and progress. They do not, however, provide focused feedback, subject specific strengths and weaknesses in each attainment target, nor subject specific targets for improvement.
63. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The leadership has been successful in raising declining standards in Years 7 to 9 but more effort is needed to improve students' performance in Years 10 to 11. The science curriculum has been revised in Years 7-9 and a modular GCSE course has been introduced in Years 10 to 11. There is clear focus on raising standards in the department. The revised scheme of work and departmental handbook provide a useful framework for its work. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the senior management team and the LEA's advisers is good. Improvement since the last report is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 to 11. Detailed students' performance data are kept but these are not well used in planning the teaching strategies. Students and teachers benefit from the excellent support provided by the technicians. They ensure that all the equipment and chemicals are well managed and used efficiently to support a wide range of investigational work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management bringing about very good improvement.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good because of the high standards set by teachers.
- Good teaching is bringing good achievement by the end of Year 9 and GCSE standards targets that were set in relation to specialist technology status have been met early.
- Experiences planned for high attaining students in Year 9 do not allow them to achieve their potential.
- Learning is extended well using homework across the department.

Commentary

64. Achievement is good by the end of Year 9 and satisfactory by the end of Year 11. Standards seen are in line with those usually reached nationally and seen in the schools' results. GCSE targets that were set in relation to the school's specialist technology status have been met early. Students receive a broad range of experiences in Years 7 to 11. Students demonstrate high degrees of competence in critical reflection and peer review. They also have a good understanding of ICT systems but this is not applied in Year 9 to allow high attaining students to achieve their potential. Students also do not fully understand modelling principles but work with a good degree of independence.
65. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their students, have very high expectations, a good degree of knowledge and relationships with students are well developed. The teachers use sensitive questioning to draw out information on students' learning and they support students well as they circulate the class throughout the lesson to monitor progress

and ensure that students know what they have to do to improve. Homework is well used in lessons to reinforce and extend learning. Students' attitudes and behaviour are generally good.

66. The leadership and management are both very good. There is a very good sense of priorities and very good progress has been made since the previous inspection despite staffing difficulties. The Year 7 to 9 ICT strategy materials are starting to be used and the department is keen to adopt the key messages. Assessment practices are very good but some fine-tuning in relation to national expectation is still required. Computers have been upgraded and the number increased but this does not yet ensure one computer for each student in ICT lessons although the school now has the number usually found in a school this size. Many students stay behind after school to use the ICT facilities for homework and coursework.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. There is some use of ICT in most subjects of the curriculum although further development is required. The Internet is well used generally in coursework by most departments for research and appropriate information is selected and presented well. The physical education department uses stop watches and video, music use composition software and the science department use the Internet but need to further develop their work in measuring. There is some use for electronic circuit design in design and technology but control experiences are not developed. The use of ICT in the delivery of the curriculum is developing with interactive whiteboards and digital projectors used in some areas.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Overall, provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Rising results in full course GCSE geography in 2003.
- Commendable commitment and dedication of current staff to improvement despite significant difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff in recent years.
- The need to tackle the deficiencies in pace, challenge and expectations of students in lessons.
- Work and performance is compromised for many students by a lack of basic skills, especially in literacy.

Commentary

68. GCSE results fell consistently from 1997 to 2002, largely attributable to staffing difficulties during this period. The 2003 results rose under a new specification with a fairer deal in coursework but are still below national average. The new GCSE Short Course, mainly taken by lower attainers, was introduced in the same period but results fell between 2001 and 2003 again below the national average. The Travel and Tourism GCSE results are below the national average.
69. In Years 7 to 9 overall standards are below expectation with no clear record of a year's worth of work that can show progress or satisfactory achievement. Work is often compromised by weak basic skills, with literacy the poorest, thereby weakening written answers to questions especially where any extended writing is required. Too much written work is piecemeal and does not represent continuous coverage of a topic. Standards of presentation are often poor with too little pride being taken in it and more than usual being incomplete, frequently caused by absence. There is too little evidence so far of the use of ICT in written work, though department facilities were upgraded in September 2003. Each of these factors restricts progress.

70. In Years 10 and 11 this pattern is reversed. Clear measures of progress indicate that achievement is good. Students make comprehensive notes they can use for examination revision and topic coverage is often good. Fieldwork has been a barrier to exam success in the recent past but steps, including changing GCSE specification, have been taken to improve this as seen in the 2003 results. There is little difference in the achievement of different groups of students other than girls perform a little better than boys at GCSE.
71. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. It is weaker in Years 7 to 9, where there is some unsatisfactory teaching, than in Years 10 and 11. Always well intentioned, teaching does not make clear enough all the objectives of the lesson or give a time frame needed to deliver these. Pace, challenge and expectations of what students can do are insufficient to push attainment on, which means learning opportunities are restricted. There is a tendency to start topics in the abstract rather than via example which makes understanding difficult for middle and lower attaining students. Furthermore, lessons can be overtaken by the lack of subject knowledge of students rightly assumed to be there. Matching work to the needs of all students remains an issue, for example in understanding latitude and longitude or relating effect to cause. Opportunities for drawing the attention of students to spiritual, moral, cultural and social aspects of topics covered are unusually restricted in Years 7 to 9. Those for citizenship are beginning to come through.
72. Similarly, learning is weaker in Years 7 to 9, where it is unsatisfactory, than in Years 10 and 11. Weak prior attainment, basic skills and the considerable staffing difficulties the department has faced in recent years impact on learning and progress detrimentally. There are only three lessons per fortnight, six per cent of timetabled time, which constrains National Curriculum delivery. There is inadequate support for students with special educational needs which handicaps progress in foundation groups. Assessment and the use of assessment data has improved greatly but the translation of this for students into where they are and what they need to do to reach the next level or grade needs greater emphasis to raise attainment. Progress commensurate with ability for gifted students has been strengthened recently via the new co-ordinator but a full programme to stretch all is still in its infancy.
73. The department is well led but management is compromised by circumstances. The head of department is also head of sixth forms and carries too heavy a workload. Staffing difficulties in the past four years have seriously handicapped her in making the progress she desires and play a large part in the decline of results from 1998-2002.
74. Administration is good. There is a comprehensive, updated departmental handbook containing policies, schemes of work and assessment procedures. The issues surrounding courses to offer, Curriculum 2000, the organisation of fieldwork and post-16 geography are all well handled. There is a Key Stage 3 Strategy in geography and the relevant audit has been conducted for this. Highlighted is the need to tackle weak basic skills inherited on entry to the school. Each student has a geography glossary including key and technical terms, regularly tested. For GCSE there is an impressive individual action plan per student showing very clearly what is needed for revision, for coursework, dates and deadlines as well as examination and revision technique. Resources available to the department are limited.
75. Attitudes, values and behaviour are satisfactory overall, but far better in the GCSE courses where students have opted to study. In Years 7 to 9 a few disaffected students in each year group are a cause for concern. Behaviour is good when it is tightly controlled, boundaries are clear and enforced. Otherwise it is impacting detrimentally on the learning of the whole class.
76. In GCSE results there is decline until 2003 whilst at A and AS level there is growth. New courses have been introduced and there is the desire to extend post-16 to include travel and tourism as an advanced vocational option. The staffing situation had become acute, though it is stable for the moment. Work is better matched to needs of students in Years 10 and 11 but not earlier. The issue of pace and challenge remains.

History

Overall, provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students' literacy skills are developed well to produce well-structured extended writing.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Insufficient development of ICT.

Commentary

77. Standards in work seen are in line with national expectations for Years 7 to 9. GCSE results are average and standards are rising because the coursework deadline has been moved forward from spring to autumn and there is more focused approach to examination tasks. The most notable feature of improving standards is the quality of extended writing where students express good causal reasoning in well-crafted essays.
78. Given that attainment on entry is below average, the achievement of most students in Years 7 to 9 is good. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Progress made by the highest attaining students is generally less than that of lower and average attaining students, and the achievement of girls is generally higher than that of boys. Measures are in place to correct both deficiencies – for example, the provision of specific work to meet the needs of the highest attainers - but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.
79. The quality of teaching is good. There are innovative teaching methods designed to improve students' historical reasoning and essay-writing skills. By affording students of all abilities access to problem-solving activities, these methods not only facilitate differentiated learning but also increase student self-esteem and motivation. Consequently the number of students opting to follow the GCSE course has almost doubled over the last two years. However, there is insufficient use of ICT and a lack of emphasis on source-based enquiry in Years 7 to 9.
80. The department is well led and managed. The head of department has a clear vision of future developments and leads by example in devising and implementing strategies for improvement. The style of management is open, participative and reflective. Teachers work well as a team in raising standards. Resources are well managed. Assessment procedures are good and consist of a series of well-focused tasks that deliver reliable outcomes, which in turn are used to track students' progress and set individual targets for improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students behave well in lessons and have a positive attitude to the subject.
- Relationships are good.
- Assessment needs to inform students of the steps to take to raise their level of attainment in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

81. Students enter the school with below average attainment levels. By the end of Year 9 standards in relation to the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus are below those expected in learning

about and from religion. For example, in Year 9 students' knowledge of some key points and events in the five world religions was factual. Tasks to meet the needs of those with special educational needs and the different levels of ability are delivered in different ability groupings, but there are limited opportunities to extend the more able. No students have sat for a GCSE examination in religious education. Currently two groups in Year 11 and three groups in Year 10 are following a short GCSE course. In work seen, standards are average. The course followed by the majority of students leads to a Certificate of Achievement and almost all achieve the standard set by the school to gain the award. Overall, attainment in Year 11 is below average and students achieve satisfactorily. There is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or students from different ethnic backgrounds or those with special educational needs.

82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Almost half of the teaching observed was good. Lessons are well prepared and students are clear about what they are meant to do. However, in a number of lessons there are too few opportunities for students to develop their skills of written expression and argument. The students' good behaviour and positive attitude to the lessons enable the pace to be maintained. Homework is set, relevant to class work and enables students to consider 'Why?' Marking indicates the National Curriculum levels students are achieving, but in Years 7 to 9 it does not tell students what they need to do to improve. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities to explore individuals' personal beliefs are examined sensitively. Examples of this were seen in the examination of men, women and racial harmony in Year 10 and of euthanasia in Year 11.
83. Religious education is a small department with two teachers and three lessons taken by others. Leadership and management are effective, and the organisation of materials for use is good. The positive ethos that has been established is supported by the well organised rooms with a range of students work on display. Statutory requirements are met in Years 7 to 11.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching staff are hard working and committed.
- The department has very good community links.
- The department is generally well resourced, except for computers.
- Teaching in a few lessons was unsatisfactory, leading to below average attainment in those lessons.
- Standards of attainment at GCSE are below the national average, and are well below in resistant materials.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning.

Commentary

84. Results in the GCSE examinations held in 2003 were slightly below average when compared to national averages, but were an improvement on the previous year. Progress in years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Girls perform much better than boys overall. In the 2003 teacher assessments of students at the end of Year 9, results were in line with the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, therefore these results represent good progress. The attainment of minority ethnic groups in all years is in line with that of other students.

85. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and is good for about one third of the students. Examples of good achievement occur in graphics and electronics coursework in Year 11 where higher attaining students have clearly worked hard to produce work of a good standard. Some graphics work is of a very high standard. There are examples of under-achievement in Year 11, and this is often because students do not make an appropriate effort. Achievement is good at the end of Year 9 for higher attaining students, and is satisfactory for the majority of other students.
86. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of learning matches that of teaching. In the better lessons, teaching proceeded at a brisk pace, and the overall quality of work produced was good. High quality work was seen in a Year 10 graphics lesson where students had to analyse the information on various items of packaging prior to developing their own ideas. In this lesson the majority of students produced some good annotated drawings. In a Year 9 resistant materials lesson students produced some very effective ideas for clocks with the best work coming from girls, particularly those from minority ethnic groups. In a few unsatisfactory lessons, insufficient attention was given to setting learning objectives for lessons and there was a lack of pace and challenge. The system of assessment used is satisfactory, but a number of students need to be given greater guidance from day-to-day marking as to how they can improve the quality of their work. The department offers extra-curricular activities in the form of the CREST scheme and a Robot Wars club. These activities provide a valuable experience for some students.
87. Overall, leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department has worked hard to maintain the work of the department in difficult circumstances, especially in respect of staffing and to ensure that progress is made. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 11 represents many hours of work but, whilst this provides considerable detail of the content of each lesson, and suggests how work can be altered to suit the needs of students of different ability, it does not give sufficient support to teachers starting their careers or to more mature teachers new to the school. There is no guidance on the setting of aims and learning objectives, or how lessons can be evaluated. Currently, detailed guidelines for the coursework element in Years 10 and 11 are not in place. The lack of these details results in unsatisfactory teaching. Progress towards meeting the targets of the Technology College bid has been good overall with very good community links. These include work with local primary schools, and links with a nearby secondary school to develop vocational courses. There are effective links with local universities and companies, with visiting staff supporting sixth form courses. Students from a local university also support extra-curricular work. Currently the use of ICT in the department is insufficient because access to computers is limited but provision of other resources is good. This makes it harder for the department to meet the Technology College target for the use of ICT.
88. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Staff working in contributing subjects work well together as a team. Food technology has not been established as a specialist area, but it is not now a statutory requirement as it was at the time of the last inspection. There are, however, plans to include provision for food technology in the next stage of the Technology College bid. ICT is still underused and there is no provision for computer control. Group sizes in Years 7 and 8 are too large.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Overall the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are well informed and provide good support for students.
- Teachers set clear objectives for students during lessons.

- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- Students' work reflects the multi-cultural make-up of the school.
- Boys' attainment in the GCSE examination is much lower than that of girls.

Commentary

89. Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is below national expectations. By the end of Year 9, attainment is in line. Girls attain higher standards than boys. The 2002 GCSE results were well below the average although the 2003 GCSE results show improvement. Many students achieved higher grades in art and design than in their other GCSE subjects. When students enter the school in Year 7 they possess weak drawing and painting skills, but they enjoy the subject and make satisfactory progress throughout the first year. Students in Year 8 make reasonable progress and improve their basic skills. By Year 9, students work with greater concentration and independence that helps them improve their drawing, painting and craft skills. The standard of work produced is in line with national expectations. Students with special educational needs make good progress and work to the best of their ability. Achievement from the start of Year 7 through to the end of Year 9 is good.
90. Although one group of students in Year 10 was seen to be producing good work based upon direct observational drawing the majority of students in Years 10 and 11 possess limited understanding of how to develop ideas, from initial research studies, through to the production of final paintings or 3D objects. There are weaknesses in their visual diaries where there are many 2-dimensional drawn studies, but little evidence of development of ideas. There is too much work based upon secondary source material and insufficient work based upon direct observation and first-hand research. Many students have difficulty in using brushes and powder paint to produce paintings of an acceptable standard. Some students are producing good work based upon investigation of objects from other cultures such as masks and carvings from Africa. The overall standard of work is below national expectations. Students with special educational needs work to the best of their ability and make satisfactory progress. Achievement from the start of Year 10 through to the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory.
91. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Year 10 and 11. Teachers are well informed and provide good support for students. They set clear objectives at the start of lessons and students know what is expected of them. However, introductions to lessons are sometimes too long and insufficient use is made of modern technology such as television and videos to stimulate enthusiasm and promote learning. Issues relating to the appointment of supply teachers to the department last year contributed significantly to lower attainment in the GCSE examination by one of the lower attaining groups. The impact of this is still being felt in the department. Strategies for dealing with under-achievement by boys could be improved and some consideration given to the content of assignment briefs taking account of subject matter that might interest them.
92. Leadership is good and management satisfactory. The head of department has a clear vision for the department that is outlined in the departmental development plan. She provides a very good role model for other members of the department, and also for students. There are plans to introduce a vocational course in September 2003 which is a very positive step forward as the current art curriculum is too narrow and places undue emphasis on traditional drawing, painting and craft skills that do not satisfy the requirements and interests of all students. There are systems in place to monitor and record students' performance but at present these lack rigour. More detailed records are required to provide feedback to students and to enable the setting of more accurate targets for individual students. At present there is little evidence of any use of objective or value-added data to inform students about their progress. Teacher assessments of Year 9 students' work are overly generous and inflated.

93. Accommodation is satisfactory. Storage of work, equipment and resources is a problem for the department. There are four computers in the art department, which places severe restrictions on the production of images using computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers within the art studios. Displays in the studios are satisfactory, but could be improved significantly by using much better quality card for mounting students' drawings and paintings.
94. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards in attainment in art at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations and progress is now good between the start of Year 7 and the end of Year 9. GCSE examination results remain below national expectations.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are good.
- Over one hundred students take instrumental lessons and participate in ensembles and school concerts.
- There is widespread under-achievement amongst younger students, and especially boys.

Commentary

95. GCSE results in 2003 were well above the national average, with all students obtaining passes at grade C or above. The majority of the 12 students in this GCSE class obtained grades that were significantly higher than their GCSE grades in other subjects. For several, music was their only GCSE pass at grade C or above. The department's teachers have worked hard to enable students to achieve at these levels. Students in the current Years 10 and 11 are proud of their musical achievements to date.
96. However, standards in Years 7 to 9 are well below average, there is widespread under-achievement, especially by boys, and many students make little or no progress as they move from Year 7 to Year 9. In one mixed ability Year 7 class observed during the inspection, for example, students were learning to play a simple piece using electronic keyboards. The standard of their playing was similar to, and even slightly higher than, the standard of students observed in a mixed ability Year 9 class in which students were working on a similar task. This inconsistency can be explained largely because of the difference in the teaching input; overall, teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11.
97. The good teaching is effective because there is a purposeful classroom atmosphere with warm, respectful and friendly relationships and sensitivity to the different learning needs of individual students. Year 10 and 11 students respond well to the very generous provision of extra classes after school and in the school holidays, to teachers' firm insistence that coursework be completed to an acceptable standard, to the robust manner in which teachers involve parents in the learning process. These students sense that teachers are strongly committed to their success. In Years 7 to 9, the teaching is far less effective. There is a need for a more interesting range of teaching strategies, including more probing questioning, more thought and discussion about musical concepts, and more singing, clapping and group and class performances to internalise musical learning. Students misbehave in music classes, yet with higher expectations, more exposure to high quality musical experiences, a greater sense of challenge and reward, a more rapid teaching pace and a stronger, more secure learning ethos, their behaviour would improve accordingly.
98. The department is energetically led by a head of department who makes good use of the cramped and unwelcoming accommodation and the limited range of resources for music teaching. She organises over one hundred instrumental lessons and a wide range of extra-curricular music ensembles, including orchestra, various instrumental ensembles, Indian

drumming, and regular concerts. The recently revised schemes of work and music department handbook are exemplary for their scope and detail and should provide a helpful framework for the department further to raise the quality of its provision.

99. Taking account of the serious dip in the school's performance after the last inspection, progress in this department has been satisfactory in many respects. The head of department's enthusiasm and energy ensure that musical performances are once again a normal part of school life. There is an urgent need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 in order to significantly raise achievement and to build upon the good progress of the GCSE students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many students thoroughly enjoy the subject and speak very highly of the variety of sports that they experience, and the good relationships they enjoy with staff.
- There is some very good teaching, especially of girls' gymnastics.
- Participation levels are low amongst some groups of students.
- There are too few opportunities for students to plan and evaluate their own performance.

Commentary

100. At the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of the majority of students is broadly in line with expected standards nationally. Very good standards were seen in gymnastics where girls worked effectively, and with considerable ingenuity, to improve individual and group balances. Boys demonstrated good understanding of the correct techniques for 'ruck and maul' situations in rugby, and were able to demonstrate these in a practice drill. However, a significant minority of students do not reach expected national standards. Many students find it difficult to consistently select and apply the appropriate skills in a game situation, and many find it difficult to work independently in order to evaluate and improve their own performance. The attainment and progress of some students, especially some girls in Key Stage 3, is undermined by their low levels of active participation in lessons. Overall students with special educational needs, and whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress but more challenge could be provided to raise standards amongst higher attaining students. GCSE results are below the national average for physical education but broadly in line with the average for the school. By the end of Year 11, the standards achieved by students in practical lessons are in line with national expectations, and students achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Most students are able to demonstrate appropriate techniques in practical activities. Standards of written work in GCSE are variable. Some students produce good quality, detailed work that demonstrates a solid understanding of the skeletal system and contemporary issues such as sports' sponsorship. However, the written work of other students lacks detail, represents only a superficial knowledge of key issues, and is poorly presented. The curriculum time provided for students not following GCSE PE is below the average.
101. The majority of teaching is satisfactory with some instances of good and very good practice. When teaching is good it is characterised by good relationships between staff and students, sensitive management of behaviour, provision of interesting and challenging tasks, which engage students intellectually as well as physically, and optimum use being made of teaching time. When teaching is less than satisfactory it is characterised by late starts to lessons, and too few opportunities for students to plan and analyse their own work. In recent times there have been numerous staff changes within the physical education department. This lack of continuity has contributed to the low participation rates in some lessons.

102. The relatively new head of department has sought to manage a variety of challenges in a constructive manner, and has made some progress. For example, new schemes of work are providing a more secure and consistent structure to underpin the curriculum. The initiative to make greater use of the very good facilities at the neighbouring Brunel University has strengthened overall provision. However there are also some weaknesses in the leadership that is provided both within and to the department. In particular there has been insufficient effective action to tackle the low rates of participation, especially among younger girls.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

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

Commentary

103. Personal, social and health education has a high profile in the school. There were no lessons timetabled during the inspection. The course meets statutory requirements and deals sensitively with such issues as relationships, sex education, alcohol and drug awareness. Overall, students respond well. Personal and social education makes a good contribution to the overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory** in Years 7 to 9 and **unsatisfactory** in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

104. It was not possible to observe any citizenship lessons during the week of the inspection. In Years 7 to 9, citizenship is delivered as part of the school's personal, social and health programme. Appropriate teaching materials have been provided by the citizenship co-ordinators and provide satisfactory coverage of the programme of study. Students' written work shows some understanding of a range of syllabus topics and views expressed about relevant issues, for example destruction of the rainforest. Skills of participation and responsible action are less well developed than other syllabus strands, though students took part in an 'International Week' held in the school last year and there is an active School Council with links to other schools in the Hillingdon area.
105. In Years 10 and 11 parts of the citizenship programme of study are delivered during form periods rather than in personal and social education lessons and many students do not identify it as a subject and show little awareness of its content and meaning. The co-ordinators have worked hard to provide a teachable programme, but this is incomplete, so that syllabus requirements are not currently being met in Years 10 and 11. Some auditing of subject areas has taken place but subject-based delivery of the programme of study is as yet undeveloped. Appropriate end-of-key stage reporting arrangements are in place but these lack specific information about what students know, understand and can do. Leadership and management of the citizenship programme have been enhanced by the appointment of two enthusiastic co-ordinators to develop implementation across all years.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Information technology	5	80	78.2	0	20.6	24	28.5

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	5	100	91.6	20	36.3	80	74.1
Business studies	19	100	96.4	42.1	32.8	81.1	76.5
Chemistry	6	100	94	16.7	45.9	66.7	81.1
English literature	9	100	98.5	33.3	43.7	80	84.3
Design and technology	9	100	95.3	11.1	35.5	75.6	76.5
History	8	100	97.1	25	41	72.5	81.2
Information technology	8	100	89.1	25	22.4	67.5	64.1
Business	22	81.8	87.1	4.5	16.5	50	60.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English language post-16 courses were inspected in depth. French was not inspected in detail in the sixth form, but one lesson was sampled in Year 13. Exclusive use of French by the teacher set high levels of expectation and challenge. Teaching was good and led to good learning and satisfactory achievement.

English

Provision for English in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is generally good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students express enthusiasm for the subject.
- Leadership is good.
- There are insufficient procedures in place to guide the work of the department in the sixth form.
- The attendance of a considerable proportion of students is a cause for concern.

Commentary

106. Attainment in A level English in 2002 was in line with the national average. Although a smaller percentage of students attained a grade A than is seen nationally, all students received a grade D or higher which is considerably better than the national picture and so the average points scored by students was very close to the national average. The provisional results for 2003 indicate that attainment was below the national average for 2002, the most recent year for which national comparative figures are available. Although all students attained a pass grade the percentage of higher grades was lower than in the previous year, as was the average points scored. The number of students taking English fluctuates from year to year and, although numbers are much higher now, there were insufficient students over past years to identify any steady trend in attainment. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection, including discussions with students and an analysis of their work, indicates that attainment is currently close to the national average.
107. The department operates a very flexible policy of admission to the A level course and students starting the course have a wide range of prior attainment in English. Many sixth form students start their A level studies with prior attainment which does not provide a firm basis for study at this higher level. Overall, achievement during the course is good. Students with higher prior attainment generally make good progress to attain the higher A level grades, while those whose attainment is lower at the start of the course generally achieve well to attain an A level pass. There is, however, a strong correlation between the erratic attendance of some students and their unsatisfactory achievement. It is clear that students whose attendance during the course was unsatisfactory did not achieve as well as other students. There is a similar correlation in the current Year 13, where the AS grades attained by students whose attendance is erratic and the A level grades predicted for them indicate that their achievement is unlikely to be satisfactory. During the course of the inspection the achievement of students during their lessons and in their on-going work was good.
108. Students make particularly good progress in their use of the skills of note-making to record their knowledge and understanding in a way which will provide useful material for revision. They make good progress in the planning and structuring of their written assignments, using their understanding of the way in which their work will be assessed to enhance this. They develop and use confidently an appropriate range of specialised vocabulary and use this to make their written work clearer and more precise. They make good progress in the understanding of the historical and social context of the texts they study, but do not make sufficient progress in reading and applying the ideas of well-known literary critics to enhance their own understanding.
109. The quality of teaching seen was consistently good. Teachers plan their lessons well to provide a good variety of activities, including opportunities for collaborative work and direct participation in lessons. Students respond well to these opportunities by showing increasing confidence and making good progress from hearing the ideas of others. Teachers make good use of questioning and discussion to challenge students' ideas and also to identify areas of uncertainty. They offer good support to students who find the course very challenging, especially by offering frequent opportunities to clarify, discuss and illustrate the way in which their work will be assessed. The teaching which takes place early in the course to introduce students to the broader and deeper requirements of the study of English at AS level is very effective in supporting students to make a smooth transition and they speak approvingly of this. Teachers do not offer students sufficient opportunities to become familiar with the work of a broad range of literary critics and this aspect of students' contextual understanding is weaker.
110. Students speak warmly of the support they receive from their English teachers and the way in which they succeed in making the lessons varied and exciting. Their attitude to English shows enthusiasm and commitment. There is unanimous satisfaction with their choice of English as a subject for further sixth form study.

111. There is no permanently appointed head of department. There are no schemes of work for the sixth form and the policy on sixth form assessment is very brief and offers teachers insufficient guidance. Consequently, although the quality of marking and day-to-day assessment is good, there are no procedures for the way this information should be used in order to build an overall picture of students' progress or to identify underachievement. Similarly, examination results at AS and A level are not analysed to measure achievement during and at the end of the course. There is no department policy or programme for the enrichment of the curriculum through theatre trips or attendance at specialised study seminars and the provision of this is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory attendance patterns of a proportion of students are a cause for concern. There are insufficient clear procedures in the department and in the sixth form as a whole to address this problem. The acting head of department has made a good start in identifying priorities for development and there is a clear commitment to raising attainment. There is a good sense of teamwork and collaborative working. The leadership of the department is good and the management is unsatisfactory.
112. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Students are now attaining the full range of pass grades, including the higher grades. Teaching is consistently good and achievement is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Teaching is good and students achieve well.
- Students have developed excellent skills to work independently and collaboratively.
- The lack of whole class discussions in a minority of lessons inhibits the understanding of basic concepts in pure mathematics.

Commentary

113. The inspection covered modules in pure mathematics and decision mathematics. Modules in mechanics offered by the school were not inspected.
114. Two students completed the A level course in Year 13 in 2003 with high grades. There are five students in Year 13 now and their standard was well above average in AS level mathematics at the end of Year 12. The achievement of Year 13 students is good. They have developed excellent skills of independent study, working ahead of the teaching in pure mathematics, for example. Collaborative work is also very well developed, as seen in a decision mathematics lesson in their group work, which they enjoy. Students know how to complete difficult questions in calculus and are extending their knowledge well to the solution of differential equations. Year 12 students' standards are currently below average. Basic pure mathematics techniques are not yet carried out quickly enough, but their confidence is growing and achievement to date is satisfactory.
115. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form. Teachers' subject expertise is good and a significant factor in students' learning. Examples are accurately worked through and explained in a way students find easy to understand. There is a lack of whole class discussion in a minority of lessons that inhibits the development of basic concepts. This is particularly the case in the definition of a limit and the use of algebraic symbols representing small quantities. The challenge to learning is good though the nature of the problems set. Teaching methods overall are good, fostering the excellent private study skills of the students. Students work hard.

116. Leadership and management are good. The teachers form an effective team, creating a good learning environment in lessons so that all concerned enjoy their work. Improvement since the last inspection is good because standards have improved.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision for biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory.
- Rising numbers are recruited from Year 11.
- Students have a good capacity for independent study.
- There is a broad curriculum and ready access to resources for study.

Commentary

117. The standards attained in A level in 2002 were above average. Five students entered, four attained grade C and above, plus a single D grade. Unconfirmed results for 2003 for 2 students are not as strong. Standards of work of the current students, both Year 12 and Year 13, are broadly in line with the national average. The achievement of students, that is progress over time, is satisfactory in terms of their GCSE results. The entry requirements to join AS level biology from GCSE are sound and the current Year 12 cohort is coping satisfactorily with the course. Overall, retention through the courses is satisfactory. Students have left from Year 12 in recent years though this is mostly after the first modular examination in January. The satisfactory achievement of the current students is a mix of good and very good progress in some sections of the course, and sometimes unsatisfactory progress in other elements.
118. The difference lies in the quality of teaching. Overall, teaching and of learning are satisfactory. At best teaching is very good. This occurs when the teacher requires students to use terms and concepts targeted at A or B grades. They rise to the challenge. The expert feedback from the teacher lets them know how well they attain in this tough regime and clarifies what to do to improve. The unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by low expectations. The pace sometimes drifts, standards are sometimes below average, and students do not achieve as much as they are able to. Students have a good capacity for independent study. They value the ready access to resources for study, including plenty of chances to use information and communication technology as a tool for learning.
119. Leadership and management are good because effective steps are being taken to alleviate the impact on standards from the variation in the quality of teaching. Successful efforts have been made to increase the numbers of students choosing biology. There are currently 17 students in Year 12. The curriculum has been enhanced well to include field trips, dissection work, and revision conferences. More is still needed, such as a response to students' views that revision starts uncomfortably close to the actual module examinations. The last inspection report does not make statements about standards in biology so reliable comparisons cannot be made.

Chemistry

Provision for chemistry is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher-attaining students have a sound grasp of concepts and apply them well.
- Practical work is taught in a structured way and students have good investigative skills.
- Students work well together and with their teachers.
- Too many students were unsuccessful in the AS examinations.
- Results in the A level examinations have been well below average for the last two years.
- Quality of marking and use of assessment to identify individual students needing extra support and to raise expectations of higher target grades.
- Students should be given greater opportunity to develop independent learning skills.
- There is not enough use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

120. Chemistry results in 2002 were well below the national average. They were also well below those expected when compared with students' GCSE results. Provisional results in the 2003 examinations show a substantial decline in standards. In Year 13, no student took the A level examination and three students entered for the AS examination achieved disappointingly poor results. In Year 12, results are equally poor: one student gained a grade A whilst the remaining three students were graded as unclassified. These results represent unsatisfactory achievement at the end of Years 12 and 13, though the number of candidates in both years was small.
121. Inspection evidence indicates that achievement in the current Year 12 is satisfactory, relative to students' attainment in GCSE. At the early stages of their course in Year 12, most students find the transition from GCSE chemistry to A level difficult. They find the conceptual levels to be much higher and that there is a lot of material to be covered. The teachers built successfully on existing GCSE knowledge to develop the students' understanding of metal compounds and alcohols. Higher attaining students are achieving at least as much as expected. They show a sound grasp of thermal decomposition, precipitation and redox reactions and are able to interpret and construct balanced equations. Average attaining students show adequate understanding of molecules, compounds and the atomic shell structure of elements. Lower attaining students, however, some of whom have only studied science up to intermediate level at GCSE, find difficulty in understanding some of these concepts and lack confidence to apply them to solve problems.
122. In Year 13 achievement is good. The only one student in Year 13 demonstrates a good understanding of basic concepts in all branches of chemistry. For example, he has a good grasp of chemical reactions and with confidence can solve complex problems involving entropy and enthalpy change in a reaction. He demonstrates very impressive investigational skills, including an ability to evaluate experimental data and suggest possible sources of error.
123. Overall, the teaching of chemistry is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge which is used well in their questioning, explanations and the tasks they set. Practical work is taught in a structured way and students' experimental skills are well developed. Students investigating flame colours and emission spectra to identify Group I and Group II metals worked competently and safely and demonstrated a satisfactory grasp of theoretical models to interpret experimental data accurately. In a few lessons insufficient opportunities are provided for students to extend individual learning. In some instances the delivery is too fast, with insufficient time available for students to reflect, consolidate and absorb the concepts being taught. Homework is set which extends classwork and often takes the form of end of topic

questions. Day-to-day marking, however, is inconsistent and does not help students to improve their work.

124. Students work hard and show interest in their work. They support and help each other and enter into mature discussion as part of their learning. Lower-attaining students are less confident and do not always enter into classroom question and answer sessions. Most students can extract information and make their own notes on, for example, the mechanisms of reactions. Some are less confident and need additional support.
125. Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory. It has not provided the vision and the drive needed to challenge declining standards, unsatisfactory achievement and low take-up of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Procedures for recording and analysing performance data have improved considerably since the last inspection and provide a valuable tool for monitoring students' progress. More effective use, however, could be made of the data to set targets and develop strategies to improve the attainment levels of those who are under-achieving. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A good range of learning support materials has been developed, but more attention needs to be given to the use of information and ICT as both a teaching and learning tool.

Physics

Provision for physics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good, improving standards since the last inspection.
- Standards are well above average.
- Excellent subject expertise is a significant factor in the very good teaching, resulting in good achievement by students.
- Excellent assessment of students' progress.

Commentary

126. In the GCE A level examination in 2003, the three students on the course were successful, two of them with the higher grades. Numbers have been small for the last few years. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 13 are well above average. Students have a very good understanding of momentum, applying basic principles to the solution of problems successfully. In Year 12 standards are below average for students starting an A level course. They are slow to recognise the application of experimental error in experiments, for example.
127. Excellent subject expertise using a wide variety of examples is the basis of the very good learning by students. They pick up the meaning of new words very quickly because the practical work is planned very well. The continuous interaction between the students and the teacher enhances students' learning because any misunderstandings are corrected immediately. Formal assessments through question papers prepare students very well for their examinations. Students have good memories. They have developed very good independent learning skills because their motivation to succeed is encouraged so well in the teaching. Year 12 students are dependent on their teacher for their learning.
128. Leadership and management are very good. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. The teachers are highly experienced and work well together. Resources are used well. The transition of appropriately qualified students from Year 11 to Year 12 results in teaching groups too small for reliable comparisons on standards to be made with national figures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve above average standards because of the good teaching.
- Specialist status target for 2005 met.
- Students' work is well monitored and they are well guided.
- Students have good access to resources.
- Some students not attending all lessons.

Commentary

129. Standards are above average by the end of Year 13 with the specialist technology status target for 2005 met. This represents satisfactory achievement when students' broadly above average ICT capability at the end of Year 11 is considered. There is a good retention rate for this course. Students are well motivated and have well-developed independence in the use of the computer in a range of problem solving situations. Students have good opportunities provided for peer evaluation and are responsible and constructively critical in this process. Increased attendance by some students will support their attainment.
130. Teaching and learning are good. Students benefit from very committed teachers with very high expectations who are very keen to try out new technologies and resources. Relationships are well developed and teachers monitor students' progress very well and indicate clearly what students need to do to improve further. Homework is well integrated. Good links exist with external companies enabling students to solve problems in real situations. Students' attitudes and behaviour in this area of study are very good.
131. The leadership and management are very good. There are well-established management systems to support students with their studies. Students have very good access to ICT resources in and out of lessons.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

In the sixth form, the school offers courses in design and technology (product design) at AS and A level and GNVQ Intermediate engineering. The engineering course was offered for the first time in 2003.

The GNVQ course was sampled. Standards in the examination last year were satisfactory. There were three distinctions and four merits achieved by students in 2003. In the lesson seen students were making good progress with the construction of a mini scooter. With appropriate assistance from staff, students used hand and machine tools with competence and accuracy. Half the students in the group worked to explore computer aided design software.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff from local companies and universities make a valuable contribution to the course.
- There are examples of high quality work in both Years 12 and 13.
- In Year 12 progress in lessons and so far in the term is slow.
- There is a lack of detail in the scheme of work to guide teaching.

Commentary

132. Results in examinations held in 2002 were broadly in line with national expectations, but few students attain higher grades. Results in 2003 continued this trend. Work from the current cohort of students in Year 13 is of average standard, and some is above average. In Year 12, about one fifth of the group have produced work which has the potential to be above average. The work of the majority of the group is of average standard, but about one fifth is below average.
133. Achievement is satisfactory overall. In both Years 12 and 13, there are examples of good achievement and some high quality work from a Year 12 girl. For most students, achievement is in line with their abilities, but the progress of about one fifth of the students is slow, and in consequence their achievement is below average.
134. Teaching in the sixth form was satisfactory overall, but one lesson was undemanding and led to slow progress. The quality of learning matches that of teaching. In Year 13, effective use was made of research as a method of learning where students were set the task of researching 'Smart' materials, and to make a presentation using multi-media software. The students developed a sound understanding of their topics as a result of this and were able to answer questions from the teacher well. Students generally enjoy the course and feel that it meets their needs. The department makes effective use of staff from local universities to provide lecturers on a range of topics and so broaden the experience of the students.
135. Leadership and management of design and technology in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. The only specialist area offered is resistant materials, but few members of the current Year 12 cohort have followed this specialism in Year 11 and consequently their previous experience is limited. This requires staff to teach some basic techniques, such as isometric projection which might otherwise have been covered at an earlier date, resulting in slow progress. The current scheme of work lacks sufficient details to guide staff through the course.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are well-informed and possess good subject knowledge.
- Students work within a traditional model of the curriculum.
- Students work with a limited range of media and materials.
- Students are encouraged to think for themselves.
- The small numbers of students who choose to stay on to study art in the sixth form.

Commentary

136. In the 2002 GCE AS level art examination well over half of students achieved A and B grades. In the GCE A level examination that year no students achieved grades A to B by comparison. In the 2003 GCE AS level examination four students out of a total of five achieved grades A to B and in the GCE A level examination again four out of five students were successful in achieving grades A to B.
137. Year 13 students work with increasing confidence in the quality of their own ideas, attitudes and beliefs. They develop the capacity to conduct in-depth analysis of the work of twentieth century artists such as Andy Warhol and Georges Grosz based upon their own opinions and views. They are articulate, well informed and prepared to discuss their work openly and

rationalise their opinions and attempt to explain them to others. Their visual diaries show that most have become quite skilled at collecting visual information in various forms from a wide variety of different sources. The standard of work produced by these students is broadly in line with national expectations. Achievement is good.

138. Students in Year 12 make slower progress but work with reasonable concentration to develop deeper understanding of colour theory and improve their skills in the handling of paint. Most have acquired the capacity for working with some degree of independence, but many remain overly-dependent on their teachers for guidance and support. They work within a very narrow model of the curriculum that places undue emphasis on traditional drawing, painting and craft skills. There was little evidence of any students working with modern technology such as photography or computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers to produce exciting images. Standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory.
139. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers plan well and possess good subject knowledge, which ensures that they are in a position to offer informed guidance and support to students. Organisation and planning are good and students are clear about what they must do. As an integral part of their coursework they are required to carry out independent research into the work of artists such as Claude Monet, Georgia O' Keefe, Georges Grosz and Andy Warhol. Teachers have high expectations of students and relationships are very good.
140. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of the department, particularly at sixth form level. She is enthusiastic about the subject and it is evident that this enthusiasm affects other members of the department. The systems that are in place to monitor students' progress, to assess and record work presently lack rigour and much more effective use could be made of objective data to inform students about the standard of their work and to set realistic and informed targets. Little use was seen of value-added data to inform students about their progress.
141. Accommodation is just satisfactory and conditions in which the sixth form students are obliged to work are rather cramped. Inevitably this has an impact on the scale and nature of the exploratory or experimental work with various media and materials that can be done in such confined spaces. There is one small darkroom which is currently used by one student to produce exploratory black and white images. Improvement since the last inspection is good. These students are producing work of a standard that is now above national expectations.

Media studies

Provision for media studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students make good progress through the course.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- Some students' written work needs to be improved.

Commentary

142. Media studies has been introduced since the last inspection. Some students have already taken GCSE Media Studies and all have had experience of the media units in GCSE English. The AS course was first examined in 2003 and A level will be in 2004. The AS level results were above average and girls and boys achieved similar levels.

143. Standards are above average. Students' attainment on entry to the course is slightly below average but they make good progress and, by the end of Year 12, most are achieving above national expectation. Lesson observations and the examination of students' work indicate that, at this stage of the course, attainment is consistent with the national expectation in Years 12 and 13. In Year 12, students develop a good knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and, by the end of the year, the quality of their work is above expectation. Written work shows evidence of good research skills. In discussion, students confidently use subject terminology and demonstrate a clear understanding of the structure and demands of the course. Their oral work is of a high standard but some students use inappropriate, informal language in their written work at the start of the course. A few are still doing this in Year 13. Some spelling and grammatical errors persist throughout the course. In Year 13, students further develop their critical skills and their written coursework contains some perceptive analysis. Their practical work is good and they confidently use computers, both for written tasks and for editing their moving image work.
144. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and keeps up to date with recent developments. Lessons are well structured and well paced. Marking is constructive and students understand the level they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Relationships are very good and effective classroom management ensures a positive working atmosphere. The good teaching promotes effective learning and students of all abilities make good progress. They are very enthusiastic about the subject and the quality of the teaching. They are fully involved in the lessons and contribute confidently to discussion.
145. Subject leadership and management are good and there is a clear vision for the development of the subject. The schemes of work match the demands of the examination syllabus, which provides a clear structure and a balance between written and practical work. There are effective systems for monitoring and assessment.
146. Accommodation and resources are adequate. Teaching takes place in a number of different, non-specialist classrooms because the popularity of the subject means that the classes are too big for the subject base. This is a popular and expanding course that is challenging students to achieve high standards.

BUSINESS

Business studies

Provision for business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Aspects of good teaching help students develop good attitudes to their work.
- AS and A level students do not use ICT enough to develop their key skills.
- Female students make more progress than males on vocational courses.
- Standards have declined since the last inspection.

Commentary

147. Business lessons are run in Years 10 and 11 (GCSE), 12 (GNVQ and AS level) and 13 (A level). GCSE business lessons in Year 11 and the Year 12 intermediate GNVQ were sampled. Standards were in line with national expectations, and satisfactory teaching and student achievement were indicated
148. Standards overall are average. In 2002, results in A level business were well above average for male students and half gained the top A and B grades. Female students' results were average, with a third gaining top grades. 2003 results show a similar pass rate but far fewer

top grades in A level. Results at AS level were satisfactory in 2002, but 2003 results were below average. Overall, students' achievement at AS and A level is satisfactory when compared to their standard on entry from GCSE.

149. All but five of the AVCE business students entered passed in 2003, but the quality of work was below average, and that of previous years, when results were consistently well above average. Female students achieve consistently well. Although male students attained well below the national average in 2002 and 2003, most achieved in line with statistical predictions based on their low GCSE average points scores.
150. Current students are making satisfactory progress overall and reach expected national standards. Year 12 AS level students gave good examples of internal economies of scale, but Year 13 AVCE students had limited understanding of the role of financial advisers. Students did not apply knowledge enough to develop good communication, numeracy and ICT skills. Students showed good attitudes to their work. Completed Year 13 A level project work included relevant customer surveys and graphs of results, but analysis was below average.
151. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons observed were well based on interesting, challenging case studies. In a well planned AS level lesson, students readily understood how business size affects performance. Teachers were enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and organised effective business conferences, but not all students used work experience for research. Teachers marked homework regularly but few students had written targets to help them improve, and teaching was not always geared to individual capability. Lack of available computers in lessons limited progress in literacy of lower attaining students.
152. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because of difficulties in recruiting well-qualified staff, reducing teaching standards and results. Planned development targets are greater use of ICT in lessons, and more long-term links with local businesses to improve achievement.

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	4
How inclusive the school is		4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	4
Overall standards achieved		5
Students' achievement	4	4
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		4
Attendance	5	6
Attitudes	4	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4	4
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	3	4
How well students learn	3	4
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	4	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		4
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for students	4	4
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		4
The governance of the school	5	5
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	4	4
The effectiveness of management	4	4

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