

INSPECTION REPORT

BRENTFORD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Brentford

LEA area: Middlesex

Unique reference number: 102536

Headteacher: Ms S Higgins

Lead inspector: Ms S Kearney

Dates of inspection: 4th - 8th October 2004

Inspection number: 268754

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: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 11 - 18 |
| Gender of pupils: | Female |
| Number on roll: | 835 |
| School address: | 5 Boston Manor Road Brentford Middlesex |
| Postcode: | TW8 0PG |
| Telephone number: | (020) 8847 4281 |
| Fax number: | (020) 8568 2093 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr C Benn |
| Date of previous inspection: | 12 th October 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brentford School for Girls is a comprehensive secondary school providing education for 835 girls aged 11 to 18. It is a smaller than average school located in Hounslow, London. The school has a growing reputation and numbers have increased since the last inspection. Almost 40 per cent of girls travel to the school from neighbouring boroughs and the school recruits from over 50 different primary schools. There is a high rate of mobility with a significant proportion of pupils joining the school in years other than Year 7. Many pupils come from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The number eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. Nearly three quarters of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds with no one group being predominant. Approximately 49 different countries of origin are represented in the pupil population. Nearly 14 per cent of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. There are unusually high proportions of pupils from refugee families and those seeking asylum in this country. There are six traveller children and four girls in public care. A quarter of pupils have special educational needs, above the national average, and 21 have statements, which is in line with the national average. A small number of these have dyslexia or moderate learning needs. Many have problems with literacy and some exhibit social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The attainment of pupils when they join Year 7 is well below the national average.

The school holds a very good range of national awards. Additional funds are available from several initiatives including Excellence in Cities and the Leadership Incentive Grant. Adult education and the City Learning Centre are also located on the school site. The recruitment and retention of teachers is a continual challenge because of the school's location in West London.

The sixth form is almost half the size of other schools nationally. It is part of a well-established consortium with three other local secondary schools. The proportion of students eligible for free

school meals is almost five times the national average. Four students have special educational needs. Almost half the pupils leaving Year 11 join the sixth form.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| 18006 | S Kearney | Lead inspector | |
| 9942 | S Stevens | Lay inspector | |
| 12191 | C Moxley | Team inspector | English Special educational needs English in the sixth form |
| 32169 | B O'Hagan | Team inspector | Mathematics Mathematics in the sixth form |
| 31159 | C Simmonds | Team inspector | Science Biology in the sixth form |
| 31353 | P Palk | Team inspector | Geography History |
| 30072 | J Skivington | Team inspector | Religious education Sociology in the sixth form |
| 15706 | R Crocker | Team inspector | Music |
| 8503 | A Allfree | Team inspector | Art and design Design and technology |
| 31983 | D Makin | Team inspector | Physical education |
| 28106 | M Majid | Team inspector | Information and communication technology Citizenship |
| 22685 | N Moss | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages English as an additional language |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brentford School for Girls is a good school with many very good features. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. GCSE results in 2003 are very high compared to similar schools. The pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils have good attitudes to their work. Leadership and management are good and the school provides **good value for money** particularly so because of the **excellent inclusion** of all pupils in the life of the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Examination results in 2003 show that those pupils in Year 11 added value on their previous performance that is well above that seen in all schools nationally.
- Standards and the quality of provision in physical education are unsatisfactory.
- There is very good provision in English and mathematics and excellent provision in drama.
- The inclusive nature of the school is excellent, building on very strong moral and social values. It ensures that all girls, no matter what their ability, race or special needs, feel secure and valued so that pupils make good progress.
- Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher the school was close to the top fifty most improved schools in the country in 2003.
- Teaching is good and in some areas it is very good. There is sometimes insufficient challenge for the highest attaining pupils in some lessons.
- The monitoring of the personal development and the academic progress of all pupils, but particularly those at the early stages of learning English, is very good. Pupils know how well they are doing and what the school expects from them.
- The school has improved the facilities for developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology since the last inspection. However, not enough use is made of computers in some subjects to enhance learning.
- The school regularly reviews the curriculum and has made some good decisions about the range of vocational courses available. Currently there is limited choice of Level 2 courses for pupils in the sixth form.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in October 1998. Concerns expressed then about science have been addressed with very effective intervention by the governors and senior team. Attendance and punctuality have been rigorously monitored and are now closer to the levels expected nationally although there remains some concern in the sixth form. Standards in information and communication technology have improved. Strategic planning is now good and the school complies with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship. The provision for religious education has improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – very high; A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. For Year 11, similar schools are those with pupils with similar prior attainment. ** Only examination results in 2003 are validated and reliably compared to national averages. At the time of the inspection the results for 2004 were*

available but had not been validated. The grades shown for 2003 do not include attainment grades for 19 refugee pupils who took these examinations in 2003.

Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. **This represents good, and in some areas very good, achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 11** when their prior attainment is taken into account. The achievement of students in the sixth form is also good. Pupils' achievement in physical education is unsatisfactory.

The majority of pupils join the school in Year 7 with attainment well below what is expected for their age although their skills in English are better than those in science and mathematics. Good teaching and very good support ensure that they all make good progress as they move through the school. GCSE results show year-on-year improvements that are higher than the national trend. The school achieved exceptionally high scores for adding value to pupils' attainment in 2003, placing it in the top five per cent of all schools nationally.

Pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 reflect a similar, positive picture and the school reports a continuation of these trends in 2004 at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. Excellent management of the experience of pupils with English as an additional language ensures that they make very good progress. Pupils on the register of special educational needs make good progress in line with their peers and in relation to their targets. The most vulnerable pupils, such as those in care and refugee children, make good progress because of very good concern for their welfare. The highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some subjects.

Examination results in the sixth form are below the national average but are improving. Students achieve well in relation to their starting points because of good teaching. There is a tension between the school's very strong policy on the inclusion of students in post-16 education, and the standards they achieve. Recent changes to the curriculum are helping to meet the needs of all the students more effectively.

Pupils' personal qualities, particularly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are well nurtured. The school works successfully to ensure that the experience of all pupils, whatever their background, is balanced between support and challenge. Pupils' attitudes to work, and their behaviour, are good. The schools' high expectations of pupils promote a very good atmosphere in the school and there is very good racial harmony. Attendance levels are in line with the national average. In the sixth form, punctuality and attendance, although very well monitored by the school, are unsatisfactory and a barrier to improved achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education, resulting from very good support for pupils' welfare and **good teaching and learning** across all years. Teaching uses information from assessment well to monitor pupils' progress and there are high expectations of achievement, good behaviour and attendance. The curriculum is good in Years 7 to 11 and satisfactory in the sixth form. There are good opportunities for enrichment and links with parents and the community. Very good links with other schools and colleges provide additional curriculum benefits for students in the sixth form although the take-up is limited.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good. The headteacher and governors recognised the main priorities for improvement after the last inspection and have relentlessly driven up attendance rates and standards, particularly at GCSE. Funding from a wide range of external sources has been used very effectively in support of these priorities. The headteacher is innovative and plays an active role in local partnerships that bring benefits to the school. **Governance and management are good.** Governors have supported the headteacher and senior team effectively in all areas of school improvement, particularly in science.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils express good levels of satisfaction with the school. Members of the local community hold the headteacher in high regard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- continue to develop teaching and learning in all subjects to bring it all in line with the very best;
- continue to incorporate clear strategies into teaching that will extend and challenge the highest attainers;
- ensure that computers are used in all subjects to raise pupils' standards;
- continue to improve standards and the range of courses in the sixth form;
- improve the standards and quality of provision in physical education;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that pupils receive their entitlement for information and communication technology in all subjects.

THE SIXTH FORM

There are 88 students in the sixth form. The numbers have fluctuated since the last inspection but have been broadly maintained. This sixth form is almost half the size of sixth forms nationally. There are nearly twice as many students in Year 12 than in Year 13. Approximately 40 per cent of pupils in Year 11 joined the sixth form in 2004, including four students with special needs and many from ethnic minority groups. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is almost five times the national average. A significant number of students are eligible for the new grants available for those in economic difficulty. Brentford School for Girls is part of a consortium with three other local schools. Retention rates for students studying a two-year course are comfortably in line with national targets. The number of students making use of the consortium arrangements is relatively low.

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall, **provision in the sixth form is good.** Teaching is good, supported by good learning. Examination results are below the national average and the standard of students' work is below expectations for the courses they are studying. Nevertheless, students' achievement is good. There is adequate provision across the consortium with a range of 34 courses leading to vocational qualifications and GCE A2 and AS levels. The school provides a positive

environment for the personal and social development of students. The sixth form gives satisfactory value for money and has made good improvement since the last inspection.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All students feel valued regardless of their personal circumstances. Relationships and racial harmony are very good reflecting the strong policy for inclusion that pervades all areas of the school.
- The achievement of students is good because of good teaching and very good care and concern for their welfare.
- Some students are reluctant to take advantage of the facilities of the consortium. The range of courses available in the girls' school is limited and does not meet the needs of some of the students.
- The management of the development of basic skills in literacy, communication and numeracy is not sufficiently rigorous and this is restricting achievement in some subjects.
- Attendance rates are below national averages and this has a negative impact on the continuity of students' learning.
- Students play an active part in the good enrichment activities provided across the school. This contributes positively to their personal and social development.
- Career guidance is very good.
- Students express positive views about the school and enjoy their experience in the sixth form.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

| Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected. | |
|---|---|
| Curriculum area | Evaluation |
| English, languages and communication | Provision in English is very good . Students learn very well because of dynamic teaching. |
| Mathematics | Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . Teaching is very variable in quality although the best is excellent. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory |
| Science | Provision in biology is very good . Standards are above national expectations. This represents good achievement for most students. |
| Humanities | Provision in sociology is good . High expectation and challenge in teaching encourages good intellectual effort by students. |

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school provides **very good** care to students. Support and advice is good and very good in careers guidance. Assessment information is used effectively in monitoring students' progress and in making sure that they know their targets. Relationships are very good and result in a harmonious community in which students from the very wide range of cultural and social backgrounds feel secure. The few students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. However, there is no system in place to monitor effectively the development of students' skills in literacy, communication and numeracy, and students are not getting sufficient support in these areas of their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership, management and governance of the sixth form are good. Governors and senior staff are very clear in their vision for the sixth form. They have a strong commitment to a fully inclusive post-16 provision that caters well for all students, no matter what their race, cultural background or ability. They have embraced the recommendations for 14 to 19 education and are beginning to make effective use of the consortium arrangements. They have a realistic awareness of the tensions created by their vision for inclusion and the need to raise standards. They have yet to fully implement a curriculum that meets the needs of their own young women because the range of courses currently available in the school is too narrow.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

All returns to the inspection survey of student views confirm the mostly positive views about their experience in the sixth form that students shared with the inspection team during the inspection week. A few students in Year 13 expressed concern about the quality of teaching in some subjects that have been disrupted by staffing difficulties. The school has experienced problems, common to this area of West London, in recruiting and retaining specialist staff. The inspection team judge that the strategies for the management of this aspect of the school are often innovative and largely effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDING

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

GCSE examination results have improved since the last inspection in 1998 at a rate higher than that seen nationally. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have also been rising faster than national trends. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with that expected for pupils of similar age, representing **good achievement** as pupils move through the school. Standards of work seen in the sixth form are below expectations for the courses studied, also representing good achievement for students when compared with their levels of attainment when they first join Year 12.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The percentage of pupils awarded GCSE grades A*-C has increased by 22 per cent between 2000 and 2003.
- All pupils, regardless of their race, background, ability or personal circumstances, make good progress because of the very good care and support provided in line with the excellent inclusion policy of the school.
- The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is very good because of very thorough and effective support.
- The development of pupils' language and literacy skills is good across the school and particularly for pupils with special educational needs.

- Higher attaining pupils, and those with special talents, make satisfactory progress but are sometimes not sufficiently challenged in some subjects.
- Standards and pupils' achievement in physical education are unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory provision.

Commentary

1. The school has performed exceptionally well since the appointment of the headteacher four years ago. This is particularly so when the challenging circumstances facing the school are considered. These include;
 - The high number of primary schools located across several different boroughs creates difficulties with the transition arrangements for pupils. Attainment data is sometimes missing and details about pupils' special needs is often unreliable.
 - Many pupils' journey to school is long and often affected adversely by London traffic. This has a negative impact on attendance and punctuality, and puts additional pressures on these pupils at the start and end of the school day.
 - Links with parents and pupils from these more distant locations are difficult to sustain and the school works very hard to create a feeling of 'belonging'.
 - The high numbers of pupils and their families that move into, and out of, the area, many from this and other countries, present challenges of integration into the school community. For example, it was double the national average in Year 11 in 2003.
 - There are a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, and the range of languages represented in the school is unusually wide. These pupils need support that is highly specialised.
 - A high proportion of pupils come from economically and socially deprived backgrounds creating pressures on them such as providing care for siblings and taking on part-time employment.
 - The school experiences continual difficulty in recruiting and retaining teaching staff because it falls outside the designated area of London that is eligible for financial support.
2. All of these factors have a significant impact on the standards and achievement of pupils and the improvement in the performance of the school under these circumstances is very good. In 2003 GCSE results place the school in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally.

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

| | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades | 50 (46) | 52 (50) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades | 90 (81) | 91 (91) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades | 100 (93) | 96 (96) |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 33.7 (30.1) | 34.7 (34.8) |

There were 140 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. These figures do not include 19 refugee pupils

3. The continuing improvement in examination results at the end of Year 11 is evidence of the good achievement of pupils as they move through the school. The very good support provided for pupils with particular needs such as English language development, or for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, ensures that they achieve in line with

their peers and in many cases their progress is very good. Specialist teaching ensures that those with special learning needs associated with dyslexia are equipped with strategies that enable them to achieve in line with their peers. Conscientious and consistent application by all members of the school community of the school's inclusion policy ensures that the girls learn in an atmosphere of warmth and friendship, which helps the more vulnerable pupils to be fully integrated in school life. Their achievement is at least good and often very good.

4. A high proportion of pupils at the school speak English as an additional language and a relatively high percentage of these are in the earlier stages of language acquisition. The school collaborates very well with the local borough of Hounslow and has created a team of specialist teachers working in a dedicated specialist unit. Those pupils who come to the school with little or no knowledge of English make very good progress from Stage 1 to Stage 4 of the register. This rapid progress is the direct result of very good teaching in the earlier stages through withdrawal and intensive support in the dedicated unit. This teaching is not confined to English language but includes other subjects. It enables pupils to keep up with their peers in mainstream classes, as well as improving their literacy skills. Pupils who have passed through the early stages continue to be supported by the specialist teachers in mainstream classes until they are capable of managing without individual support. Pupils' achievement is very good at all levels of proficiency in the language.
5. The application of the National Strategy in Years 7 to 9 has been very effective in many subjects and is having a positive impact on standards and achievement. Value added data for 2003 indicates the school is performing well above the national average for similar schools by the end of Year 9 and the school reports a similar pattern of results in 2004.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 33.9 (32.4) | 33.4 (33.3) |
| mathematics | 33.7 (30.5) | 35.4 (34.7) |
| science | 30.2 (30.2) | 33.6 (33.3) |

There were 150 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. Pupils are competent in the use of computers and their numerical skills are sufficiently well developed to enable them to learn effectively in most subjects. Language and literacy skills are good for the majority of pupils. Speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed in drama where the achievement of pupils is very good because of very good and sometimes excellent teaching. The strategies employed in this subject are also very effective in helping some of the more socially and emotionally vulnerable pupils to learn self-discipline. They use these skills in their learning in other subjects and this supports their achievement.
7. The school has intervened very successfully since the last inspection to improve standards and the achievement of pupils in science. Concerns reported then about standards in information and communication technology have been addressed successfully through timetabled lessons in all years except Year 10. There remain some weaknesses in the overall progress that pupils make in developing these skills because

there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their work in other subjects. Staffing difficulties in recent years have resulted in unsatisfactory provision in physical education. Pupils' standards and achievement in this subject are unsatisfactory.

Sixth form

8. The average points score for students in the sixth form entered for A2 and AS levels, and those entered for vocational examinations, indicates that standards were below the national average in 2003. These results are an improvement on the previous year when they were well below. The school reports results for 2004 that show a similar picture to 2003. The proportion of students that complete the A2 courses is comfortably in line with national levels. Few students leave without any qualification and the total number of ungraded awards in 2003 was well below the national average. Completion rates on the AS courses are slightly below expectations with a drop-out rate of approximately 14 per cent in 2004.

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

| | School results | National results |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades | 93.8 (79.4) | 87.4 (93.3) |
| Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades | 25.3 (30.7) | 30.1(36.7) |
| Average point score per pupil | 216.3 (160.7) | 268.7 (272.7) |

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

9. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below expectations for the courses studied. However, when the prior attainment of students is considered this represents good achievement. The standard achieved by students in the sixth form is restricted by several factors. These include;
 - Some low levels of attendance.
 - Some poor attitudes to punctuality.
 - Weaker standards on entering Year 12 than usually seen.
 - Family backgrounds that do not always value education beyond the age of sixteen for females.
 - Economic pressures that result in students taking on too much part-time employment.
 - Personal circumstances that require older female children to care for siblings.
10. Students' competence in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and communication are satisfactory and sufficiently well developed to enable most students to learn effectively in many of their sixth form courses. However, the school has very little idea of how well these skills are developed for all students in all subjects. There is no monitoring of overall provision through schemes of work and no separate taught course for students in the school. Some students do repeat GCSE courses in English and mathematics at one of the consortium schools or through evening courses at the adult education centre but there are a significant minority of students whose skills in these areas are not well developed. This weakness is identified as a barrier to achievement in some courses.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance in the main school is now satisfactory. This shows an improvement since the last inspection. However, attendance in the sixth form remains unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are good and relationships with adults and other pupils are very good in both the main school and in the sixth form. Behaviour is good and the rate of fixed-term exclusions remains steady. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive views of the school and good attitudes to their work and studies.
- Attendance and punctuality in the sixth form are unsatisfactory despite all of the school's efforts.
- Pupils generally behave well around the school and in lessons. There are a few pupils who can be disruptive when their challenging behaviour is not well managed.
- Relationships are consistently good throughout the school community and pupils respect each other's values, cultures and traditions. There is very good racial harmony.
- Because of the very good caring ethos around the school, pupils' moral and social development is very good. Spiritual development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory.

Commentary

11. Pupils' attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average in the main school. This is due to the very good systems developed by the school to monitor absence, promote attendance and prevent truancy. Punctuality has also improved. Many classes across the year groups have very good attendance levels but there are groups of pupils who have frequent unauthorised absence. These are monitored very carefully. Individuals are challenged by the school and the educational welfare officer with growing success. There are a few pupils who return to lessons late after breaks or between classes, but the pupils know that persistence will lead to detention and the majority are motivated to be punctual.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.6 %)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.4 | School data | 2.3 |
| National data | 7.2 | National data | 1.1 |

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

12. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and to school life. Most are well motivated with positive attitudes to learning and they make genuine efforts to improve. They are interested in their work, articulate in discussions and concentrate well. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher, work responsibly in groups and in pairs and take instruction well. Their interest and attention in the majority of lessons are at least good, although there are occasional instances when some pupils show inattention, are noisy and disruptive. This usually occurs when teachers are less confident in managing pupils' behaviour. The school has attracted funding for developing an inclusion programme for disaffected

pupils in Years 10 and 11, which has seen some positive effect with this group of pupils. The learning mentor team provides valuable support.

13. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are very motivated to work hard in order to join mainstream classes. They are very appreciative of the warm and encouraging ethos within the unit and know that they can always call on the help and guidance of the specialist teachers. It is not unusual to see pupils now in mainstream classes returning to the unit at lunchtimes or after school to seek help and advice over a text in English or a piece of coursework. Behaviour in the unit is exemplary, because of the relationships established between teachers and pupils.
14. Behaviour is generally good across the school. Most pupils are aware of the school's rules and the standards expected of them. They are polite, respectful and friendly to staff and visitors. Teachers provide good role models for pupils, treating them with the same respect and courtesy that they hope to see in return. Pupils respond well to this approach and, as a result, relationships throughout the school are consistently good, and often very good. Pupils report that there is very little bullying and the school takes any incidents very seriously. They speak warmly of the approachability and care of all the staff and they can always talk to someone about their concerns. Because pupils support one another in lessons and during break times, there is no special tension or harassment in the school community and staff work hard to support pupil confidence and self-esteem. A significantly strong feature of the school is the racial harmony that exists. There were no permanent exclusions between 2000 and 2003. The two permanent exclusions in this current year have been given places at a special school for behavioural difficulties. The rate of fixed-term exclusions has remained steady since the last inspection.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

| 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 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean |
| Black or Black British – African |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background |

Exclusions in the last school year

| Number of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 239 | 27 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 23 | 1 | 0 |
| 22 | 3 | 0 |
| 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 12 | 2 | 0 |
| 23 | 4 | 1 |
| 63 | 3 | 0 |
| 123 | 3 | 0 |
| 15 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | 0 | 0 |
| 78 | 20 | 0 |
| 75 | 13 | 0 |
| 11 | 1 | 0 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|---|---|
| Chinese | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 102 | 6 | 1 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 4 | 3 | 0 |

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

15. The school works successfully to promote pupils' personal development and they behave with increasing maturity and understanding as they move through the school. Successes are recognised and praised so that self-esteem is boosted and pupils become increasingly motivated to do well. The school's expectations that pupils will act maturely, considerately and with care for others promote a very good atmosphere in the school where pupils are valued and included whatever their background.
16. Spiritual development is encouraged through religious education and the opportunities for reflection in the 'thought for the day' each morning. Moral development is fundamental to the school ethos and pupils know right from wrong and the importance of trust and respect. The wide cultural mix within the school ensures that pupils share experiences and beliefs so that they become aware of the traditions of a wide range of cultures. Literature from other cultures is taught well, emphasising positive aspects of developing countries, such as Ethiopia. However, there is little visual evidence of the local area and traditions, or that of the multicultural community, within the school. In this respect, the excellent inclusion policy is not well implemented. The school is aware that social opportunities for many pupils are limited and tries to ensure that they have as much opportunity in school as possible with a wide variety of clubs, such as the Glads Club producing items for charity, and numerous extra-curricular activities including street dance, pop groups, drama, hair braiding, football, netball and basketball. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility both within lessons and through activities such as the school council and peer mentoring. The latter in particular makes a significant contribution to racial harmony, to the security and well-being of more vulnerable pupils and is praised by pupils of all ages. This aspect of the school has recently won a series of national awards.

Sixth form

17. Students in the sixth form are mostly mature and sensible. They enjoy a high degree of independent learning, well supported by tutors and a learning mentor. Students behave very well and most have good attitudes to learning. They have very good relationships with each other and with staff, can be articulate, studious and committed. As part of their enrichment activities, many sixth form students support pupils in the main school, acting as peer mentors and as very good role models. The senior students attend Year 10 and 11 parents' evenings, social evenings and consortium social committee meetings, as well as being involved in supporting the school in other duties.
18. While most students attend well, there are a few with poor attendance, which affects overall levels of achievement. Punctuality is also a concern for some students. Some show little commitment to their coursework and 12 per cent of students leave school during their time in the sixth form. This is a particular problem in Year 12 in AS courses where the proportion in 2004 was 14 per cent. The school is very aware of the factors that contribute to these problems and has some rigorous systems for promoting better attendance and punctuality. They report that the requirement for good attendance and punctuality in the new national programme of financial grants for post 16 students facing financial hardship, is a significant motivational factor in promoting improvements.

19. Only five per cent of courses studied by students in this school are taught through the consortium. Many of the students expressed a reluctance to study outside of their own school. This reflects their cultural background in some cases, but is also a reflection of the students' general lack of confidence in unfamiliar situations. The school recognises the problems and has plans to address them.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education with many very good features. There is good and sometimes very good teaching across many subjects, leading to good learning. The curriculum includes a good range of courses in Years 7 to 11 and is satisfactory in the sixth form. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 experience very good support and it is good in the sixth form. Links with parents and the community are good and the sixth form benefits from very good links with other schools and colleges. Educational inclusion across the school is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The quality of assessment is **good**. The school has been very successful in improving the quality of its teaching since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. It is now good, and often better, in all years, although it is still slightly better in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in English and in mathematics in Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers employ a wide variety of strategies and methods to ensure that pupils remain engaged and ready to work hard.
- Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some subjects.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensuring a purposeful approach to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' planning does not always provide specific attention to pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
- The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress is good.

Commentary

20. The school has produced a new and more rigorous teaching and learning policy, which has involved teachers from across the whole school. The audit of teaching and learning has enabled the school to identify focal points for improvement. These the school has addressed through the successful training of teachers, sometimes involving collaboration with other authorities in the locality. The introduction and establishment of the Key Stage 3 strategy has been very productive in bringing about an improvement in teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9. The national guidance has been very effectively followed and has also had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11. The majority of lessons are now clearly planned to ensure good learning for the majority of pupils. The effective use of computers by pupils in all subjects is not yet monitored thoroughly and some teaching is failing to develop pupils' skills in this area.

21. The teaching of pupils with special needs is good and they generally learn well. Teachers and teaching assistants give special attention to them when it is needed. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable about their specialist subject areas and the requirements of pupils' individual educational programmes. Pupils with literacy difficulties learn well through multi-sensory methods, particularly when they are taught in the specialist unit. Those with social, emotional and behavioural needs learn very well in the learning support centre. Teachers' planning is helped by clear individual education plans but not all subject staff are fully aware of these plans or have the skills necessary to implement them. This restricts the progress of these pupils in some lessons, has a de-motivating effect on them and can create disruptive behaviour that teachers find hard to manage.
22. The teaching of the pupils with English as an additional language is consistently very good in the specialist unit. Teachers are skilled in dealing with language problems and adept at calling on the right sources when there is a specific problem, such as a language not spoken by those within the unit. The atmosphere is one of good-humoured enjoyment, together with interested and engaged work on the part of both pupils and teachers. Management of lessons is seamless and lessons are full of varied and productive tasks that hold pupils' attention and lead to a high level of effort. Teachers' flexibility is truly remarkable, as is their ability to spur pupils on with encouragement and praise.
23. Pupils are assessed in great detail when they arrive at the school and all those in the earlier stages of language development have individual statements and targets, copies of which are given to their class tutors. These are frequently reviewed and adjusted and used to move the pupils' learning on. Assessment is used very well to plan for the specific needs of each pupil.
24. However, the very high quality teaching of the unit staff is not always matched by the quality of support given by classroom teachers. Here, the use of the individual statements of need is not used with consistency and lesson planning does not always allow for the needs of these pupils. Teaching does not often build on the very good strategies that these pupils have experienced during their time in the specialist unit. The continuity of experience for these pupils is an important part of their continued achievement.
25. Although very able pupils are challenged in some subjects, there are a number of subjects where they are not extended to their full potential. This is particularly so in mixed ability classes, where there is very wide range of needs and abilities. The school is aware of this and has started to address the issue. There is a programme for pupils who are identified as either gifted or talented, supported by the Excellence in Cities funding. This provides some activities that enhance the overall experience of a few pupils but it has limited impact on the majority of more able pupils and in some cases it works in a negative way as it creates resentment of what are seen as privileges. The lack of opportunity for pupils to use computers to extend their work is also having a particularly negative effect on the progress of the highest attainers.
26. The school is very aware of the barriers to improving teaching that still exist. They recognise that these issues are preventing full implementation of their inclusion policy. There is the relatively high turnover of staff typical of city schools. This makes significant demands on the senior team as they hold the principal responsibility for the improvement of classroom activity and its impact on standards. They have been very successful in the support of science since the last inspection and have made some very exciting

appointments recently in drama. There is very good teaching in English, in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and in science in the sixth form. There are very good features of teaching in many of the other subjects. Middle managers responsible for subject areas are not yet all fully effective in their role as team leaders raising the quality of teaching and driving up standards.

27. In the majority of lessons, objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they will learn in the lesson and there are clear introductions, followed by tasks and activities that involve pupils in their own independent learning. Most lessons end with an exploration between pupils and teachers during which the learning completed in the lesson can be evaluated. This helps pupils to understand how well they are doing. Teachers have good command of their subjects and the majority manage their classes very well, with high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There is insistence on high standards, which extends beyond the classroom and ensures that homework and coursework are completed and meet the required standard. For many of the pupils, this structure and focus on organisational skills is well received and appropriate to their needs. A very strong feature of the teaching is the encouragement and enjoyment passed on by teachers to their pupils. Lessons are seldom boring and teachers employ a wide variety of strategies and methods to ensure that pupils remain engaged and ready to work hard. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are usually warm and good humoured, a factor which leads to good learning as pupils feel confident to take risks.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 149 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 6 (4%) | 28 (19%) | 63 (42%) | 45 (30%) | 5 (4%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

28. Teachers' use of assessment is good. Teachers monitor pupils' progress accurately and give useful feedback through marked work. The school collects a range of information about pupils' progress that help tutors to set suitable pupil objectives on the annual target-setting day. Developing the use of assessment for learning is high among priorities and the recent focus by the senior team is beginning to have a positive impact on standards and achievement. The new *www/ebi* system ("what went well" and "even better if" comments), pupil self-assessment and peer assessment, and teachers using data to adjust their lesson planning are all examples of improvements underway.

Sixth form

29. Teaching and learning are good in most subjects. Students are learning well, both in lessons and independently, making good use of both the learning resource base and information and communication technology provision available to them. Very good teaching was seen in science. The best teaching is characterised by good planning of challenging and interesting activities, carefully devised to engage students in active learning. There are good computer facilities available for use at this level, and these are used well to contribute to learning skills. Teachers have good relationships with students. Students have good attitudes in lessons, but are sometimes hindered by a low level of literacy skills. The school does not provide a coherent programme to monitor the development of students' key skills.

30. Teachers' use of assessment is good. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked and annotated in most subjects, with helpful and detailed suggestions for improvement. Data is used well to set target grades on the annual target-setting day. Students do not always receive guidance from tutors that is timely and thorough, and a few students complete courses only to be awarded unclassified grades. Others, particularly in Year 12 leave before completing their course. The school has made great improvements to the systems used to monitor the progress of individual students.

Language development and the enjoyment of learning together are the result of innovative use of the electronic whiteboard in English.

In a Year 12 lesson exploring the language of newspapers, the front page of a newspaper was projected on to the interactive whiteboard. A small group of students moved straight to the board. One annotated the image with the board pen as they brainstormed ideas; a second student operated the colour change for the text while a third pressed icons at the top of the board as required. They worked with the synchronicity of a great team, editing and improving as they went. When they had planned their ideas, one student presented them confidently and articulately to the whole class.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11, enriched with good provision of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum offered to students in the sixth form is satisfactory. Resources for learning are good and accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a good range of appropriate and relevant courses that meets the needs of its pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 11.
- The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is exceptional.
- The range of courses available to students in the sixth form, taught on the school site, is limiting the progress of some students.
- There is a very good careers education programme that prepares pupils well for future training and employment.
- Very good planning, regular monitoring and review of the curriculum ensure continuous high quality curriculum development and improvement.

Commentary

31. The school has effectively translated its vision of meeting individual learning needs into a good quality curriculum for the 11 to 16 age range. Pupils are offered several pathways after Year 9 and given good guidance on which choices will meet their particular requirements. The quality of courses provided is good because the school very effectively monitors and evaluates its provision. Since the previous inspection, information and communication technology and religious education courses have been introduced for all pupils, thus complying with statutory requirements. The teaching of cross-curricular information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. In art and design and technology, pupils do not receive their statutory entitlement. Art and design and information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9, are arranged as a carousel and this inhibits achievement because pupils are away from the subjects for nine week periods.

32. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a good curriculum with the national strategy firmly in place in most subjects and with 'catch up' and booster classes available to pupils in some areas. Time allocated to subjects now more closely reflects national guidance. Improvement in the schools curriculum has been good.
33. The school offers an innovative and full range of courses for pupils with English as an additional language, so that all are able to achieve to their full potential. Although the primary aim is to equip pupils to cope with mainstream classes, modular schemes are used so that pupils are entered for International GCSE examinations as well as gaining intensive language support.
34. There is very good provision in the specialist learning support unit called "The Study" for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school provides a caring environment in which students with a range of special needs are well looked after. The learning mentors support these pupils very well and the pupils learn good strategies that they can take with them into the mainstream classes. The arrangements for educating pupils with statements are good. In the special educational needs unit, reading is very well promoted.
35. The school now makes provision for a daily act of collective worship through assemblies and a themed programme for each day that gives the pupils opportunities to reflect. Statutory requirements are now fully met.
36. The school has a well-planned programme of personal, health and social education. Pupils generally see the relevance of the topic to their lives and are appreciative of its value. The quality of careers information is very good. The school has recently been awarded the Investors in Careers accolade for its work in this field.
37. Extra-curricular provision is good. Activities range from participation in sports, such as basketball, netball and football, to attending the "Glads Club" – raising money for charities. Higher achievement is fostered in the improvement of GCSE coursework, help with homework, and some extended learning for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils speak particularly highly of the opportunity to contribute to wider school life through peer mentoring, and of the debating club, which helps them to develop reasoning skills.
38. The resources in the school are good. There are very good resources in geography and sixth form biology. Some subjects, such as science, mathematics, English and humanities are benefiting from the use of interactive whiteboards. In addition, the English department has a computer room with 20 machines that is used well. Specialist facilities, such as design and technology, are well resourced. The school has made an impressive investment in improving information and communication technology resources, including an efficient server and networking system. However, the deployment of this equipment is not yet fully effective in ensuring that all pupils have regular and frequent access to computers to enhance their learning.
39. The quality of the school's staffing is good. The school has sufficient teachers and support staff with qualifications and expertise to meet the needs of the curriculum. Particular strengths include induction arrangements for all staff and the systems for the performance management of staff. The school plans to develop as a training centre for teachers. Recruitment in some subjects remains a challenge. Staffing problems in

physical education have resulted in unsatisfactory achievement. Long-term absence of staff in science has affected standards in recent years.

40. Accommodation is satisfactory. The school site is generally well maintained providing satisfactory accommodation. Subject rooms are mostly grouped together; the exception is religious education whose rooms are shared and scattered, and as a result lack the specialist ethos that enriches learning. There is very good newly-built accommodation for design and technology and the ongoing refurbishing of science laboratories has enhanced provision..
41. The accommodation for performing arts though satisfactory, has significant weaknesses. Drama, one of the most popular and successful courses, is taught in rooms with very poor lighting and dismal outlooks. The lack of practice rooms for music restricts pupils' learning. Pupils complain that, though adequate, the dining facilities are overcrowded and feel that the drabness of some public areas of the school would be improved by better displays of their work. They also express great concern about some of the toilets and have done for some time. The school has recently been successful in securing funds to make improvements.

Sixth form

42. A satisfactory range of AS and A2 courses are provided jointly with three other schools in the consortium. Recent additions to the curriculum include AS levels in critical thinking, French and German. There are two BTEC courses and one NVQ course under the management of adult education. These are health and beauty, holistic therapy and counselling. The school also provides vocational courses in business studies, health and social care and information and communication technology.
43. The proportion of students taking advantage of the consortium provision is very small. Many girls prefer to follow courses provided in the school rather than travel to other consortium schools. As a result, the range of courses available to them is limited. The arrangements for the development of students' key skills are unsatisfactory. They are not monitored sufficiently to ensure that all students can make appropriate progress in the courses they study.
44. Accommodation is satisfactory. The specialist facilities of the main school are used for most sixth form courses. Students have their own base that provides satisfactory accommodation for social activities and independent study. Media courses make good use of the City Learning Centre, and the beauty therapy course is taught within the adult education facilities. Both of these facilities are on the school site.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good. Monitoring procedures are very effective in showing very good support. Academic monitoring procedures are very good in the main school and good overall in the sixth form. Pupils and students report that the school takes good account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff generally know the pupils very well and create relationships of trust and confidence.
- Learning mentors support individual students very well. There is high quality support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their home language.

Commentary

45. The school has a very well structured pastoral system that ensures that the personal and academic progress of all pupils is monitored closely so that effective advice and guidance can be provided for them. Record keeping is extensive and readily available to staff. Any concerns about attendance or behaviour and their effect on pupils' achievement, can be identified quickly. Relevant information is provided for the form tutors, heads of year, learning mentors or outside specialists, and the necessary support given to the pupils concerned. The school has comprehensive procedures for child protection and all staff have received specific guidance. Appropriate support is given to the pupils in the care of the local authority. Parents are contacted immediately if their child does not arrive, truancy patrols are rigorous and the school works very closely with the local education welfare officer in the drive to improve attendance further.
46. The school maintains a supportive and caring atmosphere in which all pupils are valued equally and in which pupils and staff generally get on well with each other. Pupils say staff are easy to speak to and take time to explain things they do not understand. They say they can always ask for help without any problem and many have strong relationships with teachers, which makes them want to listen and achieve well. Many pupils join the school other than in Year 7 and are made to feel welcome and are helped to settle in. Most pupils respond well and are appreciative of the support given by learning mentors, learning assistants and subject teachers. Peer mentors provide valuable assistance to those new to the school as well as help for any pupil who needs their expertise. Comments from parents confirm that the school caters for 'a wide range of girls in ability, behaviour, religion, etc and seeks to meet their varied needs well and spurs them on to try to achieve higher levels'.
47. The school promotes the inclusion of all pupils whatever their specific need. Every pupil new to the school is assessed and their learning and pastoral needs are identified. The quality of support given to these pupils is of a very high quality. This ensures that all these pupils have the same access and support to their work as the rest of the pupils and are able to make progress at a similar rate. This in-depth, informed knowledge of pupils, and the quality of the support they receive, are strengths of the school.
48. Pupils with English as an additional language receive an excellent level of support and guidance from the specialist teachers, as well as from their form tutors. They are guided well in choices of subjects and courses, helped by withdrawal to the unit and there are strong links with the special educational needs department where necessary, although the two different needs are never muddled. The support and guidance lasts until they leave the school and is responsible for the high achievement of most of these pupils and the fact that many of them continue into the sixth form.
49. There is a very good mentoring scheme for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The learning mentors work skilfully with them; the pupil mentors are also very effective in developing the emotional literacy of those that they help. The school has very

good systems to reduce the number of exclusions. The learning support centre and the learning support team involve pupils in taking responsibility for their behaviour before they reach the point of exclusion. The school has a good understanding of the personal circumstances of many of the pupils who have received fixed term exclusions, in which there is a predominance of black African and Caribbean pupils. Some parents and pupils have concerns about behaviour but the inspection team did not find this to be an issue. A small minority of pupils, many of whom are registered as having social and emotional difficulties, present challenging behaviour. The school supports these pupils very well and equips them with a good range of strategies that help them to develop socially. There are also good facilities for removing disruptive pupils from classes so that other pupils can continue to learn. Specialist help is regularly obtained from a range of other agencies.

50. The school seeks pupils' views through close relationships with tutors, regular review meetings, class representatives and the school council and through questionnaires. There is a regular programme of school council meetings. Peer mentors are active across the school and are valued by pupils of all ages for their availability and discretion.

Sixth form

51. The quality of the personal support and guidance that the school provides for students in the sixth form is good. Most students report that staff listen and respond to their views with respect and they are given clear advice about course options. Students are given advice at sixth form enrolment, with key students identified and interviewed in Years 12 and 13. Links with adult education on site have offered new vocational courses, and the school arranges for advice to be given internally on courses available in the consortium link with other sixth form schools. The sixth form common room provides well for independent study, supported by tutors and personal, social and educational programmes. However, attendance and punctuality remain an issue, with some students dropping out of courses. The school has seen an increase in regular attendance since the introduction of the Education Maintenance Allowance Award for many students.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents and carers, who are pleased with what the school has to offer. **Good** use is made of the wider community and there are **very good** partnerships with other schools and colleges, particularly in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents are pleased with the school, find it approachable and feel it communicates well with them.
- The school uses formal and social opportunities well to develop its links with the community.
- The school provides detailed information to parents on their child's progress and offers good opportunities for parents to meet and discuss progress with teachers.
- There are very good educational links with other schools and institutions, particularly at sixth form level.

Commentary

52. The school has good links with parents and carers and most are pleased with the education provided for their daughters. Information supplied to parents about progress is very good, giving a picture of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses and setting specific targets for improvement. An increasing number of parents attend parents' evenings where they can discuss their child's progress with staff. The school has seen an increase to over 70 per cent attendance by parents at the Year 7 parents' evening. This was held in response to parents' request, so that they can discuss progress in subjects with teaching staff. Attendance at other school events, such as the international evening, carol concert and celebratory Record of Achievement ceremony, shows a steady rise in parent numbers, responding to the school's efforts to involve parents in their children's education. Many parents, however, continue to be 'supportive, but passive'.
53. Parents are pleased with the school's expectations of their children and feel that this enables them to make good progress. Most parents feel the school is approachable and find formal and informal communication relating to their child's work helpful. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved in reviews of progress and to help with their children's learning. The school provides translators where necessary. Student journals provide an effective means of communication between home and school. The very effective pastoral system ensures that any concerns or queries that parents may have are dealt with promptly and effectively. Helpful and efficient reception staff provide a welcoming, approachable first point of contact for parents and visitors and for pupils requiring first aid.
54. The teachers in the specialist unit ensure a smooth and thorough interface with the parents of pupils who have English as an additional language. They are always accessible to them in the unit, hold many consultative meetings with them and ensure that information to home from the school is translated into the required language. The department does much to add to the atmosphere of racial harmony, inclusion and equality of opportunity in the school and the community. The links that the staff has across the borough provide a very effective network that aids the integration of families from other countries and provides support for all those families that would otherwise be at risk of social exclusion.
55. The school makes good use of the community links and very good use of partnerships with other schools and colleges. These enrich the curriculum for pupils, provide staff with opportunities to share and develop expertise and raise the school's status in the local community. Good links with local businesses enable pupils to obtain appropriate work experience placements. Many of the governors work locally and bring their expertise to benefit the school. This shared provision between the community and school provides some vocational courses and involves employers in the school curriculum through business links and through the new City Learning Centre. The school has very strong links with the Hounslow Education Business Partnership. Adult education on site, linked consortium of sixth form schools and close collaboration with other local secondary schools, enable the school to be in the heart of its community. The school continues to try and work closely with the large number of primary schools that send pupils in Year 7. It is well aware of the barrier that the distance of some families from the school presents to forming a cohesive school community.

Sixth form

56. Communication and links with parents and carers is weaker and less effective in the sixth form. Parents are less involved and the school has taken steps, such as sending out a parents' information booklet, to try to increase turnout for parents' evenings. An induction programme to help students and their families develop relationships with tutors has been developed. Students are encouraged and guided to work experience placements, supported by the school's business and enterprise programme.
57. There is limited access for students to have experiences relevant to their own cultures or to take advantage of the wide range of cultures amongst their peers. Some families support the reluctance of the students to study at the consortium schools. Others support their daughters in taking on part-time employment or caring for siblings, at the expense of students' academic studies. The school is very aware of the barriers to improvements in respect of parental involvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides leadership that is very good and is very well supported by senior colleagues. Leadership elsewhere in the school is good and sometimes very good. Management of performance across the school is good. Very good planning, underpinned by effective monitoring, is helping to take the school forward. Governance of the school is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent inclusion policy is well understood by all who work in the school and its community.
- Standards at GCSE have improved at an exceptional rate since the appointment of the headteacher.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in the overall effectiveness of the school.
- Monitoring procedures are insecure in some areas of school performance.
- Governors are very supportive, have a good range of expertise and largely fulfil their statutory duties.

Commentary

58. There is overwhelming respect from pupils, students, staff, governors and members of the community for the leadership provided by the headteacher. She has a very clear vision for the future of the school and a strong focus on raising standards within a framework of inclusion for all those in the school community. Her style of leadership encourages the very effective senior team to take initiative, look for innovative responses to any difficulties facing the school and challenge others to do the same. This is set in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that results in very effective teamwork across the school. There is also a willingness to identify, adapt and apply good practice from outside sources in order to ensure continued improvement.
59. The senior team has steered the improvements in teaching and learning with the support of middle managers. Leadership across subjects and year groups varies in strength but is generally good. The school invests heavily in training for staff and supports their integration well. It takes time for new staff to familiarise themselves with the wide range of

pupil needs and to understand, and meet, the high expectations of school policies such as behaviour, inclusion and teaching. This is particularly the case for newly qualified teachers and those recruited from overseas. The strong focus on the monitoring of teaching and evaluating the work of departments is helping to drive up standards. The senior team is not yet fully supported in all departments by inspirational and dynamic subject leaders.

60. The governance of the school is good. The chair of governors is very experienced and provides consistent support to the school. He works closely with the headteacher on a formal and informal basis. Governors offer a wide range of expertise and many of them work and live in the local community, bringing additional strengths through links into employment, awareness of local and national government initiatives and financial knowledge. The headteacher has their trust and respect and she, in return, relies on their support. They have steered the very good improvement in school performance since the last inspection with very effective intervention in some areas such as science. However, they have not monitored with sufficient rigour the right of pupils to use information and communication technology in all subjects and in this respect they are in breach of the statutory requirements.
61. The school provides a caring environment in which students with a wide range of special needs are well looked after. The arrangements for educating pupils with statements are good. The provision for special educational needs is managed well. The statutory requirements are fulfilled and there is very good co-ordination of key staff through School Action meetings.
62. The leadership and management of the unit supporting pupils with English as an additional language are excellent. The head of the unit is extremely knowledgeable and experienced and has drawn together a wholly united, committed and dedicated team of teachers. A difficult timetable of withdrawal and in-class support is carried out seemingly effortlessly and an ethos of calm and interested work pervades the unit. Resources are very good, largely prepared by the teachers themselves, and the accommodation is transformed into an exciting place to be by the way in which it is used. The value that the unit adds to the school in academic, social and cultural terms far outweighs its costs.
63. The school undertakes regular and mostly rigorous self-review to ensure that standards are improving and pupils' needs are met. Management systems in the majority of areas are good and often very good. Intervention in some areas is very effective. For example, in science since the last inspection. Management systems are also flexible enough to respond to short-term challenges such as that identified in the behaviour of some groups of pupils in Year 9. In this instance, very effective teaching strategies employed in drama lessons were seen to have a positive impact on the poor behaviour of some pupils.

However, in a few areas of school, performance management systems are not yet rigorous enough. These include;

- Information and communication technology across subjects.
- The programmes for citizenship and work-related learning that are co-ordinated across subjects.
- The development of pupils' numerical skills in subjects.
- The development of key skills in the sixth form.

64. There are also weaknesses in monitoring arrangements in some subjects such as mathematics in the sixth form, physical education and religious education. Although collective worship was seen to comply with statutory requirements during the inspection, there are weaknesses in how well the arrangements are monitored throughout the year.
65. The school is very successful in attracting funding from a wide range of sources and uses it to good effect. The Leadership Incentive Grant is well managed and additional funds to support ethnic minority groups, those with English as an additional language and with special educational needs is very well managed. The school works effectively in partnership with several local secondary schools to implement the development of the post 16 curriculum. There are very good links with local providers of adult education and the City Learning Centre. Work-related learning benefits considerably from the support of the Education Business Partnership. The school is well placed to meet the criteria for specialist status in media arts as part of future plans.
66. There are good arrangements for the financial management of the school. Budgets are carefully set and controlled and there are very good procedures to ensure that departments remain within them. The principles of best value are well understood and applied. Clearly organised priorities for budgets and spending are based firmly upon pupil need. Consideration of the annual budget in conjunction with the school development plan is thorough. The monitoring of the effectiveness of expenditure is as yet underdeveloped. This means that governors have no effective way of knowing the value of the return on spending, such as with the recent investments in computers. The planning cycle is soundly managed, although targets for improvement are not yet rigorous and quantified in all areas of school performance.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and Expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|------------|
| Total Income | 2,884,752.05 | Balance from previous year | 244,641.31 |
| Total expenditure | 2,835,650.35 | Balance carried forward to the next year | 49,101.70 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,404.14 | | |

Sixth form

67. Leadership, management and governance of the sixth form are all good. The vision for an inclusive, quality experience for all students within a broad curriculum is at the early stages. The strong partnerships within the sixth form consortium bring considerable benefits in terms of extra provision and external, friendly support for the headteacher and

senior team. There is a shared vision from the community as a whole and the school is active in all programmes working towards this. Students prefer the familiar environment and may not take full advantage of the additional resources available beyond the home school. The current curriculum does not yet offer sufficient breadth within the school to cater for their needs. Although it is adequate for the majority, a significant minority are not well provided for and this is preventing full implementation of the school's inclusion policy. Recruitment to the sixth form is low and the unusually small numbers present a real challenge for curriculum development.

68. There is no coherent strategy for the development of key skills. The school has no way of knowing currently if students have sufficient skill in these areas to support their work and make progress in the courses they study. This was seen to be a barrier to improved standards in some subjects. Monitoring of this aspect is unsatisfactory.
69. The sixth form provides good value for money. Although the school is a high spending school compared to others and costs in the sixth form are even higher than in the main school, the return on this spending is good teaching, leading to good learning and good achievement. This is within a context of significant challenge associated with the profile of students, staffing recruitment and some very old and tired buildings. The inclusive nature of the sixth form and the very good relationships that support racial harmony are a significant factor in the good value for money.

Work-related learning

The overall provision for work related learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As yet, there has been no audit and only limited training to help all subjects recognise ways in which they can support learning in this area.
- Pupils are positive about the quality of provision and respond appropriately.
- There are some links with other training providers to help enrich and broaden pupils' experiences.

Commentary

70. The school has developed a satisfactory range of work related courses in Years 10 and 11. Pupils can study courses in business studies, information and communication technology, media studies and health and social care. Standards in these courses in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average. Approximately one third of pupils study the information and communication technology course. Numbers on the other three courses are around 15 to 20. All Year 11 pupils experience office skills in the CLAIT Level 1 course. A few pupils in Year 11 benefit from a course called 'Preparation for Employment' and a small number in Year 10 are working towards bronze and silver awards in the ASDAN course. Pupils' attitudes are good and for many the courses have led to improvement in attendance and organisational skills.
71. The school has links with a wide variety of local industries and training providers. These links not only help in the development and delivery of courses, but also in enhancing work experience, careers education and contact with outside consultants and providing pupil

mentors. Local industries also offer extended work placements to some Year 11 pupils following NVQ courses.

72. Teaching of the vocational courses varies. In one lesson seen in business studies it was very good while some of the teaching in health and social care is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the CLAIT course in information and communication technology is now satisfactory after some concerns about non-specialist teaching leading to underachievement.
73. Some subject areas, particularly design and technology and English, are explicitly developing skills to develop enterprise such as business simulations and knowledge of industrial processes. In English, there is a complete unit related to work experience where pupils are encouraged to give presentations to their peers. The teaching approach effectively engages the pupils in a practical way of learning, but also debating real issues in the world of work. During a bread-making project in design and technology, reference was made to industrial processes and a consideration of large batch production. The pupils consolidated their class work with a visit to the factory of Pizza Express to get an understanding of the cutting edge of manufacturing.
74. Work-related learning is less effective in other areas of the curriculum although the school is aware of this and has plans to share and extend good practice. Careers education is very good and there is a good programme of work experience. For some pupils at risk of exclusion or disaffected, there is the opportunity for extended work experience to help motivate and prepare them for the next stage of their education and training.

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

Overall, provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn very well because of lively teaching that is very well planned.
- There is very good provision for pupils from ethnic minorities.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their work.

Commentary

75. When pupils enter the school standards in English are below average. By the end of Year 9, they are average in comparison with all schools and well above average compared with similar schools. They are better in English than in mathematics or science. At GCSE they were below the national average in 2003 for the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C, but above average for the percentage reaching grades A*-G. In 2004 there are indications that they were average at A*-C. In speaking and listening pupils reach well above average; they speak articulately and with confidence on a range of topics, presenting themselves maturely. They write well for a range of audiences and read widely. Pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, perform at least as well as other pupils. In English literature standards were average in 2002 and 2003, although there are indications that they fell to below average in 2004. This is in part because all pupils in Year 11 are now entered for this examination in addition to English.
76. Pupils achieve well in all years. By Year 9 they achieve better in English than in science or mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of very

good teaching in key skills and the support provided. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make very good progress. Those from ethnic minority groups achieve better than others. Those from Asian and Black African groups achieve better than white British pupils.

77. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. This is because of lively and very well planned lessons, which enable pupils to learn effectively. Lessons are well paced; during the inspection, pupils showed rapid learning about Wilfrid Owen's poetry and travel writing. Reading is fostered very well through well-structured induction and good teaching in the learning resource centre. Oral skills are developed well through role-play and good links with drama. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They learn literacy well owing to good planning by teachers and a calm, purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Two new interactive whiteboards are used very well for teaching and learning in some classes; all pupils word process work where appropriate but there are insufficient opportunities for all pupils to use computers for English in school. Teaching assistants support pupils very well because they work closely with teachers.
78. The department is very well led and managed, because of clear leadership and very good vision by both the current and previous heads of department, and superb teamwork between both teaching and support staff. Pupils' progress is very well analysed to enable further planning. The department is well resourced and has satisfactory accommodation.
79. Since the last inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 have improved, owing to better literacy teaching. At GCSE, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-G has greatly increased and all pupils are now entered for the examination; the proportion of pupils reaching grades A*-C remained the same until 2003, and there are indications that it has risen in 2004.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

80. Literacy is well taught across the curriculum. In addition to the very good implementation of the national strategy in English, punctuation and grammar are taught well in information and communication technology and in modern foreign languages. Key words are displayed in many subject areas, and technical vocabulary is taught particularly well in drama. There are good opportunities for learning through focussed discussion in mathematics, and extended writing is developed in history and geography, where word mats and glossaries are well used. There is excellent provision for literacy for pupils with English as an additional language.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' extensive use of French and German in lessons develops pupils' listening skills and provides them with good and consistent role models.
- Many students find it difficult to speak in either language with confidence.
- The quality of teaching is good and often very good or excellent.
- Access to information and communication technology resources is limited.

- The curriculum is well planned to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils - nearly all take a language option for GCSE regardless of their abilities or cultural background.

Commentary

81. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national average. However, as pupils' levels of literacy on entry to the school are well below average, achievement is good at this stage because of the good teaching pupils receive. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to read with comprehension in both languages and can produce clearly structured and sometimes extended sentences. They show a firm understanding of the written and spoken language, but their fluency and confidence when speaking the language is less strong and is sometimes lacking in confidence.
82. In 2003, GCSE results in French were close to the national average, with the proportion of A/A* grades above the national average. Provisional GCSE results in both French and German increased in 2004, to reach national expectations. Inspection evidence reflects this level of attainment and shows it to be in line with the average expected in both languages, while achievement is good. Pupils with special education needs make good progress in relation to their abilities, through the use of well-targeted support from their teachers. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress, often better than that of their peers. Extension work is well provided for those who show themselves to be gifted in languages. High attaining pupils can use a variety of tenses and structures accurately in their written work. Their listening skills are also well developed because teachers consistently use either French or German in conducting lessons, providing pupils with good models of the spoken language, as well as frequent use of audio tapes. Average and lower attaining students can write in the present tense and can produce basic sentences using tenses in the past. Skills of speaking, however, remain less strong than those of listening, reading and writing.
83. Strong features of the teaching are the consistently good planning, which organises pupils' learning well through manageable, focused tasks. Planning also ensures the steady and logical development of language skills. As a result, pupils are able to take pride in their understanding of each new step of language acquisition and learn to evaluate their own and others' progress. Teachers make good use of starter activities to focus students' attention. Classroom organisation is also varied to include pair, group and individual work. This encourages the collaboration of pupils from different races in line with the school's inclusion policy. They emphasise their teaching objectives at the beginnings of lessons, which helps students to understand why and what they are learning. They show good subject knowledge in French and German and provide consistently fluent and accurate models for pupils to copy. Teachers form good relationships with their classes, have high expectations of both work and behaviour and their classroom management usually is apparently effortless. As a result, the majority of students respond positively and participate with interest and effort. Homework is set regularly and consolidates the work done in class. Teachers' marking is consistently good. Books are regularly marked and pupils are shown how to improve their work. Assessment is detailed and thorough and is put to good effect when planning future lessons or in order to fill gaps in knowledge or skills.
84. Pupils' literacy skills are well developed in their understanding of grammar and the wide vocabulary they experience. The development of information and communication

technology skills, however, is hindered by the limited access to computers. Cultural awareness is well developed both in the classroom and through trips abroad.

85. The department is well led and managed. The head of department has now created a cohesive team enthusiastic, experienced and often sparkingly encouraging. Teachers share good practice and pupils' work and teaching and learning are monitored to good effect. The curriculum is well planned, with several initiatives to ensure that all pupils can acquire some knowledge of another language and receive some successful recognition for their work in the school.
86. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been good, with improvements in achievement, teaching and management of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative, well-structured teaching accounts for rising standards.
- Pupils are encouraged to conjecture and experiment.
- Homework makes a striking contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils hardly ever use computers to enhance their mathematical skills.
- Monitoring procedures and the use of assessment are not yet rigorous enough to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

87. When they join the school, pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are well below national expectations for their age. Standards rise rapidly during the first three years and by Year 9 they match expectations. These pupils achieve very well and in the next two years achievement is also good. In 2004, GCSE results were similar to those of 2003, which were in line with the national average. Pupils' current written work reflects a similar picture of added value. Pupils' facility with algebra is particularly well developed, and prepares them well for advanced study. The department is inclusive; pupils from various ethnic backgrounds and those with special needs achieve similarly well, benefiting from teaching assistants' skilled support,
88. Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11, and very good in Years 7 to 9. High expectations permeate lessons, especially in Years 7 to 9. They are embodied in imaginative, challenging and pacey lessons that are carefully planned by a talented team of teachers. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are encouraged to imagine, conjecture, discuss, experiment and explore, while mathematical routines and vocabulary are consolidated through lively repetition. Tasks are normally very well suited to varied individual needs. Teachers make confident and judicious use of interactive whiteboards, but pupils hardly ever use computers or graphical calculators to enhance their learning of mathematics. This contravenes national requirements. Pupils are well motivated and fully engaged by the varied teaching methods that often include visual and practical learning. Teachers shape their support to the needs of individuals and they give their time to offer clubs and lessons outside the normal teaching day.

89. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department is growing into this demanding role. Teachers share a collective determination for their pupils to succeed and they welcome ideas on how to innovate and improve their teaching further. The department has good quality data available, but it is not yet interrogated effectively to help prioritisation in planning. Procedures for monitoring, identifying and sharing good practice are not well developed.
90. Six years ago, the last inspection found one quarter of lessons in Years 7 to 9 to be unsatisfactory, with few opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves. Since then, test and examination results have climbed steeply, reflecting the dramatic progress in teaching quality and expectations. This amounts to very good improvement across the board.

Mathematics across the curriculum

91. The monitoring of this aspect of pupils' provision is unsatisfactory. An audit of the ways other subjects develop pupils' mathematical skills has been undertaken but the results have not yet been codified or a coherent plan developed. The school has fallen behind the national programme in this area. Nevertheless, student competence in these skills develops well, mainly because of their success in core mathematics lessons. Students are expected to use mathematics in most other subjects at a routine level but there was little evidence seen during the inspection. More demanding instances occur in geography and science where pupils collect, analyse and interpret numerical data successfully. The school has yet to establish a clear system for monitoring the development of pupils' numerical experiences across subjects.

SCIENCE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement has led to improved results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004.
- The results in GCSE in recent years are not high enough.
- There is insufficient challenge for talented pupils.
- The management of coursework is much improved.
- Teachers use information and communication technology very well but there are missed opportunities for pupils to use computers.

Commentary

92. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in 2003. They were well below those of similar schools based on the relative achievement in Year 6. The results improved considerably in 2004 and have improved at a rate above the national rate since the previous inspection.
93. In 2003, the GCSE A* to C results were well below average but were above average in the higher grades of A* and A. They improved slightly in 2004. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Strategies are now in place to raise achievement in GCSE through extra lessons after school. The coursework is now managed better with definite time slots enabling most pupils to complete the work in Year

10. The autumn term in Year 11 gives opportunities to repeat experiments to raise achievement.
94. Standards in the current Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement for many pupils who entered the school with standards well below the national average. This includes pupils with special educational needs and the large proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language. Classroom support staff employ good strategies. They check pupils' knowledge of scientific vocabulary on a regular basis. This ensures that the pupils can write and speak about science confidently. This was demonstrated in a Year 9 class of pupils of below average ability who discussed an experiment about pendulum swings using the appropriate scientific language. The achievement of pupils with special ability in science is good. This is because of their positive attitude and motivation. However, there is insufficient structured extension work to raise their achievement further, and a need for more independent learning. The achievement of black pupils has improved recently and during the inspection was in line with that of their peers in terms of both scientific knowledge and presentation of work.
95. By the end of Year 11, standards are below national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement for many pupils based on their relative achievement on entering the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those pupils whose home language is not English who all make progress in line with their peers. Pupils' practical skills have improved and they plan and observe experiments accurately. Higher attaining pupils can sustain rational debate with good use of appropriate vocabulary but the opportunities for them to develop these higher skills are limited. Most pupils are good at collecting data from their experiments but are less confident in evaluating their results. This reduces the opportunities for many to score higher marks in the practical coursework.
96. Intervention strategies identified by the senior management team in collaboration with local consultants, improved the quality of classroom teaching and learning at a time when there was considerable unavoidable problems with staffing. Teaching is now good across the department. Strong features of the most effective teaching are planning and the monitoring of pupils' progress. Teachers continually check pupils' understanding in class with questions that encourage the pupils to think about their answers carefully. This improves the accuracy of their responses. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, while comments praise and encourage them, there are inconsistencies in letting the pupils know how to improve. Teachers' planning is improved by the sharing of innovative ideas and good practice. This increases the range of teaching strategies and helps to raise standards. There is some variation in the quality and quantity of homework and it does not always extend or build on the quality work done in lessons.
97. The department is well managed and there is now a focus on raising standards. There is a shared understanding of what factors contribute to higher standards and the head of department has welded together new and experienced teachers into an effective team. The leadership places a high priority on helping to develop teachers' skills and sharing their good practice. Most of the teaching and support staff have been trained in ways to support the national science strategy. This is having a positive effect on the improvement in practical work. Good systems are in place to monitor classroom activities, helping to raise standards by identifying areas where teaching may be improved, therefore improving learning.

98. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The use of information and communication technology has increased, but there are missed opportunities for the pupils to use computers. The interactive whiteboards have added visual impact and increased learning opportunities. The national science strategy in Years 7 to 9 is now fully developed and as a result, the investigative strand demands many more practical experiences. This places an increased demand on technician time. Currently there is not enough time available to meet these additional requirements and maintain service to improving standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision in information and communication technology is **good**. Provision for using information and communication technology across the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is good because of teaching that is mostly good.
- Higher attaining pupils are not fully challenged in all lessons.
- There is good promotion of independent learning, which is beginning to be effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- Monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly those in Year 10, are receiving their statutory entitlement.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers in all subjects.

Commentary

99. In 2003, 65 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A* to C, which is in line with national expectations. In 2004, the department achieved a higher percentage of A* to C results than was predicted and also scored well in relation to other subjects in the school. In the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) tests, 63 per cent of pupils passed one or more units. Of these, 32 per cent passed five units and gained the CLAIT Level 1 Certificate. This low level of passes is reported by the school to result from non-specialist staff teaching some units. This has been rectified and specialist staff now teach all CLAIT courses.
100. For current pupils studying for GCSE and CLAIT, achievement is good. However, pupils in Year 10 who do not study for GCSE are not receiving specialist lessons and rely on opportunities in other subjects for improving their use of information and communication technology. This affects at least two thirds of the pupils in this year group. The experience for these pupils is unsatisfactory.
101. In Year 9 in 2004, the department did not achieve its target of 70 per cent achieving Level 5 or above and the actual result was 38 per cent. The reasons for this have been analysed and a more realistic target has been set for this year. The school is now successfully using the new national strategy guidance, and teaching is good.
102. Many pupils start in Year 7 with well below average skills, knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. Achievement is good, so that by the end of Year 9, all pupils have progressed by at least one and sometimes two levels. During Year 11, pupils working towards GCSE qualifications continue to achieve well. This is a result

of the consistently good teaching, the very good implementation of the national strategy and the well planned GCSE courses. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is such that they make good progress, as do pupils with English as an additional language. Teachers ensure that these pupils have work related to their ability and also give them individual support in lessons. However, two thirds of pupils in Year 10 do not receive specialist lessons and there are no rigorous arrangements for assessing their progress during this year.

103. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan exceptionally well and teach with enthusiasm and accuracy. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in the learning process, regardless of their race, ability or social background. This, together with the very good relationships with the pupils, results in very good behaviour. Teachers stress the value of independent work. Pupils learn well because the curriculum is challenging and has many elements that capture the pupils' interest. However, in Years 7 to 9, the rotation of information and communication technology with another subject affects continuity and progress and time is wasted on reinforcing previous learning. Also, pupils in Year 10 who do not study for GCSE do little more than consolidate the skills learned in Years 7 to 9. The Level 1 course for pupils in Year 11 offers little challenge to higher attaining pupils, although pupils appreciate that it is a widely accepted accreditation for working life. The department is aware of the issue and is addressing it.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There has been an impressive amount of work to enable the national strategy to be implemented successfully in Years 7 to 9. Extensive and well-planned improvements are part of the development planning and standards are rising. Contacts have been made with primary partner schools to support the national strategy and the school has been accepted as a pilot centre for online testing. There is now an enthusiastic team of well-qualified and experienced staff who are committed to continued improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

105. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Whilst it is used well in some areas, there are a significant number of subjects where information and communication technology is used insufficiently to enhance learning. There is good practice in science, where data logging kits and digital microscopes are used well and pupils use word processing to a high standard, although even in this subject there are missed opportunities, particularly for the more able pupils. In geography, pupils search the internet for information, use digital cameras and produce graphs from spreadsheets. Very good use is made of the department's own web pages on the school intranet. Information and communication technology is used in the English department to help pupils with poor literacy skills.
106. Teachers are making good use of the new interactive whiteboards in some subjects to enhance and stimulate the learning experiences of pupils and contribute to the achievement of departmental objectives. However, this does not always involve the use of information and communication technology by pupils and consequently may not necessarily contribute to pupils applying and developing information and communication technology capability.

107. There is non-compliance with statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9 in design and technology and art and design. There is little use of information and communication technology in art and design in Years 10 and 11, where opportunities are missed to use and manipulate digital images. There is no use of information and communication technology in physical education. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is limited and there is no specific planning for its application.
108. The school has audited the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. This requires further review to ensure that all statutory requirements are met, that teachers make use of the suggested opportunities in the national curriculum documents and that pupils are encouraged to use their own initiative in identifying opportunities for using information and communication technology. There are no systems for identifying the specific achievements in information and communication technology of pupils in Year 10 who are not having specialist lessons. Whilst there is access to computers out of formal lesson times, some pupils say that the time allowed on them is insufficient.

HUMANITIES

History

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 results in good achievement for pupils.
- The development of literacy, particularly extended writing is helping to improve standards.
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons.
- Planning does not always cater for the needs of those pupils with English as an additional language, and for pupils with special educational needs.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are good and help them to know how well they are doing.

Commentary

109. Standards in Year 11 are improving but GCSE examination results were still below the national average in 2003. A similar picture is seen in 2004 with 50 per cent of pupils achieving grades A-C. There has been a significant improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9, although they are still below the national average.
110. In Years 10 and 11, the achievement of pupils is good. Pupils can examine sources critically in order to explain different interpretations of key events and comment on the value of different sources. Pupil achievement in Year 7 to 9 is at least satisfactory with pupils making good progress in some lessons. For example, when they had to select and

organise information to produce structured answers on “Black History”. Most pupils from the range of ethnic groups make comparable progress.

111. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 and the impact on learning is good. Lessons are well structured with a range of activities planned to challenge pupils and deepen their thinking about key events and characteristics of life in the USA in the 1930s. Subject knowledge is strong and planning includes different levels of outcomes. Most pupils make good progress. Probing questions ask pupils to speculate and analyse the consequences of key features, such as mass production.
112. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory with many good features. The department has adopted the principles of the national strategy, including lesson starters and plenaries. The development of pupils’ literacy skills has been given high priority through opportunities for extended writing and reinforcement of historical vocabulary through the use of glossaries. Pupils are given opportunities to develop information and communications technology particularly in Year 9. The pace of some lessons is too slow to meet the needs of more able pupils. Primary sources such as artefacts and photographs, are not always used to particularly good effect.
113. Leadership and management in the department are good. There have been improvements in marking and an emphasis on peer and self-assessment in order to help pupils identify how to improve. A range of resources has been produced to enable pupils to evaluate their own work. Pupils’ achievement is monitored across all years and targets are identified and shared with pupils. However, monitoring is not so effective in supporting pupils who have arrived more recently from other countries and those with special needs. The department does not pay enough attention to the integration of these pupils into lessons and the targets identified in their personal education programmes.
114. Monitoring of standards in the subject is satisfactory through the scrutiny of pupils’ work and a cycle of lesson observations. A portfolio of examples of pupils’ work has been developed that exemplifies performance at a range of levels. This is helping to improve the reliability of teachers’ marking.
115. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have improved in GCSE examinations and the subject has increased in popularity, with two groups now studying GCSE in Year 10. There has been a steady improvement in standards in Year 7 to 9.

Geography

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school reports significant improvements in GCSE results in 2004.
- There is very good development of information and communication technology as part of teaching and learning.
- There have been improvements in assessment strategies.
- Some groups of pupils can lack concentration, particularly in Year 9.

Commentary

116. Whilst standards in Years 7 to 9 are below the national average, there has been a sustained improvement in results, including a significant rise in the number of pupils achieving Level 6. In 2004, there was a significant rise in standards in GCSE grades with 59 per cent of pupils achieving A*-C. In 2003, GCSE results were well below the national average owing to there being a significantly higher proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English within the class.
117. Achievement overall is satisfactory. The most able pupils make good progress over time in Years 7 to 9 as demonstrated by work scrutiny. They can produce extended writing, for example, when describing the differences between northern and southern Italy. Lower attaining pupils, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with educational needs, make similar rates of progress as their peers. This is because the teachers know the pupils well, have good relationships with pupils and offer good support. In Years 10 and 11, more able pupils give detailed explanations of geographical processes, can test hypotheses and develop a range of graphical skills. Pupils from across the range of ethnic groups make comparable progress.
118. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are carefully planned and the wide use of information and communication technology greatly enhances learning. A range of digital images are used as a teaching stimulus and the departmental website can be accessed by the pupils to find out more about coursework. GCSE fieldwork enhances learning and enables pupils to use the digital camera and present their finding in a range of ways.
119. Overall teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 with many good features. Lessons are well resourced and carefully planned. Lessons in Year 7 contain a range of creative activities and probing questions that enable pupils to investigate the local area. In some lessons however, such as in Year 9, pupils can become restless and lack concentration.
120. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has vision and has developed a range of initiatives particularly in informational and communication technology. Planning is very detailed and principles of the national strategy have been adopted. Literacy development in the department includes promoting a range of writing genre including poetry, extended writing and developing geographical vocabulary. Pupils self-assess their work, marking conventions are shared with pupils as is the assessment criteria. Pupils are set targets in geography and can receive a certificate of achievement.
121. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The department has developed support materials for the range of different abilities in the school. Information and communication technology has been developed as a major teaching stimulus. Systems for monitoring pupils' performance have been improved, including a cycle of lesson observations and work scrutiny. More pupils have chosen to study geography in Year 10 and generally pupils take pride in their work and have a positive attitude to the subject.

Religious education

Overall, provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging teaching encourages pupils' good intellectual effort and supports learning.

- Unsatisfactory assessment and inconsistent marking is a barrier to better achievement.
- A lack of variety in some teaching, and material which does not reflect the learning needs of some pupils, is a barrier to learning, particularly for more able pupils.
- Sixth form provision is innovative and challenging, and develops critical thinking skills and reflection.
- Many extra-curricular enrichment opportunities are missed.

Commentary

122. Results at GCSE in 2003 were above the national average, and this trend continued in 2004. Only a small proportion of pupils are entered for the examination.
123. At the end of Year 9 pupils are assessed against national expectations, but no levels are reported. The standard of work seen is just below national expectations. Pupils understand the differences and similarities of the main religions and have produced thoughtful work on the big questions of life. Lower attaining pupils are less confident in written work and struggle to express and justify their opinions. Achievement is satisfactory, and pupils with special education needs, and pupils whose home language is not English, achieve as well as the others, because of very good classroom support and some material tailored to their needs.
124. All Year 10 and 11 pupils follow a locally agreed religious education course, but no specific levels are reported. The standard of work seen is below average. Higher attaining pupils produce writing of a good standard, for example, on topics such as conflict and moral dilemmas, and most show keen empathy and sensitivity in their responses. Achievement by all pupils is satisfactory.
125. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory, with some good and some unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is good, teachers use probing questions to which pupils respond with good intellectual effort. Effective use of material and activities helps understanding. Teaching is unsatisfactory where the delivery is uninspiring and predictable, and the material does not challenge the higher achieving pupils, or meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils. Marking is inconsistent and has little impact on learning. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory because level descriptors are not made clear to pupils or parents, nor used specifically to support learning through targeting and close monitoring.
126. Leadership is satisfactory. There is a new vision beginning to be realised, evidenced in the innovative sixth form provision, and plans to introduce the short course at GCSE for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. Management, however, is unsatisfactory. Although new schemes of work are near completion, there are areas still to be effectively addressed, such as teaching styles, material and presentations, which are more securely tied to the pupils' learning needs, real challenge for higher attaining pupils, and the many missed opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment. Information and communication technology and library resources are used satisfactorily to support independent learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
127. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, particularly in the challenging and very popular programme delivered in the sixth form, the planned new GCSE course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11, and the continuing, above average results in the recent GCSE examination results. Statutory requirements are now fully met in religious education.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall, provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE are improving in all areas of the design and technology curriculum because teaching has improved.
- Leadership of the subject is very good, providing a very good role model and a good understanding of where improvements are needed.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not use computers to aid designing and making – the school is in breach of statutory requirements in this respect.
- Accommodation is very good and is having a positive impact on standards.

Commentary

128. In 2003, GCSE results were well below average with significant numbers of pupils not gaining any grade. In 2004, the number gaining A* - C grades improved by 20 per cent, with textiles and resistant materials showing the biggest improvement. This significant improvement in examination results reflects the more stable situation in the teaching team, after many difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in recent years. In relation to capability, pupils' attainment for the most part meets or exceeds expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well because the teachers know the pupils well and are sensitive to their requirements.
129. Pupils enter the school with widely differing experiences of designing and making. In relation to national expectation, their standards are well below average. In Years 7 to 9, the pupils' achievement is good and standards rise to being below those expected nationally by the end of Year 9.
130. During the inspection, insufficient evidence of making was seen in Years 7 to 9 to form a reliable judgement. Below average skills of designing were seen with students finding the development and refining of design ideas difficult. Below average standards of graphical presentation in pupils' work reflect a lack of clarity about the standards teachers expect from pupils.
131. In the four courses in Years 10 and 11, standards are much closer to that expected nationally. Predicted GCSE grades show a continuation of the improving trend. In food and textiles in particular, folders are well presented with pupils able to respond to design briefs, devise specifications, research and analyse products. The historically below average standards in graphics are being addressed through more consistent specialist teaching. Some satisfactory making was seen in Year 10 in food and textiles, with pupils showing a good understanding of the working characteristics of materials, for example, in bread making. Items made by pupils who finished the course in 2004 indicate a good understanding of quality control and attention to finish.

132. Teaching and learning in all years is satisfactory, with good teaching being observed in textiles and food technology. All teachers are specialist and have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Encouraging the development of independent learning skills is a characteristic of the best teaching. This means that pupils take greater control over establishing their own design briefs, are better able to experiment purposefully with materials, as for example in Years 10 and 11 textiles. The good assessment of pupils' work in relation to examination criteria and the provision of written and verbal information to pupils on how they can improve, are significant factors in raising standards at GCSE. Where teaching is less successful, pupils are given tasks that are not challenging enough. For example, being required to respond to pre-prepared work or when the teaching is over structured, which results in a lack of pace in learning.
133. In Years 10 and 11, many pupils use computers to help the presentation of their folders, and in food technology, to handle data and present this in graph form. Pupils also analyse food products for their nutritional value by using computers. In textiles, pupils have the opportunity to use computers to help both design and manufacture of products. In Years 7 to 9, pupils do not have enough opportunity to use computers to aid both designing and making.
134. Leadership in the department is very good. The head of department is a very good role model whose teaching and vision for the department is giving a clear sense of direction and is helping to drive up standards. Management is good, evidenced by the developing systems of monitoring and review that have identified weakness in both approach and provision. More rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is still required. Assessment of the work of older pupils is well organised but internal moderation of the work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is not yet a regular feature of the department's work.
135. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. The new design and technology accommodation has removed the major weakness previously reported. Since the last inspection, the department has had difficulty in recruiting well-qualified teachers and this has had a negative impact on standards. This situation has now been reversed and standards are improving

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Media studies

136. Media Studies offered as an option for GCSE was sampled. Two lessons were seen, one in Year 10 and one in Year 11. In both lessons, teaching was good and pupils were achieving well in line with their abilities and experience of the subject. Much of the teaching is done currently by a supply teacher in the absence of the head of department. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and are engaged and interested in their work, so that learning is good. In the Year 11 lesson, pupils were beginning a new module of work on the evaluation, effectiveness and relevance to everyday life of 'sitcoms', in preparation for a piece of extended coursework. Lesson preparation was very thorough and was presented to pupils in an intriguing and inviting manner, which resulted in good personal response.

Art and design

Overall, provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations but are improving, and pupils' achievement is good.
- Assessment data is not yet used effectively to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough opportunity to use computers to enhance their work – the school does not comply with statutory requirements in this respect.
- The management of the environment in which art and design is taught, is not effective in celebrating pupils' work and raising aspirations.

Commentary

137. In 2003, GCSE results were above the national average. In 2004, fewer pupils gained grades A*-C but all pupils gained a grade A*-G. The trend over the last four years has been an improving one. In relation to prior attainment, all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
138. All pupils make good progress between Years 7 and 9 from well below national expectations when they enter the school, to below expectations by the end of Year 9, indicating good achievement.
139. In lessons, and in the work seen of pupils currently in Year 9, standards are below those expected nationally. Pupils use a range of media with confidence and their understanding of the qualities of colour and how they might be used expressively are satisfactory. Drawing skills are below average, particularly when pupils work in their own time and the use of sketchbooks to support and resource learning is under-utilised.
140. The work of pupils currently doing the GCSE course is below average. Many have project work unfinished, and much of the preparation in sketchbooks is not strongly focused and as a result does not provide a substantial resource for the development of finished pieces. In lessons, the mixed media work being done by some students is of a better standard. This work gives students the opportunity to celebrate links across their own, very varied, cultures – it is a strong feature of their work. The focus on this type of material meets the requirements of the school's excellent inclusion policy very well and contributes to the racial harmony that is a feature of the school population.
141. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and are confident when giving demonstrations of technique. Homework is well matched to schoolwork but the expectations that teachers have of what pupils can do in their own time are not high enough. Assessment of the work of older pupils is good and is well matched to examination criteria, giving good guidance about how work can be improved. The routine marking of younger pupils' work is often congratulatory and does not give clear messages about how high standards should be.
142. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department is an able practitioner whose vision for the future development of the department has yet to be effectively shared with a new and enthusiastic team. The rigorous management of assessment data is not fully utilised to ensure that teaching is more effectively focused on the raising of standards attained by different groups of pupils. Though providing good working spaces, the management of the three good-sized rooms is not effective in

ensuring that they celebrate pupils' work and are visually stimulating for pupils. The department does not take the lead in promoting the artistic talent and the wide cultural influences of pupils' work in displays around the school.

143. Since the last inspection, improvements have been satisfactory. Standards have been broadly maintained. The lack of opportunity for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 to make art, using computers, remains. This was reported in the last inspection.

Drama

Overall, provision for drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in the very good achievement of pupils.
- Thorough assessment and monitoring focuses work and provides pupils with relevant information on what they need to do to improve.
- Good facilities and resources are used skilfully to engage the interest of pupils.

Commentary

144. Standards in Year 11 are below national expectations. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher A*-C GCSE grades in 2003 was slightly below the national average and reduced further in 2004. However, analysis reveals pupils achieve at least as well in drama as they do in other subjects, with many achieving beyond expectations at the higher grades. Pupils' achievement across Years 10 and 11 is very good in the light of their prior attainment. Weaknesses occur in written work, which tends to be more descriptive than evaluative.
145. In Year 9, standards are above expectations with strengths in the quality of practical work, the use of the subject vocabulary, group work and the development of ideas in discussion. This represents very good achievement when considering the levels of literacy skills and low self-esteem that many pupils have when they join in Year 7. Pupils of different abilities and those from different ethnic groups achieve equally well because teachers ensure they are involved and supported throughout. The good use of group activities helps the collaboration of pupils across different racial and social backgrounds and supports cultural harmony in the school.
146. Teaching and learning are very good, with some excellent features. Pupils approach the subject with enthusiasm, work hard and sustain concentration because lessons are interesting and teachers have very high expectations. Pupils have space to experiment with ideas and good technical resources available to create atmosphere. Teachers use a variety of very effective strategies to manage behaviour, creating an excellent environment for learning. These strategies were seen to be particularly effective with some pupils in Year 9 who were registered with social and emotional difficulties. The quality of pupils' oral responses in whole class or group discussions and their willingness to contribute, stems from the excellent focused questioning and respect that teachers have for pupils' views. Assessment informs pupils of their strengths and weaknesses, providing a good framework for learning.

147. Leadership and management are very good, with teachers working together as a very effective team. Good use is made of community resources and opportunities and there are numerous opportunities for pupils to display their work to a wide audience.
148. Progress since the last inspection is very good.

Music

Overall, provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11.
- There is good use of assessment to inform pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have insufficient access to information and communication technology to support work in music.
- The take-up of music instrumental and vocal lessons is below average.

Commentary

149. In 2004, results at the end of Year 9 were at the average recorded nationally. In 2004 at the end of Year 11, the numbers taking GCSE were too small for valid statistical comparison with national results. All students gained a pass grade between A* to F with one A*, one A and one B grade and 3 C's. The school target of grades at A*-C was not achieved in 2004. Standards overall have improved since 2000 and are among the best in the school.
150. Standards on entry are below average but rise significantly to around average in Year 9. This represents good achievement. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The current scheme of work, good teaching and learning, appropriate assessments and pupils' positive responses mean that pupils make good progress in performing and singing activities. Progress in key musical skills is less secure but review and self-evaluation are strong features of the department as a whole. Pupils' technical understanding is improving and features are correctly described.
151. Few of the pupils who are taking GCSE also play an instrument or sing; some take part in the school's extra-curricular activities. Pupils who follow GCSE in Year 10 currently have low musical skills. In Year 11, a vibrant group with several high attaining pupils, progress is good for all pupils.
152. In Years 7 to 11, pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils because they share in the ideas of the group. Pupils use self-evaluations and maintain records of achievement that use national curriculum levels.
153. Clear, learning objectives, the range of activities, and many opportunities to review and appraise their work in the classroom supports pupils' learning. Performing shows a high level of commitment and listening to and talking about music is good. Teachers make sure that all pupils, no matter what their ability, race or social background, are included in classroom debate. Composing does not have a high profile in the work of the department and the recording studio is currently underused because there is no technician to manage it.

154. Electronic keyboards are well used but the embedding of information and communication technology to review, modify and evaluate work as it progresses is less secure. There are insufficient computers for the pupils to enhance composing, notation and contextual skills. This is a particular disadvantage for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
155. Effective management of the subject is enhanced by detailed plans and regular review of targets for improvement. External monitoring has provided support for the good development of music. The lack of resources, including information and communication technology, is hampering progress for some pupils. Pupils' achievement has improved from below expectation to good at Year 9. A culture for music is being established in the classroom, although the subject misses opportunities in some instances to contribute to the celebration of pupils' cultural backgrounds.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, provision for physical education (PE) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below national expectations in Years 9 and 11 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in these two years.
- The curriculum for some pupils in Year 11 does little to meet the interests of these pupils and ensure their engagement in their learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory and monitoring systems are ineffective in supporting teaching and the progress of pupils.
- There is a good extra-curricular sport programme, well supported by pupils.

Commentary

156. Standards in Year 9 and Year 11 are below expectations. Progress has been affected by long-term staffing problems. Many pupils especially in Year 11 have low expectations of the subject and are disinterested in tasks.
157. In Year 9, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. The pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Many pupils are not interested in the activities and their behaviour deteriorates, affecting the progress of others. However, there are signs of more positive approaches from pupils in Year 7 and 8 where achievement is satisfactory. The progress of pupils with special needs, and of those with language needs is satisfactory, especially when additional teachers are used to help specific pupils. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress, although the most capable pupils underachieve when tasks make insufficient demands on them.
158. In Year 11, there has been a history of instability caused by staffing changes that have resulted in a disinterest by pupils. In addition to this, weaknesses in the curriculum have resulted in erratic participation by pupils and low activity levels. Few pupils make any real effort, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement. Those studying for GCSE examinations have gaps in their knowledge and little written work to support their learning and revision. Practical skills are better for some of this group. However, standards overall remain below expectations. In Year 10, pupils respond more positively to the efforts of teachers and standards are broadly average for these pupils in core PE. Many are keen to learn, they participate more regularly and enjoy the subject. Their achievement is satisfactory.

159. Teaching is satisfactory with some good and very good teaching observed in some lessons. The new head of department has restructured lessons to focus pupils on tasks and ensure there is progression in learning. The curriculum still needs more variety to engage older pupils' interests but younger pupils are responding well to more discipline and better organisation. Warm up activities are lively and interesting, and teachers use questioning skilfully to test learning and understanding. However, the good pace engendered at the start of lessons is not always maintained and pupils lose interest, particularly in Year 9. Pupils are now assessed regularly, although there is insufficient information available to ensure the progress of pupils. Previous teacher assessments indicating attainment levels for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are over-generous and are not matched by standards observed. The use of this information to ensure the progress of pupils from different groups and of different abilities is unreliable.
160. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The recent appointment of a head of department has already begun to change the attitudes of pupils, but there has been insufficient time for this to impact across the whole school or to influence standards. Lack of management and continuity of staffing in the past has resulted in a fragmented provision. The head of department recognises the need to review and update the scheme of work to focus on progression throughout the curriculum and to build on what pupils already know when they arrive in Year 7. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 with a focus on skills and techniques in the core programme gives insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their broader organisational skills or skills in coaching and officiating. The monitoring of what is happening in lessons, the use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and the need to review the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of pupils has affected standards and pupils' achievement and needs to be addressed.
161. There is a good extra-curricular sport programme. Despite the difficulties in arranging for pupils to stay after school and the short lunchtime, activities are well supported by pupils. Teams, and particularly athletics teams, are very successful and there are a number of opportunities for pupils to try different sports run by clubs and coaches from the local community.
162. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

One lesson of business studies and one of health and social care were observed in Year 11.

163. In business studies, the quality of teaching and learning was very good, leading to good achievement. Attitudes were very good and all pupils worked at the computers with a purpose. They were all able to work independently, supported by very good intervention to individuals by the teacher. Standards were in line with expectations for the course.
164. In health and social care, standards were well below that expected by the course. Pupils' achievement over time and in the lessons was unsatisfactory. The pace of teaching was too slow and the attitudes of the pupils were unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The school has a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils generally see the relevance of the topic to their lives and are appreciative of its value. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory. Pupils were able to explore their feelings and reflect on the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. They expressed their hopes for their futures and generally responded positively to the theme of the lessons.

Citizenship

Insufficient evidence means that an overall judgement on the quality of provision cannot be made. There were no opportunities to judge pupils' standards and achievement in citizenship. The school could not provide evidence of pupils' work and lessons identified during the inspection week did not focus on the citizenship scheme but were mostly personal, social and health education. Therefore, there is no judgement about the quality of teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 11 pupils had an excellent experience of the electoral process when they elected their Head Girl.
- Good opportunities exist for pupils to take part in school activities that develop their personal and social skills.
- In Years 10 and 11, planning is not good enough to ensure teaching of all parts of the curriculum.
- The assessment and reporting of the subject fulfil the statutory requirements but need considerable development.
- There is a lack of monitoring across all areas that contribute to citizenship.

Commentary

165. Citizenship is taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme, where citizenship themes such as rights and responsibilities are identified. This is enhanced by Citizenship Days in Years 7 to 9 that take place once a year for each group. This is a themed day, giving the opportunity to use external agencies such as the police and people from different disability organisations. Year 9 also has an Industry Day where all pupils visit different organisations. Good opportunities exist for pupils to take on the responsibility of school council work, although pupils do not view positively the arrangements for holding meetings and deciding agenda. Pupils in Year 11 gained great understanding and awareness of the democratic process during the elections for a Head Girl.
166. An audit was completed in September 2003. It outlines the citizenship units for Years 7 to 9 against the citizenship strands. In Years 10 and 11, citizenship is related to other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education, English and careers education. There are some areas, such as the media's role in society and local democratic and electoral processes, which are as yet not fully covered.

167. Currently, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The school is aware of weaknesses in the audit of citizenship, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and this is part of the development plans. A new co-ordinator has been appointed. The school has made a successful Enterprise Pathfinder bid, which will develop citizenship further.
168. There are minimal procedures for assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils in citizenship and this is unsatisfactory. The annual reports to parents do give an indication of pupils' attainment based on the end of key stage description but the reliability of the information cannot be assured.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, four 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 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Art and design | 4 | 100 | 83.8 | 50.0 | 27.8 | 42.5 | 32.5 |
| Chemistry | 5 | 100 | 75.3 | 20.0 | 15.7 | 34.0 | 25.4 |
| Media studies | 4 | 100 | 88.0 | 25.0 | 27.4 | 37.5 | 33.8 |
| Economics | 2 | 100 | 77.4 | 50.0 | 24.3 | 35.0 | 28.8 |
| English literature | 6 | 100 | 86.9 | 0 | 20.3 | 33.3 | 30.9 |
| History | 2 | 50.0 | 81.0 | 0 | 21.8 | 15.0 | 29.7 |
| Mathematics | 7 | 85.7 | 67.0 | 0 | 19.1 | 24.3 | 24.4 |
| Music | 1 | 100 | 89.7 | 0 | 24.2 | 40.0 | 32.7 |
| Other languages | 3 | 66.7 | 85.8 | 66.7 | 44.8 | 36.7 | 37.7 |
| Religious education | 1 | 100 | 81.9 | 0 | 24.6 | 20.0 | 31.0 |
| Sociology | 6 | 66.7 | 73.3 | 16.7 | 20.5 | 26.7 | 26.4 |
| Sports/PE studies | 1 | 100 | 78.5 | 0 | 19.5 | 30.0 | 27.5 |

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Art and design | 5 | 100 | 98.9 | 100 | 54.1 | 120.0 | 90.0 |
| Biology | 5 | 100 | 96.8 | 0 | 42.1 | 68.8 | 80.7 |
| Business studies | 1 | 100 | 98.8 | 0 | 39.7 | 40.0 | 81.6 |
| Chemistry | 5 | 100 | 98.1 | 0 | 52.3 | 56.0 | 87.3 |
| Media studies | 10 | 100 | 99.6 | 20.0 | 41.1 | 80.0 | 84.1 |
| Economics | 7 | 100 | 99.2 | 14.3 | 55.4 | 71.4 | 90.7 |
| English literature | 16 | 93.8 | 99.6 | 31.3 | 46.7 | 72.5 | 86.7 |
| French | 2 | 100 | 98.8 | 50.0 | 51.0 | 80.0 | 87.3 |
| History | 4 | 100 | 99.0 | 50.0 | 48.0 | 85.0 | 86.2 |
| Information and communication technology | 3 | 100 | 96.3 | 33.3 | 26.2 | 86.7 | 71.0 |
| Mathematics | 5 | 100 | 97.6 | 20.0 | 59.5 | 76.0 | 91.7 |
| Other languages | 3 | 100 | 97.1 | 33.3 | 63.7 | 86.7 | 94.2 |
| Physics | 1 | 100 | 97.9 | 0 | 50.5 | 40.0 | 85.9 |
| Sociology | 7 | 100 | 98.5 | 14.3 | 46.4 | 60.0 | 85.1 |
| Sports/PE studies | 1 | 100 | 98.7 | 0 | 41.4 | 80.0 | 82.3 |
| VCE | | | | | | | |
| Business studies | 8 | 87.5 | 69.6 | 12.5 | 17.9 | 63.8 | 63.7 |
| Health and social care | 5 | 100 | 68.1 | 11.1 | 14.8 | 64.4 | 64.1 |
| Information and communication technology | 14 | 85.7 | 84.7 | 64.3 | 29.6 | 83.6 | 68.4 |

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

Modern foreign languages

The department has, this term instituted an AS level class in French in Year 12 and hopes to continue it through into an A2 course next year. One lesson was sampled, well taught by a young teacher, in which enthusiasm and interest were paramount. Students were showing their thirst for knowledge, their skill in reading and writing in French and there were good relationships. Oral skills were not as strong as other language skills, with students having less confidence in their ability to speak coherently.

English

Overall, provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students learn very well because of dynamic teaching.
- Two courses are now offered; one in English literature and the other in combined English language and literature.
- Standards have been below average, but are now rising.
- Computers are used well for learning.

Commentary

169. Standards reached at A2 level are below average on examination results but the work seen during the inspection showed that they are rising. At A2 in 2003 they were well below average but there are indications that in 2004 they are closer to national expectations for the course. The small number who took AS level in 2003 reached the national average, whilst there are indications that the AS standards in 2004 are below expectations for the course. Students' writing shows competent critical analysis and synthesis of their ideas. Work seen during the inspection showed that students were reaching national standards in both Year 12 and Year 13. Those with English as an additional language analysed their own language development well.
170. Most students who embark on the course have GCSE grades in English literature that are below average for starting an A level in this subject, although their grades in English language are higher. Achievement over time is satisfactory and achievement in lessons is good. The difference is because recent changes in staffing have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Students of English Language showed fast progress in learning about the language and presentational devices of newspapers.
171. Students learn very well because of dynamic, focused teaching and very good teamwork between teachers. They make careful notes, reflecting thoughtfully on texts. They were seen working exceptionally well on the language of newspapers. Computers and interactive whiteboards are used well for drafting, presentations and independent learning. Students were seen discussing critically, analysing perceptively, and the more able using language in a sophisticated manner. Assessment is used very well for learning; students know the assessment objectives and how to improve their work. They learn to read widely and study independently through well-prepared materials of the kind normally associated with distance learning such as the Open University.
172. The leadership of the department is very good. The introduction of the combined course in English literature and language is most appropriate for this school. It has attracted extra students and the head of department has a very good vision for the future. The department is very well managed, with very good planning shared by teachers. The school analyses students' performance well in order to monitor their progress and plan further teaching.
173. Because standards remained below average until 2003, it is judged that improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. However, there are indications that greater improvement is occurring in 2004.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

174. Students' communication skills are generally good. Those who have not obtained grade C in English at GCSE are advised to follow a re-sit course. These are available through evening classes at the on-site adult education centre or within their timetable at Hounslow

Manor, a consortium school. Where they do so, their progress is monitored. Students have good opportunities in most subjects to practise and develop note-taking and essay-writing skills, and speech through class presentations. Some students studying vocational courses, such as business studies and health and social care, find that their literacy skills are not always sufficiently well developed for them to make good progress in the subjects. The school has no way of knowing when progress is affected in this way because the development of key skills is not rigorously monitored.

MATHEMATICS

Students follow a new syllabus introduced this year including two modules of pure mathematics and one of statistics or discrete mathematics each year. However, the current Year 13 group completed AS mathematics last year under an old syllabus, and are now following a conversion arrangement requiring them to complete four modules of pure mathematics in one year. The inspection covered pure mathematics and, in Year 12, a statistics module.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know students well and give effective personal support to individuals.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Assessment information is not used effectively for target setting.
- In Year 12, teachers' fluent use of interactive whiteboards deepens students' understanding.

Commentary

175. Students' prior attainment when they join the sixth form is below average. In 2004, AS and A2 results were similar to those of 2003, which were below average. The work of current students is of a similar standard. Students' achievement is satisfactory. It is better in AS than in A2, and lower attainers make better progress than the most talented. Their grasp of the principles of applied mathematics is better than for pure.
176. There is an unusually wide variation in the quality of teaching. Some of it is excellent. Taken as a whole, it is satisfactory, and good in Year 12, where teachers use interactive whiteboards very well to illustrate ideas visually and to consolidate understanding. The depth of teachers' subject knowledge is good overall but varies considerably. Teachers know the students well, and they are very encouraging. As a result, students feel well supported and very few leave without completing the course. Teachers adjust the pace of lessons to ensure that all students can keep up, but the most talented are not always fully extended. Students make good use of opportunities for independent learning but there is insufficient emphasis on organised note taking to ensure students have good sources for revision. Opportunities for students to use information and communication technology to enhance learning are rare.
177. Students' work is marked regularly, often with helpful comments about how to improve. However, the use of assessment is unsatisfactory because the emphasis on praise and encouragement leaves some believing they are doing better than they are and some students' targets are unrealistic.

178. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Although routine management tasks ensure that lessons proceed smoothly, there is a lack of shared vision, direction and enthusiasm. Teachers work too much in isolation and schemes of work lack the detail needed for consistency.

Mathematics across the curriculum

179. Although students' mathematical skills are below average, they are generally sufficient to meet the needs of subjects they choose to follow in the sixth form. There is no organised provision within the school for students not taking AS mathematics to develop it further as a key skill. Those who have not obtained grade C at GCSE are advised to follow a re-sit course through evening classes at the on-site adult education centre or within their timetable at Hounslow Manor, a consortium school. Although many do so, monitoring is not robust enough to ensure that those with weak skills make sufficient progress. A cross-curricular audit of mathematical opportunities has been completed, but the results have not yet been codified and there is no whole-school development plan. Nevertheless, mathematical skills are further developed in economics where students interpret statistical data.

SCIENCE

The focus was on biology, but chemistry was also sampled. In chemistry in 2003, AS examination results were above average. A2 results in the grades A to E range were above average but the proportion of students achieving the higher grades of A and B were well below average and students performed as expected considering their GCSE results. One lesson was observed. Very good teaching, particularly the use of information and communication technology, led to students gaining a very secure understanding of the range of use of different chemical indicators.

Biology

Overall, provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching in the sixth form, which meets the needs of all students.
- Students have a very positive attitude to learning.
- The proportion of grades A and B is not high enough.
- Resources are very good.

Commentary

180. All students achieved a pass in the advanced level examinations in 2003. This was above the national average. No students achieved the higher grades of A or B and this was well below the national average. The number of students studying biology has fluctuated but is generally small. However, numbers are increasing and there are currently thirteen students in Year 12 and eight in Year 13. Retention of students from Year 12 to Year 13 has been good and most completed the course.

181. Standards in the current Year 12 and 13 are above national expectations. This represents good achievement for most students who enter the sixth form with mainly C grades. Insufficient curriculum time in Years 10 and 11 prevented higher attainers achieving higher grades. This slowed their progress in the sixth form. Many pupils who achieved the higher grades of A* and A at GCSE did not proceed to study advanced level biology. The school has now addressed the issue, although it remains below 20 per cent of curricular time.
182. Students have a very positive attitude to their studies and have made considerable gains in knowledge and understanding since GCSE. A2 students have very good knowledge of kidney function while AS students can competently design and carry out experiments because of the precise and accurate way the teacher has given them instructions. The subject teacher effectively monitors their key skill of communication in essays while their numeracy is developed via statistics used in analyses of plant populations. Students use computers to enhance their course work and for other practical investigations, but there are missed opportunities to use them more regularly in lessons. As a consequence, students are developing a greater degree of independence in their learning.
183. Teaching is very good and this has led to very good learning. The teacher has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and this allows her to clarify any misconceptions the students may have. This is leading to improved standards and increasing the chances of achieving the higher grades. Planning is very good and incorporates practical coursework that is very well supported by up-to-date texts and other resources. Students know what they need to do to improve as a result of the combination of structured self-evaluation and regular testing and feedback by the teacher using examination board criteria and grades.
184. Management of the subject is very good and the teacher ensures that the students are aware of their progress and regular monitoring ensures elimination of areas of weakness.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are achieving well in the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education and are producing good portfolios of work. Teachers stress the value of independent work, which is now very well developed in the sixth form. Only one lesson was observed. In this, the teaching was good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

185. Students' skills in information and communication technology are satisfactory for the needs of other subjects. Although the school has not yet completed an audit, sixth form students use computers in most subjects, most commonly for word processing and for research using the world-wide-web. In English, they also use presentation software to prepare illustrated talks and in geography, sociology and economics to construct tables and charts. In media studies, they use multimedia software with a degree of sophistication although these students are limited in the resources available to them. Students studying business use computers effectively to create publicity leaflets for a local company.

HUMANITIES

Geography

186. Standards were well above the national average for A2 level in 2004 although the group was very small. Two students achieved grade A. No lessons were seen during the inspection.

History

187. Standards in the sixth form have been maintained but are still below the national average at AS level. Achievement in the sixth form is at least satisfactory, with students able to critically evaluate their work and identify how to improve. Many students have continued to study history into Year 13 from AS level. Quality of teaching is satisfactory, with many good features. Only one lesson was observed.
188. The lesson was well structured and carefully planned. Skilful questioning enabled students to clarify their ideas about the growth of Nazi Germany. Students were given opportunities to critically examine their own and others to help them to identify how to improve. The range of planned activities flowed smoothly but at times the pace of learning could have been increased. Students responded well to the task and were confident and articulate when explaining their judgements.

Sociology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectation and challenge in teaching encourages good intellectual response from students.
- Very helpful marking leads to good improvement in students' work over time.
- A lack of variety in some teaching, and material that is not always tailored to the students' needs, particularly the weaker students, are barriers to learning.
- Weaker students, particularly those in Year 12, are not fully aware of the demands of the course and exhibit some unsatisfactory attitudes and achievement.

Commentary

189. The results at A2 in 2003 were below the national average, but a good improvement on the previous year. In the 2004 examinations, the results came close to the national average. This represents an improving trend in this newly introduced subject and good added value compared to the students' previous GCSE grades. The results at AS level in 2003 were below the national average with a significant number failing to achieve a grade, or not entering for the examination, but the results in 2004, although still below, showed good improvement on the previous year. The standards of work seen in the current Year 13 indicate continuing improvement, and although below, are approaching the national average. The work seen in Year 12 was limited as students had only

completed four weeks of study. Standards at this early stage of the course are below expectations and some students struggle because of weak literacy skills.

190. Students in Year 13 have a good grasp of methodology and perspectives, and evaluation skills are satisfactory. Higher attaining students produce work that is both evaluative and well written, using a wide variety of source material. Lower attaining students struggle with the theoretical aspects of sociology, so that rationales are weaker and writing lacks detail and development. Many of these students join the course with literacy difficulties. Good teaching in many lessons ensures that achievement is good, and in one or two cases very good. Improvement over time is good because the careful marking of students' work is very helpful, and really shows the students how to improve.
191. Teaching and learning are both good, with some teaching which is satisfactory. Where teaching is good, lessons are well prepared and teachers challenge students with probing questions that encourage critical thinking. Students themselves are generally committed to the course and respond well. Their enthusiasm and good intellectual efforts make a significant contribution to their own learning. Where teaching is less than good, the teaching style and strategies used lack variety and challenge, resulting in a lack of student involvement and interaction in the lesson. The material used does not always meet the learning needs of the lower attaining students in particular. Assessment is in place and effective because students know how far they have progressed and what to aim for. It is both thorough and constructive.
192. Leadership and management are both good. Fruitful department self-analysis is informing teaching and learning, and this is evidenced in rising standards. Lower attaining students are not always made fully aware of the demands of the course and this mismatch affects both standards and achievement. The subject makes a good contribution to the personal development of all students, but extra-curricular enrichment has yet to be organised.
193. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, especially evident in the rising standards of attainment and achievement driven up by improved teaching and more effective assessment.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

No lessons were seen.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art

194. The AS and A2 courses in art were sampled. Standards over time have fluctuated and attainment mostly reflects students' potential. In 2004, seven students took the AS examination; all passed and nearly half gained A and B grades. In 2004, three took the A2 examination; all passed with grade D or E. One lesson was seen during the inspection. Teaching was good and the standard of work seen was appropriate for students who had just started their AS and A2 courses.
195. Twelve students are taking the AS level textiles course, which is art rather than technology based. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen. Because students had just started the course, a limited amount of work was available to see. Not all students taking the course

have previously gained GCSE in textiles or art, which is reflected in the standards seen, but all showed good levels of commitment and enthusiasm.

Media studies

196. Media studies is offered in the sixth form at AS and A2 levels. The subject is taught within the consortium arrangements, so that a few boys from another school attend the course. Two lessons were sampled, one in Year 12 and one in Year 13. In both lessons the teaching was good. The current teacher at this level is a supply teacher, during the absence of the head of department. Students' achievement was good and there was a high level of interest and willingness to work hard at the subject. Year 13 students were beginning work on the independent research project that forms part of the A2 course. They were comparing two films from the 'horror' genre, showing good levels of insight and understanding of the techniques used to create effects. The lesson was very well planned and executed and relationships between teacher and pupils were very good. The teacher encouraged the students well towards independent learning, giving them much help, but refusing to do their thinking for them. As a result, progress was good and students were absorbed in their work. The subject adds well to the acquisition of higher literacy and study skills. Information and communication technology resources are neither as good nor as readily accessed as they might be for a subject that demands technical equipment.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No lessons were seen.

BUSINESS

197. Two lessons were observed – one in each of Year 12 and Year 13. The Year 12 lesson was a GNVQ Intermediate Level 2 course and the Year 13 lesson was part of the AVCE business Level 3 course. In both lessons relationships were very good and students showed good attitudes to their work. Standards in both years are below expectations for the course.
198. In the Year 12 lesson, the achievement of students was satisfactory but their progress was restricted by weaknesses in their literacy skills. Oral responses were limited. A lack of technical vocabulary and self-confidence provided a significant barrier to the quality of their presentations to the group. However, the majority of them had sufficient competence in using computers to meet the requirements of the course. In this lesson the teaching was satisfactory.
199. A small group of Year 13 students were observed working on examination questions. Their folder work from Year 12 was available for scrutiny. The achievement of these students was unsatisfactory, reflecting some weaknesses in the teaching. Marking of previous units of coursework did not do enough to prompt improvement. This was also reflected during the lesson when teacher intervention was at a level of praise and encouragement rather than challenge. The school reports that moderators have praised the level of support in the past. However in this lesson the teaching was unsatisfactory.

Economics

200. Results in AS and A2 economics are often above the average for the school. Although below the national average in 2002 and 2003, the small group of Year 13 students in 2004 did better. One lesson of A2 economics was sampled in which students considered the impact of demographic change in less developed countries. Students made good progress because of good teaching with opportunities to develop the key skills of independent enquiry, note-taking, statistical interpretation and Internet searches.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

201. One lesson in Year 12 was observed as part of the intermediate health and social care GNVQ Level 2. The students were in the fourth week of their course. Standards were well below expectations for the course with many of the students showing weaknesses in their language skills and a general reluctance to engage in the learning. Students' achievement in the lesson and since the start of the course, was unsatisfactory. Several of the students displayed unsatisfactory attitudes to their work, attendance and punctuality were a concern across the group and aspects of the teaching were weak. The organisation of the timetable, where this subject is taught in a block of five lessons in one day, is very demanding on both teaching and learning. In this lesson the teaching was satisfactory and the teachers' planning showed improvement.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

202. Every student on the school's register is requested to attend an assembly followed by a personal, social, health and citizenship education lesson every Friday morning. This is mandatory and the only time when the school has all the sixth form students on site. The lesson is then followed by a series of enrichment activities including critical thinking, counselling and study skills.
203. Three lessons were observed. Two were with Year 13 students completing their applications for university entrance. Punctuality in all three lessons was poor. Many students did not arrive in school in time for the assembly and many were late arriving at the lessons. Attitudes across the groups were mixed, with some girls very keen and anxious to complete their applications correctly. Many others were content to chat, showing little sign of any purposeful work. Relationships were very good. The support and guidance offered by teachers was good.

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 | 3 | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | | 1 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 | 2 |
| Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school | 4 | 3 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 | 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | | 3 |
| Attendance | 5 | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | | 3 |

| | | |
|--|---|----------|
| The quality of education provided by the school | | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 4 | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 | 3 |

| | | |
|--|---|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 | 3 |

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

