

INSPECTION REPORT

BRENTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Hanwell, London

LEA area: Ealing

Unique reference number: 101939

Headteacher: Mr A Jones

Lead inspector: Mr D Roberts

Dates of inspection: 1st - 4th November 2004

Inspection number: 268755

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 11 - 19
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 1,059

School address: Greenford Avenue
Hanwell
London
Postcode: W7 1JJ

Telephone number: (020) 8575 9162
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs C Smith
governors:

Date of previous April 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has had specialist Visual Arts College status since 2001 and gained the ArtsMark Gold in 2004. It gained the Charter Mark in 2001, the Schools Achievement Award in both 2002 and 2003 and had its Investors in People status renewed in 2003. The school serves a community with above average indicators of deprivation and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The pupil population reflects the culturally diverse nature of the local population. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not the first language is very high compared with the national average, although few pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English speaking skills. On entry to the school, the average levels of attainment of pupils in the current Year 8 and above were well below the national average, particularly in English and subjects with a high literacy content. For the current Year 7, prior attainment was around the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is well above the national average, and the proportion statemented is above the national average. A significant proportion of the pupils have joined the school after, or well after, the normal point of entry at the start of Year 7 and the majority of these pupils were well behind the expected levels for their age when they started at the school. In recognition of these challenges, the school is involved in the Excellence in Cities scheme and the related Behaviour Improvement Programme, receiving additional resources to help secure improvement. The school moved into brand new premises in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7582	D Roberts	Lead inspector	
9588	A West	Lay inspector	
30996	A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics
10160	R Bagguley	Team inspector	Science Biology (sixth form)
19867	M Pettitt	Team inspector	Art and design
31779	V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology
20709	D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English Drama
31772	A Kelly	Team inspector	History
13155	J Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
8360	F Peacock	Team inspector	Music
31821	B McCann	Team inspector	Citizenship Physical education
32166	N Butt	Team inspector	Religious education
28002	S Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language
15163	E Deeson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Business education
30978	E White	Team inspector	Geography

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness of the school and sixth form is good**. Most pupils make good progress at the school, particularly in Years 10/11, in response to good teaching and a caring and supportive climate. Leadership is strong at all levels and the school shows every sign of having the capacity to continue to improve further under its relatively new leadership and in its new premises. With a relatively high level of funding, it provides satisfactory value for money.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- All pupils are achieving well and making good progress from a relatively low starting point.
- Teaching is good in nearly all subjects, leading to improving standards and good behaviour in most lessons; only in a very few lessons is teaching unsatisfactory.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum are too low; provision in ICT and citizenship are unsatisfactory.
- It is a very harmonious community where all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is not the first language and those who are at risk of exclusion are given very good support.
- The headteacher, along with his senior team, provides good leadership, vision and determination; he has the full support of the staff.
- Pupils do not yet know well enough how they can improve their work in some subjects.
- There are very good learning opportunities provided by the brand new building, although it has a few weaknesses.
- There is a very good range of curriculum enrichment and there are very good links with the community.
- Whilst governors give good support to the school, there are weaknesses in several important aspects of their work and not all statutory requirements are met.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, except in ICT. The school has now begun to show real signs of improvement, after a period of little progress. This is due to the leadership by the headteacher and others, the hard work and commitment of the staff, and the impact of the school's recent move into brand new buildings, which have made pupils feel more valued and more committed to the success of the school and of themselves as individuals.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good overall. In relation to the standards reached by pupils prior to Year 7, their achievement is good in all subjects in Years 7 – 9, except in mathematics and art and design, where it is satisfactory. In religious education (RE), there is too little evidence to judge. In Years 10/11, achievement is good, except in religious education and design and technology, where it is satisfactory, and in ICT, where it is unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, achievement is good in all subjects inspected.

In national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9, results have been consistently well below average compared with all schools; however, they have fluctuated around the average compared with similar schools. This pattern appears to have continued in 2004, based on results as yet unconfirmed.

In the GCSE examinations, results over the last few years have been below or well below the national average compared with all schools but, compared with similar schools, results in 2003 were well above average and compare better than the tests at the end of Year 9. Unconfirmed results for 2004 indicate a similar pattern. Results in examinations taken by sixth formers have been broadly in line with national averages. Unconfirmed results in the 2004 examinations are not as high as in 2003 overall but the proportion obtaining the highest grades remains in line with the national average.

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.
For Year 11, similar schools are those where there are similar rates of entitlement to free school meals.*

The standard of work seen by inspectors was below average in most subjects in Years 7-11, including in English, and well below average in ICT. Exceptions are average standards in science in Years 7-9, in modern foreign languages, mathematics and music in all Years 7-11, and in physical education and business education in Years 10/11. In the sixth form, standards are above average in mathematics, biology, geography, history and art and design, and average in all other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Their behaviour is good and that of sixth-formers very good. Attendance is satisfactory and their punctuality to lessons is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is **good** overall and in all subjects, except in religious education, in technology in Years 10/11 and in art and design in Years 7-9, where it is satisfactory. As a result of good teaching which takes good account of the needs of all learners, pupils are achieving well and increasingly developing the confidence to perform well in public tests and examinations. The school provides a generally satisfactory curriculum, except in relation to ICT in Years 10/11 and citizenship, and very good provision of enrichment activities. Accommodation and resources are mainly good, including well-qualified staffing. There are good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with good leadership by the headteacher and other key staff, including in the sixth form, and satisfactory management overall. Governance, although fully supportive of the school, is unsatisfactory in that governors are insufficiently challenging and have not ensured that all requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally positive about the school but a significant minority of questionnaire responses revealed concerns about behaviour and bullying, and about the quality of information about their children's progress. A significant proportion of pupils share these parents' concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school, although there are instances of immature and boisterous behaviour. Pupils and parents alike judge the teaching to be good, with high expectations of hard work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO CONTINUE AND CONSOLIDATE RECENT IMPROVEMENT:

- improve pupils' competence in ICT;
- ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve their achievement;
- ensure the new accommodation matches teaching and learning needs in art and design and business education;
- draw up a plan for governor development;

AND, TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS, GOVERNORS NEED TO:

- ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met in ICT in Years 10/11 and citizenship in Years 7-11, and that religious education is taught in the sixth form in line with local requirements;
- ensure that reports to parents on their children's progress meet the remaining requirements;
- improve arrangements for the daily act of collective worship; and
- ensure that arrangements for health and safety are updated to match the requirements of the new buildings.

THE SIXTH FORM AT BRENTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

The sixth form is slightly larger than the national average. Numbers are rising, and the sixth form population reflects the wide ethnic mix of the rest of the school.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection, and those seen in the subjects inspected were mainly in line with or above the national average. Students achieve well relative to expectations based on their earlier attainment. Teaching is good, and there is a broad availability of both academic and vocational subjects. Cost-effectiveness is satisfactory.

THE MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Good teaching.
- Students achieve well and have positive attitudes towards their work.
- Good procedures for monitoring students' performance and taking action where appropriate.

- Students do not have sufficient ICT competence to support their studies to the full.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong.
- The curriculum offers a good range of academic and vocational subjects, although it does not provide a course in religious education which meets local requirements.
- Arts College status has a positive effect on learning opportunities and other provision.
- Accommodation for sixth form work in art and design and business education is unsatisfactory.

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 good . Teachers' subject knowledge and the students' positive attitudes lead to good achievement in both subjects. Provision in French is good . Lessons seen were well taught.
Mathematics	Provision is good in mathematics . Good subject knowledge from the teachers and the high level of motivation from the students contribute to good learning and good achievement of the students.

Science	Provision in biology is good . Students are achieving well relative to their levels of prior attainment, the result of good teaching from very well-qualified teachers. One lesson was sampled in physics and a scrutiny of work was carried out. Standards are above average, the result of very good teaching.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is good . Students achieve well in ICT lessons but their general competence in ICT to support their learning across the curriculum is at present unsatisfactory.
Humanities	Provision in geography is good . Students achieve well because of good teaching and their own very good commitment to their studies. History provision is good . Good quality teaching enables students to achieve well.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and design is good . Students achieve well because of good teaching. Outstanding provision is made for curriculum enrichment. Music provision is good . Because of good teaching, students achieve well in relation to their prior knowledge. Provision in media studies is good .
Business	Provision in business is good . Teaching is good and students work hard and achieve well. Standards are overall in line with the national average.
Health and social care	Provision is good . Two lessons were sampled: teaching and learning are good and students are achieving well.

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 advice, guidance and support which students receive is good. There are good arrangements to monitor students' work and progress, and for taking action where appropriate. Students receive good advice and guidance about careers and higher education opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There is a clear view of priorities for development geared to the raising of standards and improving educational opportunities. Sixth form leaders know the students well and have high expectations of them.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students feel that they are well taught and that teachers are willing to spend time to help them when they have difficulties with the work. They feel that courses available do not always match their ability or their career plans. They consider that there are insufficient occasions when they can learn through enrichment opportunities. Many did not feel that the school is sufficiently responsive to their views. Inspectors investigated all the views expressed by students, and found that their areas of dissatisfaction were not borne out by evidence from the inspection, and, indeed, not corroborated by subsequent interviews with students. Their positive views were, however, clearly demonstrated during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils and sixth form students is **good**. The standards of current work are generally **below average** in Years 7-11 but above average in most subjects in the sixth form. Results in national tests and GCSE examinations are mainly **well below the national average**. However, results in the national tests are coming increasingly in line with schools where pupils have similar rates of entitlement to free school meals and in GCSE examinations, results are well above average compared with such schools. In the sixth form, results have been mainly above the national average, and well above in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils and sixth-form students is generally good, including those pupils for whom English is not the first language or those with special educational needs.
- Achievement is satisfactory rather than good in mathematics and art and design in Years 7-9, and in technology and religious education in Years 10/11.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are generally at a satisfactory level but their competence with ICT is well below average overall.
- The school adds above average value, particularly during Years 10/11, to pupils' attainment.
- Results have generally not matched the school's targets.

Commentary

1. A key feature of the school is the good achievement of the vast majority of pupils during their time at the school. Whilst the level that pupils are working at when they enter the school in Year 7 has, until this year, been well below average, the school works effectively to ensure that all make good progress and this progress is particularly evident in Years 10/11. Results in the GCSE examinations are therefore closer to the national average than are those in the national tests at the end of Year 9. More than a third of pupils currently in Years 10/11 have joined the school later than the normal starting point, many much later. These pupils include a small number from overseas who are at an early stage of their acquisition of English language and literacy skills. Others are new to the area. A common feature of the later-joining pupils is that the school has little data on their prior attainment, yet it works very conscientiously to make appropriate provision for them and they too make good progress and achieve well.

2. Whilst achievement is good overall and in most subjects at all stages, it is satisfactory rather than good in mathematics and art and design in Years 7-9, in technology and religious education in Years 10/11. It is unsatisfactory in ICT in Years 10/11. (There was too little evidence from which to judge achievement in religious education in Years 7-9). In the sixth form, it is good in all subjects and courses. Whilst there are patterns of differential attainment related to gender, ethnicity, and the individual needs of pupils, for instance, in English, modern foreign languages, mathematics, history and music (which are noted in Part C of this report), in other subjects, there is little difference or there is a fluctuating pattern year on year. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well. Some pupils with marked behavioural, social and emotional difficulties overcome their difficulties very well due to the skilled support by learning mentors.
3. The standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection varied between subjects from being in line with national expectations to below, and in ICT, well below. Standards are average in modern foreign languages, mathematics and music in all Years 7-11, in science in Years 7-9 and in business education and physical education in Years 10/11. They are below average in other subjects, and well below in ICT, in Years 7-11.
4. In general, inspectors found that students had sufficient literacy skills to succeed in their subjects. In Years 7 and 8, lack of reading and writing skills is holding back some students in history and geography. Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory. Pupils are using their mathematical knowledge and skills well in other subjects across the curriculum. Graph work, basic measuring and calculation are used competently in other subjects such as geography, science, design and technology and modern foreign languages. The school has started to consider how to use the new ICT facilities and resources most effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the curriculum, but only in mathematics and science is there currently significant good practice. As a result, pupils' competence in ICT is well below average in Years 7-9 and below average in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form.
5. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9, based on the average score obtained by pupils, have been consistently well below the national average expectation, in all three subjects English, mathematics and science, over the past five years compared with all schools nationally. However, when compared with results in schools with similar rates of entitlement to free school meals, they have fluctuated around the average over those same years. Comparisons at the higher levels (Level 6 and above) on this basis show above average performance in 2003, and provisionally in 2004. The school adds above average value on this basis. Results compared with schools where prior attainment data are similar have been well below average overall, although unconfirmed results in 2004 show an improvement on this comparison, being below rather than well below average. However, comparisons with schools where pupils start with similar prior attainment are less valid due to the large proportion of pupils who are late-joiners, often from overseas, for whom the school receives no prior data. The results attained by boys and girls have been similarly below the national averages. In line with patterns nationally, girls have performed better than boys in English, particularly at the higher levels, while boys performed better than girls in science and significantly in mathematics, particularly at the higher levels. Comparisons between different ethnic groups indicate that the Asian heritage and white cohorts of pupils performed better than other groupings in all three subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (29.5)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	30.9 (30.0)	35.4 (34.7)
science	28.8 (27.7)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 135 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more grades A* to C has been well below the national average over recent years. However, as with results at the end of Year 9, the proportion has been at or above the average for schools with similar rates of entitlement to free school meals. Results in 2003, based on pupils' average score in these examinations, compared very well with those in similar schools, indicating that the school had added well above average value to the attainment of pupils during Years 10/11. In 2004, the proportion of pupils who gained at least one pass compared very well with that in similar schools. In line with the national pattern, the proportion of girls who attained five or more grades A* to C exceeded that for boys. Pupils from an Asian heritage generally performed much better than pupils from other ethnic groups. At this level, black African and black Caribbean pupils generally performed significantly worse than other ethnic groups. However, the proportion of pupils gaining at least one GCSE pass was similar for all ethnic groups, although white boys performed somewhat less well than other groups.

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	30 (31)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	87 (82)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	93 (93)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	29.3 (28.4)	34.7 (34.8)

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

7. Results have generally fallen somewhat below the targets which the school has set. In the national tests at the end of Year 9, this was particularly true in science. In GCSE examinations, results were close to the school's targets, except in relation to the proportion attaining five or more higher grades. Target-setting at the school has been made difficult by the high proportion of pupils for whom the school has no prior attainment data and by inadequate data analysis for the remaining pupils. As a result, some targets have been unduly optimistic.
8. On the basis of the good achievement observed by inspectors, the somewhat more stable pupil population, with fewer late-joiners, and the better use of pupil performance data now emerging at the school, attainment at all levels can be expected to improve over coming years.

SIXTH FORM

9. In 2003 (the latest year for which national statistics are available), male students entered for traditional and vocational A and AS level examinations performed well above the national average, whereas female students were below the national average. Overall, the school's results were in line with the national average. In each category (male, female, all), the school showed an improvement on its performance in 2002.
10. The percentage of entries gaining the highest grades A and B was well above average for male candidates, well below the average for female candidates, and overall in line with the national average. The proportion of entries gaining higher grades went up in 2003 compared with 2002, although female results remained static and male results improved markedly.
11. In the current year 2004, students' attainment in examinations was not as high as in 2003, and the relative performances of male and female students were reversed. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades A and B was in line with national average. Examination results in mathematics have been well above average in recent years.

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	87.9 (92.7)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	27.7 (23.5)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	240.9 (202.7)	258.2 (263.3)

12. In the work seen during the inspection, students' achievement relative to their previous levels of attainment is good. Achievement is very good in Year 13 music. Standards are average in English by Year 13, but are improving, and students achieve well compared with their previous attainment. The standards seen in mathematics were above average. Students achieve well in biology: students are developing good research and practical skills. Achievement is good in art and design and standards are rising, especially in the vocational courses. In geography, students are confident learners and examination results are above average.
13. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is not the first language achieve well when they enter Years 12 and 13, because the teaching is tailored to the students' individual needs. Students who have had behavioural, social and emotional difficulties lower down the school continue to benefit from the skilled support of the learning mentors.

PUPILS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Students' attitudes are **good** throughout the school and sixth form and behaviour is **good** in the school and **very good** in the sixth form. The students show **good** interest in school activities and their personal development and relationships are **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to their progress as learners, and particularly so in the sixth form.
- Relationships in the school are good.
- The school's strategies for students' personal development are generally good.
- Arrangements for the school to improve attendance and punctuality are effective and are reflected in the improvements in these aspects since the last inspection.
- The school's behaviour management strategies are good, and as a result, there were fewer exclusions last year.

Commentary

14. In class, in registrations and at assemblies students behave well. During the inspection, when behaviour management was less evident, instances of immature and boisterous behaviour were seen around the school. Students of all abilities work well together, remain on task and concentrate well; however, in classes where behaviour management was weak, inappropriate behaviour interfered with learning.
15. Pupils with English as an additional language frequently have very positive attitudes to their work. They are keen to seek advice and help from the willing and able specialist staff. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their learning when they are taught in small groups for literacy.

16. The school's strategies and policies for improving behaviour are having a very good effect and students and parents confirm that these improvements are positively contributing to the conduct of lessons and learning. A variety of strategies are used to good effect, including praise, reward and sanctions. There is a referral process, a duty teacher scheme and an inclusion system that has done much to reduce the incidence of exclusions. In the period noted before the inspection, the proportion of white boys excluded was highest, in relation to their numbers in the school. Members of the senior staff have monitored this aspect but are unable to discern any particular reason.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	196	14	0
White – Irish	7	1	0
White – any other White background	50	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	30	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	12	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	14	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	140	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	72	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	68	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	122	4	0
Black or Black British – African	133	5	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	12	0	0
Chinese	12	0	0
Any other ethnic group	112	5	0
No ethnic group recorded	17	0	0

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

17. Relationships in the school are good, students generally work well together in different groups, sharing resources and collaborating. They work and co-operate with adults well and speak highly of their teachers. Some reluctance amongst the very youngest to work together was noted in lessons.
18. Moral values are developed through the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme. This has been well planned with a complete programme of study and detailed scheme of work. It encompasses important moral issues, such as 'rights and responsibilities', 'the role of the media', 'violence in the home' and 'the global environment', and is popular with pupils of all ages. There is an active School Council and class debates are common in several subject areas, with a Debating Club attached to the English department. In addition, moral awareness is supported by outside visitors; for example, during the inspection, there was an innovative demonstration by the police of the dangers of Internet 'chat lines'. Not least, moral values such as distinguishing right from wrong, empathy and tolerance for the views of others permeate the pastoral system and contribute significantly to the good behaviour observed in most classrooms. Significantly, no pupils, when interviewed, reported any examples of bullying in the school, although this concern did feature in a significant proportion of questionnaire responses. There is a measure of inconsistency in the extent to which moral awareness is built into subject teaching across the curriculum, and in the extent to which this has been monitored.

19. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are given the opportunity to be active members of the school community and the wider society. Students can become members of the Student Council and participate in organising school activities and charitable fund-raising events. In many lessons, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and to learn to respect contributions from others. The personal, social, and health programme makes a strong contribution to developing pupils' social skills through planned activities. In most lessons, pupils work well together. In religious studies, for example, group discussions involve negotiation and reflection before making decisions; in history, pupils are aware of social issues such as living conditions and public health concerns; and in English, pupils actively listened to a reading from Pablo's story - a child in Bogota - about conditions suffered by child workers. Extra-curricular activities support the social development of pupils in a positive manner. Social issues are also raised in assemblies when topics such as responsibilities and friendships are discussed and pupils respond well to these inputs.
20. Provision for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures is good. Opportunities are given through the taught curriculum and through the daily process and ethos of the school. The great diversity of the school population provides a rich environment for pupils learning and understanding. It is a multicultural school, as evidenced by productions, celebrations and achievements of pupils. A number of subject areas contribute to the cultural development of pupils. In design and technology, pupils research food from around the world and in textiles, the ethnic influence in fabric design is considered. In art and design, there is a strong feature of cultural development when pupils study Islamic art influences and the symbolism of African masks. In history, pupils look at the industrial revolution in a local context and in music, pupils study Indonesian, African and Indian culture. There is an Indian Music group who perform at local concerts. There was a good discussion of religious festivals in the ASDAN course by special educational needs pupils. Pupils at an early stage of language acquisition make positive contributions to this aspect and all pupils integrate very well regardless of ethnic origin, and respect each other's cultures.

Attendance

21. Attendance in the year 2002/03 was 88.9 per cent, well below the national median for secondary schools. In the same period, unauthorised absence, at 2.7 per cent, was well above the national median. For 2003/04, attendance has improved significantly to 91.6 per cent and unauthorised absences are down to 1.9 per cent. These improvements have been due to the use of a new computerised attendance system and increased emphasis placed by the school on attendance and punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	1.9
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.

22. Absences are followed up well and the school's processes quickly establish why students are absent or late. Members of staff encourage parents to substantiate the reasons. Detailed examination of attendance data is carried out on a regular basis to identify any patterns in individual or groups of absentees and concerns are rigorously

followed up. Attendance records are kept and maintained correctly, despite being without the automated system during the move into the new school building.

Sixth form

23. Sixth-form students respond very well to the high levels of trust placed in them by the school. They feel that they are treated as adults, and most are willing to take responsibility for their work and actions, and to engage positively with others.
24. They are articulate and open in conversation, and relate well to one another and to the staff of the school. In lessons, there is a friendly yet workmanlike and committed atmosphere. Attitudes are positive throughout the student body, and only a very small minority of students cause any concern about their attitudes to school, their attendance or the progress they are making.
25. Attendance is somewhat below that of the main school. The school has very clear procedures for checking and recording attendance and punctuality and for ensuring that individual students keep up with their work.
26. The school provides very well and in a wide variety of ways for students' personal development. Schemes are in place to ensure that sixth formers make a significant contribution to younger students' development, through supporting their learning in the mentoring scheme.
27. There are numerous opportunities for post-16 students to become involved in helping others and the requirement in the sixth form to make a contribution to the community involves students in a range of activities within the school and in the wider community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory. The breadth of curriculum opportunities provided is satisfactory. There is very good enrichment of the curriculum. Staffing, resources and accommodation are all good. The provision for pupils' care, health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils' academic support is satisfactory. The way the school involves them in school life is good. The school's provision benefits well from links with other schools and very well from its links with the community. Links with parents make a satisfactory contribution to overall provision.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, and the learning it leads to, are good. The way teachers assess pupils' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to make progress, whatever their starting point, although a lack of information about individual pupils' special needs sometimes hinders this.

- In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm, the good relationships they establish and the appropriately challenging expectations they have of pupils help ensure effective learning.
- Behaviour management is generally good and few lessons are significantly disrupted by the behaviour of a small minority.
- There is very good teaching, in the small group settings, of pupils for whom English is not the first language.
- There is variability in the quality of teachers' assessments; in some subjects, pupils have a good understanding of how to improve but in others, they do not.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 165 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	38 (23%)	87 (53%)	36 (22%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

28. The quality of teaching is good overall and in all subjects, with the exception of religious education, where it is satisfactory. In design and technology (in Years 10/11) and art and design (in Years 7-9), teaching is also satisfactory rather than good. There are examples of very good teaching in most subjects, but these are less common in mathematics, art and design, geography, history and religious education. Teaching is good or better in three-quarters of lessons, marginally more in the sixth form. Only four of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory, all of which were in Years 7-9.
29. The teaching ensures that all pupils, whatever their starting point, are given the full opportunity to succeed. In many subjects, additional resources are made available to pupils who need extra support, for instance, with their literacy skills, and in several subjects, there is additional in-class support from teaching assistants. Teaching was seen to be most effective:
- where teachers established a good climate for learning and good relationships with the class;
 - where teachers' planning was good and particularly, on the relatively rare occasions, where they shared the lesson objectives formally with pupils and included a good range of activities in the lesson;
 - where teachers' enthusiasm for their subject helped to engage pupils' interest;
 - where expectations of what pupils could achieve in a lesson were challenging yet realistic; and
 - particularly where it was apparent that teachers were fully committed to raising standards in their subject. Most lessons have good pace but some in design and technology and in art and design (in Years 7-9) lacked sufficient challenge.
30. Teaching in several subjects makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, this being particularly evident in English and religious education. It also has a positive impact on pupils' acquisition of literacy and language skills, for instance, in mathematics and design and technology. However, there is insufficient emphasis on the use of computers to enhance learning in most subjects, although

there is good practice in some mathematics lessons, and this is holding back the development of pupils' competence in the use of ICT.

31. As a result of the generally good teaching, pupils in the vast majority of lessons are motivated to learn. In most classes, the teachers' behaviour management skills are ensuring that learning is not unduly interrupted by the poor behaviour of a small minority. Pupils therefore are consciously acquiring new knowledge and skills and generally making good progress in all subjects where teaching is good. In some subjects, pupils are given ample opportunity to develop independent learning skills, even where marking was regular, but these are underdeveloped in many science lessons and in ICT.
32. In lessons, teachers know their pupils well and generally provide resources and materials to match the needs of those with English as an additional language and special educational needs. However, there are some lessons in which individual needs are not specifically planned for. Learning support staff give good support in lessons. There are very good links with a wide range of outside agencies to provide expert advice on pupils' difficulties. However, there is no consistent system to ensure that this detailed information reaches subject teachers to enable them to plan effectively. Individual education plans are of good quality and are used by many teachers to plan adapted strategies and resources for pupils with special educational needs.
33. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language in small groups is very good. There is a high quality induction process for those pupils who arrive at the school with little or no English. It covers the practical details of school life as well as the development of spoken and written English. Assessment of these pupils is thorough and frequent and an annual language survey ensures that all pupils' language needs are known.
34. There are criteria for identifying pupils who may be gifted and talented. There are some good quality special activities provided for them such as master classes and a media project. In lessons, however, the planned extension work is frequently not used in practice.
35. Assessment is satisfactory. There is good use of assessment by teachers in some subjects, based on regular marking and a secure knowledge of national expectations by teachers. Particularly in geography and history, this leads to pupils being clear as to how they can improve their work. Day-to-day marking varies but is mostly thorough and constructive. However, in some subjects – for instance, English, science, religious education, art and design and music - pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve, because marking is not sufficiently diagnostic. Attainment data is now readily available to all staff, but its use is, as yet, inconsistent. The use of this data to inform planning and target setting is, however, developing. In mathematics, science, history and geography, assessment is good and the good practice needs to be shared. Staff and consequently pupils' awareness of National Curriculum levels is inconsistent and needs to be developed, particularly in ICT and art and design and those incorporated in the agreed syllabus for religious education. Information about pupils' achievement is shared regularly with parents. The deputy headteacher in charge of assessment is new to the school, but he has already made a significant contribution, working with individual staff and

departments, to make the assessment procedures more rigorous. His work has been well received by staff who are working effectively to improve assessment in line with the school improvement plan.

36. Assessment of pupils with SEN is carried out through a range of processes, including individual education plans, statement reviews, monitoring by behavioural support staff and pupil-tracking sheets. At present, this information is not shared with each member of staff through a whole-school assessment system.

SIXTH FORM

37. The quality of teaching provided in the sixth form is a major factor in the good achievement of the students and the standards which they attain in A-level and vocational subjects. Teaching is mainly good in all the subjects inspected, although the occasional overly-didactic lesson in science or lessons lacking pace and challenge in mathematics do have an impact on students' achievement.
38. The principal characteristics of the teaching in the sixth form are the good subject knowledge of the teachers and the high expectations which they have of their students. Lessons are challenging and well planned, and there are good strategies for questioning students in order to ensure full understanding and high levels of achievement. In art and design, students benefit from the advice and guidance of teachers who are themselves practising artists and who are able to give individual tuition to extend and enhance practical skills.
39. The impact of the high quality teaching is impaired in art and design because of the lack of dedicated sixth form teaching space for the subject, and in business studies, teaching and learning are hampered because the teaching spaces available are not large enough for the numbers of students.
40. The individual tutorial approach for pupils with special educational needs in Years 12 and 13 ensures that their learning needs are well known and met well. The range of courses and the flexible approach to studying in the sixth form ensures that the students with these needs are included.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of curriculum opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of the pupils. Enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular provision are very good. The provision of staffing, accommodation and resources are all good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum generally meets well the needs, capabilities and interest of pupils of all ages, including a developing range of alternative provision in Year 10.
- Statutory requirements are not met, however, in provision for ICT in Years 10/11, for religious education in the sixth form or for a daily act of collective worship.

- There is good provision for other aspects of personal, social, health and citizenship education, including through assemblies, but provision for citizenship education does not meet statutory requirements.
- Provision for pupils for whom English is not the first language is very good; for pupils with SEN, it is good.
- ICT is not used sufficiently well to promote learning by sixth formers.
- The new accommodation has brought substantial improvements, but there are a few shortcomings to address.

Commentary

41. The curriculum meets most statutory requirements, but fails to do so in relation to ICT and citizenship and in the provision made for a daily act of collective worship. A range of vocational courses has been developed in Years 10/11 as alternatives to the traditional academic curriculum, including some which involve placements at the local further education college. These arrangements serve well the needs of pupils who are given the opportunity to follow them. Other pupils of this age are identified as needing extra support, for instance, with their coursework in other subjects, in place of a further option course which would place too many burdens on them. Whilst the school's strategies to ensure that it has a curriculum which matches the interests, capabilities and needs of all pupils are progressing well, it acknowledges that a wider range of alternative provision yet needs to be developed. The modern foreign languages curriculum for Years 7-9 lacks cohesion and there is no provision for pupils to take an additional modern foreign language; however, some do take the opportunity to study Latin.
42. The citizenship programme is now being developed satisfactorily but does not yet meet statutory requirements and so is currently unsatisfactory. It is mainly delivered through the weekly personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lesson with their form tutor, but also through other subjects. Good provision is made for work-related learning. The school's new policy is well devised and offers a clear strategy for its evaluation. Its management is very good and developmental. Statutory requirements are fully met. All school subjects have undertaken an audit and particularly effective professional links have been made in art and design, physical education and drama. Good links are made with local employers and further education establishments to ensure pupils gain access to a wide range of activities which prepare them for the world of work, including local art galleries, the police and Heathrow airport. Particularly valuable provision is provided for less academic pupils in Year 11 where college placements operate alongside the school's core curriculum, leading to certification of key skills in the National Record of Achievement.
43. Provision for the development of pupils' personal development through the PSHCE programme and through a range of other curriculum subjects, particularly religious education, is good. It also forms an important part of year group assemblies, which are planned to mesh with weekly PSHCE themes. Through the RE curriculum, pupils are encouraged to reflect on some of life's big questions and to develop their self-knowledge and respect for others by the study of other faiths, always from a non-British perspective. Although delivery through other subject areas is uneven, English, drama, art and design, history and geography make strong contributions. A very well planned and well presented year assembly programme ensures that pupils learn about

the community of the school and about the value of courtesy and respect for others. Careers education is well received by the pupils, and all in Year 10 participate in a well-organised work experience programme.

44. Pupils for whom English is not their first language, and those with special educational needs, have the same access to the curriculum as other pupils. Small group teaching facilitates inclusion by tackling those barriers to the pupils' progress caused by learning, behavioural or language difficulties. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
45. The visual arts specialist status of the school has strengthened community links through greater cooperation with many partner institutions. The school is a leading provider of professional development for arts teachers in the borough. Strong national and international links have also been developed to the benefit of pupils in the school. The contribution of the visual arts specialism to raising standards generally is slowly being realised and is further being addressed by preparations for more vocational courses.
46. There is a very good programme of enrichment activities provided through the visual arts specialist status and by individual subject departments. Pupils also take advantage of the booster classes and homework clubs, the foreign trips, historical and artistic visits and workshops and sporting opportunities. This raises expectations and broadens pupils' horizons: it prepares them well for the world of opportunities that are available beyond the school.
47. The school has recently moved to new premises and the standard of accommodation now provided is a substantial improvement on the situation pertaining previously. Whilst the majority of staff and pupils are very pleased with the new accommodation, there are some drawbacks which affect delivery of the curriculum. The main problem is acoustics and the high noise levels between learning areas, particularly in art and design. The lack of sufficient soundproofing between the school hall and the social areas means that, on some occasions when year groups have a lunchtime assembly, the outside noise level competes for pupils' attention. The ICT departmental rooms are small for full-size classes and the air conditioning there is poor.
48. Overall, the level and quality of learning resources in the new school are good, notably in art and design and music, although the music-recording studio has not yet been equipped. Not all departments have interactive whiteboards yet, but these are being well used to enhance teaching quality in mathematics. There is a lack of access to ICT in business education. There are insufficient artefacts to support teaching and learning in religious education.
49. The staffing needs of the school are well met and the majority of teachers are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. Although there are a number of teachers who do not possess qualifications to teach in England, the majority have elected to go through qualified teacher training. There are sufficient support assistants and they are appropriately trained.

Sixth form

50. The school offers a wide-ranging sixth form curriculum, with a good range of academic AS and A-level courses available alongside intermediate and advanced vocational courses. Take-up of courses at all levels by students is improving, and an increasing number of students are following their courses through to advanced examination level, although the retention rate remains slightly below the national average.
51. Curriculum planning is good, and well matched to the needs and aspirations of the students, although this does not coincide with student responses to the questionnaire which they completed prior to the inspection. The school has good arrangements to ensure that students can, if they wish, take a mix of vocational and academic courses at sixth form level. The use of ICT to promote learning in the sixth form, however, is unsatisfactory at present. There are sound informal arrangements with other local schools to accommodate students' curriculum choices where they cannot be met at Brentside. However, the sixth-form curriculum does not comply with the legal requirement to provide a course for all students in religious education.
52. Advice on careers and preparation for higher education are well planned and promote high aspirations, although in isolated cases the engagement of the tutor is not as committed as it should be, and students have concerns about their preparation for the next step.
53. There is a suitable outline plan for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). This covers a wide range of issues which contribute to students' personal development and contains elements that promote understanding of the world at large and politics. The programme includes a number of important spiritual and moral issues, for example, racism, crime and punishment and the role of Amnesty International. These are thoughtfully integrated with careers advice and aspects of the world of work. PSHCE sessions usually take the form of debates, which are popular amongst the students. Exposure to this kind of experience contributes significantly to the very good behaviour and the positive attitudes to learning observed in the sixth form. The school has high expectations of its students in the ways in which they can set an example to their younger peers, and the sixth form development plan sets out ways in which they can make a greater contribution to the school community.
54. There are good opportunities for students to increase their cultural awareness in the sixth form. There are field trips and excursions in a number of subject areas with visits to galleries, museums and theatres. This is supported by activities outside school and the wider community in art and drama. There is involvement with the Royal Academy of Art. Discussions in lessons develop cultural awareness: for example, an English lesson encouraged reflection on the nature of evil following a good class discussion about the suffering of children and young people across the world.
55. A good range of enrichment opportunities is provided, both in subject areas and school wide, and in terms of participation in sport and engagement in the arts. Sixth-form students have very good opportunities to provide a valuable service to the whole school community through helping their fellow-pupils lower down the school, both

with developing their reading and through giving support to pupils who are disaffected. Additionally, students provide further service to the school community through acting as classroom assistants to help younger pupils learn. In subject areas, there are outstanding opportunities to extend learning through enrichment activities in art, including links with a number of countries abroad, and biology provides residential field studies. Young Enterprise activities enhance the curriculum in business, as does students' participation in national mathematics challenges. Students' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, where they suggest that there are insufficient enrichment activities, are not borne out by the provision which the school actually makes.

56. The development plan for the sixth form includes the promotion of greater independence in learning, and the school's new facilities have provided much better opportunities for private study and research, although the section of the library allocated to sixth-form students is often noisy and not conducive to quiet study. The new facilities in art do not provide a separate sixth form teaching space, and the teaching rooms are noisy and intrusive. Some teaching spaces in business are too small to accommodate the numbers of students in the group.

Care, guidance and support

The involvement of students in the life of the school and the school's pastoral care of students are **good**. The academic support of students based on monitoring is **satisfactory**. In the sixth form, the levels of care, guidance, support and advice based on monitoring and the involvement of sixth-form students are **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school is inclusive and involves pupils well.
- The tutorial system is good in providing pastoral guidance and support for pupils.
- The transition processes, from primary schools through key stages and into work or further study, are good, including those for pupils with special educational needs.
- The provision of additional support for identified pupils is good.
- The school council works well.
- Child protection arrangements are good.
- The school's health and safety policy is out of date and certain risk assessments require updating.

COMMENTARY

57. The school's ethos is exemplified in the way that staff and students treat one another. Pupils and parents confirm that teachers are caring and helpful. Pupils feel that this is a good school to be at, and are proud of the new building. There was no evidence of harassment or bullying during the inspection and pupils confirm it is not a problem for them, despite concerns expressed in responses to the questionnaires completed by pupils and parents.
58. Pupils' pastoral care is handled well throughout the school. All members of staff are aware of pupils' specific needs, and strategies are devised and implemented to support and advise pupils, both from within the school or from outside agencies. The

great majority of pupils confirm there is an adult they can speak to when they are in need of help. The pupils have access to tutors, year heads, learning mentors and a very skilled and committed behaviour support team, where they can seek impartial support and guidance. The high quality pastoral care has resulted in lower rates of pupil exclusion and raising the motivation and esteem of many pupils.

59. Academic support and target setting based on assessment informs students about how they can improve, although this is not consistently applied throughout the school. There is close monitoring of the progress of pupils with statements of special educational needs, poor literacy and behavioural difficulties. The guidance and support of pupils who come into the school with little or no English is very good. There are clear criteria for identifying when pupils with English as an additional language have other needs such as special educational needs or are gifted and talented.
60. Although many pupils are named as having special educational needs, there is, as yet, no clear, consistent understanding of what this means within this school, or of when the pupil has made sufficient progress so that they no longer have a special educational need. This is an area for development.
61. The School Council provides significant opportunities for pupils to be involved in the management of the school and to air their views. The council is investigating how improvements could be made to teaching and learning within the school. Pupils' opinions are taken into account and, where possible, policies are changed or matters altered to meet their requests, including involvement in the provisions for the new school building.
62. The transition processes into, through and out of the school to the next phase are good. Health, medical and welfare support for students are good, as are arrangements for child protection. The local area child protection committee requirements are fully met and the school has embarked on a programme of training to extend the expertise of the senior management team in this area.
63. Within the school, there is a strong commitment to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils.
64. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory, and pupils are cared for well if they need medical aid. Inspectors noted that the school's health and safety policy has not been updated to reflect the school's new location and management structures. The school's risk assessments have also not been amended.

SIXTH FORM

65. Central to the care that the school provides for its older students is the programme of study, activities and expectations which all students are required to follow. It provides well for a range of aspects of personal development and key skills, and gives good advice and support for students' next steps, including university application, moves into higher education or the world of work.

66. Arrangements for supporting students' progress and attainment are good. All students are given targets as soon as they move into Year 12, and these are kept under close review throughout their stay in the sixth form. In all subjects, there are regular reviews of progress towards targets, and the students are asked to evaluate their own performance and set themselves targets for improvement. The system is very effective in involving students in a clear appraisal and understanding of where they are. Links between the school and universities are strong and, with the very effective systems for dealing with the UCAS process, the proportion of students achieving their planned higher education courses is high.
67. Students interviewed all felt that the system was of benefit to them, and appreciated the availability of their subject teachers to give help and guidance when problems arise. The view, expressed by some in responding to the inspection questionnaire, that students do not have an adult who knows them well and to whom they can speak when in need of help, was not borne out by the inspection.
68. Students meet regularly with their tutors to discuss their progress. These meetings are helpful and promote good learning. Procedures for tracking student attendance, ensuring that they present work on time and are keeping up with their targets, are secure. The sixth-form team meets monthly to discuss progress, to identify any students who may be under-performing and to take appropriate action.
69. The school has high expectations of its students in the ways in which they can set an example to their younger peers, and there are clear guidelines on the range and amount of work they should do and the way in which they dress. Their views are canvassed and the school takes account of what they say, despite the fact that students expressed the contrary view in the pre-inspection questionnaire.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **satisfactory**, the links with the community are **very good** and links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The links with the community are very good, providing much enrichment for pupils.
- There are good links with primary schools, receiving colleges and other local schools, which benefit pupils.
- Communication with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good and well documented.
- Annual reports to parents on their children's progress are unsatisfactory and do not meet all statutory requirements.
- Parents are not always willing to respond to the school's efforts to involve them more fully in the life of the school.

COMMENTARY

70. Parents and carers generally have positive views of the school, especially the new building, the quality of teaching and the management of the school. The school works hard at involving parents, but many are unresponsive. The pupils' contact books are

often not completed by parents, and they do not always respond to school invitations to attend meetings to discuss their children's progress.

71. Parents generally are positive about the efforts made to smooth the settling-in process for their children when joining the school. A comprehensive and detailed range of information is provided regarding the curriculum and how they can help their children at home. There are several opportunities for parents to attend the school to discuss their children's progress and to witness the celebration of pupils' achievements through the year. Although the staff are very willing to discuss with parents their concerns, there are few opportunities for parents to voice their opinions or influence the school's plans on issues such as changes to school uniform arrangements.
72. The good relationships between parents and the tutorial and pastoral staff provide a strong basis for supportive and helpful dialogue that is often used to improve pupil performance, behaviour and attendance. The school's learning mentors make significant contributions to the support available for the parents of pupils who may be experiencing difficulties with their learning. School staff work very hard to build and maintain links with the parents and carers of pupils with English as an additional language. Many families attend after-school family learning sessions. Although all parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs attend their child's annual review meeting, there are too few opportunities taken for informal contacts with the range of pupils with special educational needs.
73. Written annual pupil reports for the parents of pupils in Years 7-9 are somewhat inaccessible. Although they do include comments from parents and pupils, they are not provided at the end of the school year and do not consistently explain how pupils can improve in specific subject areas. Separate reports detailing attainment are provided at the year end. The reports for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are more informative in all areas and include details for subject improvement and pupils' contributions. They do not, however, include any details on progress in citizenship or information and communication technology and therefore breach statutory requirements.
74. Links with other schools and colleges are good. Very effective induction arrangements with partner primary schools ensure that the school is well informed of the achievement and support needs of pupils about to enter Year 7. All new pupils are tested to ascertain their levels of knowledge and understanding. As a result, these pupils settle down quickly in their allocated sets.
75. The school has built up very strong links with local partner establishments as a result of its visual arts specialist status. The school is developing links with other secondary schools, although there is no consortium of local secondary schools.
76. The school's links with the community are very good. There are very strong links with many institutions that support the school; these include international and national institutions involved in the visual and performing arts. The school has strong positive links with the local authority, contractors and service providers involved with the new school building. Pupils benefit from the links with local providers of specialist learning, pastoral and social support, mentoring services and local youth organisations. The

strong links with the careers advice provider, business links and the school's work-experience programme ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to experience and talk about the world of work. In addition, the school organises many visits and visitors as part of curriculum and enrichment activities that enrich the pupils' experiences and contribute to their personal development.

77. Through links with primary schools and a special school, pupils make significant contributions of service to the community. For example, pupils assist in a special school and members of the special school are invited back. Local sports organisations and members of the public make use of the school facilities and pupils join in many inter-school sporting competitions, enjoying much success. Productions, performances, exhibitions and workshops run by the school are very successful, enabling many parents and visitors to enjoy the work of the school.

SIXTH FORM

78. Parents and students are positive in their praise of the sixth form and support the institution well. They extol the virtues of the sixth form, and consider the new level of provision since the school's specialist status to be a marked improvement. The sixth form is beginning to recruit students from other schools and provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses and extra-curricular activities.
79. Parents receive good quality information on the school's activities and the students' progress. Students benefit from many of the strong links enjoyed by the school, especially those that contribute to broadening their experience and contributing to a clearer understanding of the subjects which they are studying. The wide range of enrichment activities associated with the arts college status and strong faculties in the performing arts include business enterprise, debates, music, art, theatre, sport, adventure activities, exchanges and foreign visits.
80. There is good preparation for higher education: students visit higher education establishments, other educational establishments, businesses and industry. Good use is made of the Connexions service to provide advice for students with career and course choices, as well as advising on gap years.
81. Links with other schools and colleges are good and include informal collaborative arrangements to enable access to courses that the school could not otherwise provide. Students also attend workshops and presentations in the performing and visual arts.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good, as is that of other key staff. The effectiveness of management is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's energy and commitment have secured good support from staff, who work as an effective team.

- The key priorities for the school, rightly, are to secure inclusion and to maximise achievement.
- There is good leadership at all levels, and leaders are committed to these priorities.
- Pupils sense the commitment of leaders and managers and this improves their motivation.
- Much is invested in line-management arrangements, which are very supportive but do not adequately secure accountability.
- Monitoring, particularly of pupil performance, is beginning to improve with much better access to data and analyses.
- Strategies for the recruitment and retention of staff are good.
- Governors are supportive of the headteacher and the school but not sufficiently challenging and not adequately securing statutory requirements.

Commentary

82. The headteacher provides the school with energetic, determined and committed leadership which places a strong emphasis on raising attainment and on improving pupil behaviour through high quality teaching and care. The value he places on the importance of an inclusive ethos is understood and supported by all. A number of key changes which he has introduced in his first year as headteacher reflect this commitment. He is working hard with the wider community, now in the context of the school's brand new premises, to attract a more comprehensive pupil population, and this is beginning to bear fruit. Staff morale is high as a result of the head's effective leadership.
83. The headteacher is supported well by staff in the key positions in the school. The senior leadership team is effective and visible, helping to assert the school's values and high expectations of pupils and staff alike. At the level of year group co-ordination and subject departments, leadership is mainly good and never less than satisfactory. In science and physical education, leadership is very good. The good and very good subject leadership is characterised by a clear vision of what needs improving and how this will be achieved, and the determination to secure that improvement. These features are well to the fore in mathematics, geography, history, religious education, art and design and music. Another strength to be found widely in the school due to good or very good leadership is the effectiveness of teamwork, which often stems from the infectious enthusiasm, as well as the leadership skills, of middle leaders. Pupils too sense the commitment and enthusiasm of key staff and this is helping to improve their motivation to make good progress.
84. The school's strategic plan reflects the school's central aims relating to inclusion, achievement, professional development of staff, the impact of the specialist visual arts status of the school and the impact of the new premises. However, the plan has two main shortcomings. The criteria it includes as illustrations of successful outcomes are too general for the school to be able to evaluate its progress and it does not secure an adequate focus on all the areas which the headteacher rightly acknowledges as needing improvement. However, the plan to improve teachers' assessment of pupils' progress and teachers' understanding of the uses of pupil performance data has been significantly improved and updated. This provides a good model for the school to revisit other elements of its strategic plan to help ensure that it better describes and communicates the school's intentions.

85. The co-ordinator of English as an additional language is very knowledgeable and has a clear vision of the steps needed to be taken in the drive for constant improvement. Very good quality information is provided to all teaching staff to equip them to manage the learning of pupils with English as an additional language in the classroom.
86. Management overall is satisfactory. Much management time during the headteacher's first year at the school has inevitably been devoted to ensuring the successful move into the new premises. This work is now almost complete. Communications and line management arrangements have recently been revised and are now largely effective, although line management does have some unnecessary complexities. A significant amount of time and resource is allocated to line-management meetings. The monitoring and evaluation functions carried out by line managers are found to be thoroughly helpful and supportive by middle-managers. However, practice varies across the school and is not adequately demanding on occasion, particularly with regard to accountability for performance.
87. Management of subject departments is good in most departments and very good in science, where strategic planning and monitoring of performance are particular strengths. Modern foreign languages is another area where performance review is regular and positive lessons from this are shared effectively around the team. Interim arrangements put in place for managing English and SEN are effective.
88. As part of the school's plan to improve teachers' use of assessment, work is currently advancing rapidly on providing them with ample pupil performance data and the means to use analyses of these data to understand how improvements can be made to both teaching and learning. Once these facilities are in place, within the next few months, departmental management is likely to improve significantly.
89. The learning support co-ordinator has oversight of both learning and behaviour and is taking steps to ensure a more integrated approach through, for example, a single referral form. She manages an effective, cohesive and supportive team.
90. Arrangements for performance management are clear and well structured, and guidance for the setting of objectives ensures that school priorities are addressed. The nine newly-qualified teachers are well supported in their first year through an established programme of talks and discussions augmented by subject induction organised by the induction tutor, who is normally the head of department. Teachers' professional development is supported by a range of activities. Almost all senior managers have completed the National Programme for Qualification for Headship and consultants are currently working with mathematics and science staff. In addition, many departments adopt a deliberate policy of sharing good practice and of providing mutual support. Whilst there are short-term difficulties in the staffing of English and some aspects of design and technology, all other subjects are now taught by specialist staff as a result of effective recruitment strategies. Retention is secured through the practice of reviewing roles and responsibilities each year to reflect changing needs and aspirations.

91. Governance overall is currently unsatisfactory. There is a small core of very supportive and experienced governors who, after devoting considerable energy to sustaining the school building programme, are now able to return their attention to the core purposes. There have been a number of vacancies for governors recently and they have now started recruiting, already with some success. Governors are committed to the school's continued development but lack a structure that ensures that these developments are closely monitored. They have played a part in formulating the school improvement plan, including the targets for pupil performance, and were involved too in the plans for visual arts specialist status. They have some awareness of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the governing body has not placed sufficient priority on holding to account all areas of the school's operations, in particular, analysing the reasons for the different attainment levels of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Though links have been formed in some areas, such as the appointment of a governor with responsibility for special educational needs, there are no strong links with subject areas. Moreover, governors are less confident in their role as a critical friend and do not always provide sufficient challenge. They do not always request information at the level of detail to which they are entitled. There are a number of areas where the school is not meeting statutory requirements, for example, with regard to the school's practice for collective worship, the ICT and citizenship curriculum, religious education in the sixth form, reports to parents on the progress of their children and health and safety arrangements in the new school. There has been no planned induction programme for new governors.

Sixth form

92. Leadership of the sixth form, which is the corporate responsibility of the leadership team rather than that of an individual, is strong. The detailed plans for the development of the sixth form are clear and geared directly to the raising of standards and the improvement of provision. The plan is in line with the aims and aspirations of the school, and seeks to retain the good qualities of present provision whilst enhancing and expanding opportunities for students.
93. The management of the sixth form is good. There is a very good management structure which keys in the management of the sixth form to the senior management team of the school, and there are regular meetings between the year leader and senior managers to review progress and discuss sixth form matters. The year leader and his assistant have a clear overview of all sixth form matters, know their students well and manage the unit effectively on a day-to-day basis.
94. There are sound procedures for the monitoring of student performance by tutors, whose responsibility it is to ensure that students keep up with their work and remain focused. The concise and clearly-written handbook for sixth form tutors gives good guidance about their roles and responsibilities in tracking student progress and preparing them for their next step in life. Curriculum planning is good, and well matched to the needs and aspirations of the students, although this does not coincide with student responses to the questionnaire which they completed prior to the inspection. There has been some monitoring of teaching quality in the sixth form through subject leaders as well as members of the senior team and consultants from outside the school, but it is not as yet a formalised procedure.

95. Subject leadership is very good in art and design and good in science, mathematics, business studies, history, geography and music. The leadership in English is satisfactory. The school makes good use of LEA and other consultants to improve its performance.

Financial information (whole school)

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	5,243,353
Total expenditure	5,045,728
Expenditure per pupil	5,041

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	13,580
Balance carried forward to the next year	211,205

96. There remains a need to secure a better link between the school's strategic planning and its financial planning. Systems to secure the efficient management of individual budgets within the school are effective and inconspicuous, but are not always adequately focused on ensuring planned actions have been carried out and their impact evaluated. Expenditure per pupil is well above the national average and only when monitoring and evaluation have been further improved will the school be secure in claiming it gives better than satisfactory value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Although standards in tests and examinations have not significantly improved, pupils' achievement is good overall.
- Teaching and learning are good in all Years 7 to 11.
- Both behaviour and learning are well managed.
- English makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Marking rarely gives pupils advice on how to improve, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

97. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were well below national expectations but were in line with the average for those schools with similar rates of entitlement to free school meals. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels was well above the average for similar schools. Girls performed better than boys. The pattern of results in 2004, and in years previous to 2003, were much the same, with the unconfirmed 2004 results continuing the pattern of good performance at higher levels. At the end of Year 11 in 2003, GCSE results in English were below average and well below in literature. In 2004, there was a drop in English but girls improved in literature. In previous years, results were similar to those in 2004. Again, girls performed better than boys.
98. In work seen during the inspection, standards by Year 9 are below average, but they have achieved well from entering the school with weak literacy skills. Most pupils speak clearly and they listen well to the teacher and increasingly well to each other. Reading aloud is generally accurate but lacks fluency and expression. Pupils are able to recount the plot and describe the characters in the books they read, but only the most capable can comment on the impact of language. Their original writing can be lively and entertaining, but little extended writing was seen, except in their transition unit in Year 7. By Year 11, the standard of spoken and written responses is below average, although some exceptionally talented pupils attain very high standards. Given their well below average attainment at the start of the course, pupils' achievement has, however, been good. Those pupils who have special needs, or for

whom English is not their first language, make equally good progress because they are given effective support. Behaviour in lessons is generally good in all years, although in a few lessons a difficult minority can take an undue share of the teachers' attention.

99. Relationships are cordial and purposeful. Teachers share clear objectives with their classes so that they know what they are expected to learn. Well-planned activities enable pupils to build on previous skills and knowledge. Good management keeps them well occupied, and teachers' enthusiasm is infectious. High but realistic expectations lead to good progress. Visual aids provide a helpful focus in some lessons and should be more widely used. Reviews of learning are planned but do not always take place. Marking is regular and encouraging but rarely gives pupils specific advice on how to improve. English makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development through the exploration of serious issues such as child labour and reading prose and poetry from different ages and cultures. Currently, pupils make insufficient use of information and communication technology in English to enhance their work and develop their skills.
100. The school has made constructive interim arrangements to cover the absence of a subject leader, following the late promotion of the previous subject leader during the last academic year. Staff demonstrate a shared commitment to improvement. The department has undertaken a substantial programme of staff development that has had a positive impact on classroom practice. Use of assessment data to inform planning and to track individual progress towards targets is at an early stage of development. The scheme of work is well structured and meets national requirements. Although standards have not significantly risen in tests and examinations, the quality of teaching and learning has substantially improved since the last inspection and the department is well placed to achieve better results. The focus for further improvement should be on constructive assessment and individual target setting.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

101. The school has made the development of literacy across the curriculum a priority, and in nearly all subjects there is a strong emphasis on the correct use of language. There are good opportunities for speaking and listening in many subjects, including mathematics, physical education and science. Writing for a variety of purposes is practised in modern foreign languages, history and geography. Well-presented handouts in art and design provide a good model of communication.
102. In general, team inspectors found that students had sufficient literacy skills to succeed in their subjects. In Years 7 and 8, lack of reading and writing skills is holding back some students in history and geography.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good

Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is good, and often very good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Pupils achieve well, and standards are rising.
- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
- There is insufficient use, as yet of the department's excellent ICT facilities.
- The curriculum in modern foreign languages lacks cohesion at present.

COMMENTARY

103. In 2003, the latest year for which there are national statistics, GCSE results in French were well below the national average in terms of pupils achieving grades A* to C, but close to the national average at A* to G. Girls did markedly better than boys, and their performance was closer to how they did in their other subjects than is the case nationally. There was a substantial rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher grades in 2004, when most pupils achieved at least their predicted grade, and many exceeded it.
104. Spanish results in 2003 were above the national average, and a quarter of the pupils entered achieved grades A* or A. In 2004, however, results in Spanish were considerably lower.
105. There are clear indications that the standards reached by the pupils are improving. They are overall close to the national average. In most year groups, all pupils are achieving well relative to expectations. Pupils make a very good start to their language learning in Year 7, and many achieve very well because expectations are high and they have great enthusiasm for their work. By the end of Year 9, the ablest linguists can write accurately using the past tense, and average and lower-attaining pupils can produce similar work with varying degrees of support from the teacher. By the end of Year 11, pupils are writing extended accounts in French using a range of tenses and have a good understanding of the nature of language. Pupils taking Spanish in Year 10 are developing good language learning strategies and responding very well to the high expectations of the teacher.
106. Most of the teaching seen in modern foreign languages was good or very good. There is a good team of able linguists who are committed to raising standards and whose lessons are often very challenging and geared to promoting high levels of pupil achievement. Lesson planning is good and takes good account of the range of pupil attainment in the group. There are good reinforcement activities for those pupils who need them and imaginative extension work for the ablest pupils. Teachers have good strategies for developing language understanding and improving pupils' speaking skills through exhaustive practice and challenge. The department does not, as yet, make sufficient use of its excellent ICT facilities and curriculum for languages in the lower school is not as good as it should be.

107. A major factor in the good improvement which the subject has made since the previous inspection is the quality of departmental leadership. There is clear vision as to what the department needs to do to improve and a determination to introduce and consolidate strategies to bring about that improvement. There is good teamwork in the department and all understand what needs to be achieved. Management is good: best practice is shared and the quality of the department's performance is regularly reviewed and monitored through discussion and lesson observation.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, promoting effective learning.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of the head of department and the staff, who work well together as a team.
- Relationships in lessons are very good and the pupils behave well and work hard.
- GCSE results have improved recently, test results at the end of Year 9 now need to improve.
- Information and communication technology is used well in some lessons and now needs to be developed further.

Commentary

108. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 show the proportion of pupils reaching the required level is well below the national average. When compared to schools with similar rates of entitlement to free school meals, the proportion is in line with the average. Boys and girls performed equally well and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is in line with national averages when compared to similar schools. More pupils reach the required level and the higher level in mathematics than in English or science. The results in 2004 were all similar to those in 2003, although boys performed better than girls and the Asian and British students outperformed the black African and black Caribbean pupils. In GCSE examinations in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C and A*-G was marginally below the national average. The boys' results were significantly better than the girls' results. The pupils performed better in mathematics than in any other subject. The proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades has shown a significant improvement since the previous inspection. In 2004, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C and A*-G improved slightly and girls performed much better than boys.

109. Standards of work seen in lessons and in the pupils' books throughout the school were at the expected level for many pupils and better than the test and examination

results would indicate in Years 7-9. Poor retention of knowledge prevents the pupils' performance in tests and examinations from being as good as it might be. Many pupils enter the school during Year 9, in particular, some with poor literacy skills, and this has a detrimental effect on their test performance. Most pupils are able to draw accurate graphs and interpret and analyse data. The connection between fractions, decimals and percentages is well understood by most pupils. GCSE coursework, which was of a high standard for pupils at all levels of entry, has contributed to the improvement in results recently. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below the national average and so achievement by the majority of pupils by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory and by the end of Year 11 is good. In all years, pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds make sound progress.

110. Teaching and learning are good overall. The majority of lessons are good and all lessons are at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers have high expectations of the pupils, the pace is good and a variety of tasks have been prepared to challenge the pupils. In a high-attaining Year 11 group, the pupils were using their information and communication technology skills to plot graphs and understand the connection between the position of graphs with similar equations. Some very good starter exercises were seen to engage and enthuse pupils. For example, there was good use of the interactive whiteboard to revise and learn ways of remembering the meaning of important statistical terms in a low-attaining Year 10 lesson. The endings of lessons are more variable in quality and did not always consolidate learning appropriately. Teachers make effective use of questioning, encouraging pupils to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class. Where teaching was less good, the pace and variety of activities were usually insufficient. Homework set was appropriate and usually challenging. As a result of effective teaching, most pupils acquire knowledge of basic skills and concepts, which enable them to work on their own to improve their understanding. Literacy skills are improved by the insistence of teachers on the correct use of mathematical language and the good oral work in lessons. Pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics, they behave well in lessons and relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good. Assessment procedures are good; pupils are tested regularly, are aware of National Curriculum levels and have targets set. Day-to-day marking is mostly encouraging and informative.
111. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is enthusiastic and has a clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards even further. She is well supported by the team of teachers, who are enthusiastic, committed and hard working. The department is responding very positively to the National Numeracy Strategy and this is raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Good improvement is indicated by the fact that the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE examinations has nearly doubled. Accommodation is now very good and resources have improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

112. Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory. The key features of the National Numeracy Strategy have been shared with all staff in the school at a training day, which was well received. Aspects of mathematics have been identified in most subject schemes

of work. Pupils are using their mathematical knowledge and skills well in other subjects across the curriculum. Graph work, basic measuring and calculation are used competently in other subjects such as geography, science, design and technology, and modern foreign languages. Monitoring of progress and further development in the work of improving pupils' mathematical skills need to be continued.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Very good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Leadership and management of the faculty are significant to most pupils achieving well.
- Teachers work hard and well as a team that has a desire to raise standards and a capacity to succeed.
- Teaching and learning strategies do not place enough emphasis on the impact of shared learning objectives, key words, starter activities and plenary sessions.
- Pupils are not often challenged to make predictions, to design, and to form hypotheses, and teachers' questions are not always directed by name to keep all pupils on task.

Commentary

113. The Year 9 results in the 2003 national tests were well below the national average for both the expected Level 5 and the higher Level 6, when compared with those in all schools. These results were in line with the average for schools with similar rates of entitlement to free school meals. At both Level 5 and Level 6, results are not as good as they are in English and mathematics. In 2004, unconfirmed results reveal a similar pattern to 2003. Results for both the GCSE dual and single award examinations were significantly below average when compared with results in all schools. When compared with schools with similar free school meals, results were above average. These results represent good added value for pupils since arriving at the school in Year 7. The improvement trend in science results is above the trend in national results over recent times. In 2004, girls' results are improved on 2003 but the boys have not done as well.

114. The standards of work seen reflect well the improving test and examination results over recent years. Most pupils are keeping a good record of their work at an appropriate level but a significant number have work missing in their books and do not always address this. They handle apparatus safely and well during practical work when higher-attaining pupils are accurate measuring using different scales. Most

achieve better standards when involved in active learning situations. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in response to the good, pre-planned support they receive from their teachers and other adults, including laboratory technicians. Most pupils achieve the learning objectives at an appropriate level. There is little difference apparent between the achievements of boys and girls, of pupils with English as a second other language, or of pupils of different minority ethnic groups. With the exception of a few in Years 7 and 8, pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes support their achievements well, as do their levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

115. Teaching is good overall, ranging from very good to satisfactory. In a very good lesson on respiration in Year 9, a wealth of learning activities challenged pupils to achieve higher than expected standards. There was a very good focus throughout on the learning objectives. During a very good lesson on energy in Year 11, some very good support from a teacher of English, continual reinforcement of key words, and a good plenary session secured very good achievement for most of the lower attaining pupils present. In both of these lessons, the department teaching and learning policy was employed to great effect. In some lessons, however, there were weaknesses, for instance, in that pupils were allowed to call out answers, there was a lack of variety of learning activities and teachers' questions were not directed to keep all pupils on task. All teachers set and mark homework regularly but, marking does not set short-term targets. Some very good assessment data is shared well with pupils but as yet, pupils are not skilled at self-evaluation.
116. There is a strong sense and evidence of a very well motivated and effective team. Strategic planning promotes both faculty and whole-school visions for the future. Very good monitoring of teaching and learning supports a commitment to professional development but has not yet secured consistent practice across the faculty. The faculty has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and has made a big commitment to improving teaching and learning, both to good effect.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Good	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Insufficient evidence
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good start on providing for the computer-related needs of all pupils in Years 7 to 9; this does not yet apply in Years 10/11, where most pupils have little contact with computers and make unsatisfactory progress. National Curriculum requirements are not met.
- Schemes of work are in the early stages of development; in general, they are good, except as regards assessment arrangements.

- Development and integration of computer-related work throughout the curriculum are also at a very early stage; however, the school is now clear how to proceed.
- Where there are computer-related lessons, the quality of teaching is generally good, although learning objectives are not sufficiently clear.

Commentary

117. In 2004, a few Year 11 pupils entered for GNVQ at Foundation Level. The numbers entered and passing are too small for meaningful comparisons with other schools. Otherwise, there have not recently been any entries for this subject in any external assessment.
118. Most pupils enter Year 7 with a grasp of ICT that is well below average. This inspection coincided with the introduction for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to specific lessons in ICT, which are now provided for all. As a result, it is too early to judge how well the pupils are likely to do by the time they reach the end of Year 9 and the school is not yet clear how to assess them. Even so, pupils in Year 7 have a good chance of reaching the national expected level by the end of Year 9. Most are able to log on quickly to the school network, find and load their work files, use mouse and keyboard appropriately, and save and print what they do. Most can type text effectively in a word processor and can add bullets and imported graphics, even if not very effectively. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 do not yet have much better computing skills than those in Year 7; though more can access the Internet appropriately and a few know a little of the use of spreadsheets. Few are likely to reach the expected level by the end of their Year 9. So far, there is no specific ICT provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11, although the school hopes to provide weekly lessons from September 2005. Only those in the Year 10 GCSE class, therefore, have the chance to improve their grasp of how and why people use computers in various contexts. The course is too new for there yet to be much impact; however, it is clear that pupils are making rapid progress, although standards remain below average even in this group. For the majority of pupils, who do not take this course, standards remain well below average. Otherwise, there are a few special ICT classes in Years 10 and 11, for instance, for pupils who generally find learning very hard. These pupils do make good progress in their use of computers. At the time of the previous inspection, the standards of pupils in Years 7 to 11 were below or well below the national average and this is still the case.
119. The quality of teaching seen in specific ICT lessons with pupils of Years 7 to 9 was generally good, both with teachers for whom ICT is their main specialism and those for whom it is not. Particular strengths are the pace of lessons and the way the teachers encourage, support and challenge the learners. On the other hand, the teachers do not yet help pupils become good independent learners or collaborators, or share specific learning objectives with them; they do not test them often and the pupils do not know how well they are doing or how they could do better. There was little evidence of the quality of teaching in Years 10/11, although it was good in the few lessons seen.
120. Subject leadership is satisfactory, given that the subject leader faces very great pressures and does not have a clearly defined team of specialist teachers to work with. He faces considerable burdens stemming from the tasks related to monitoring the quality of teaching and assessment, development and resourcing of teaching schemes, staff training, maintaining the network of the large number of computers, and the development of department policies and longer-term plans. The subject leader is already working very hard with the assistant headteacher responsible for resources, and looks set to make rapid progress over the coming months in the

further development of the subject and in the support of ICT in pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

121. That the school does not provide satisfactorily for the ICT-related learning of the pupils, as set out in the National Curriculum, is partly because there is, as yet, little opportunity in the other subjects taught. Until the school's very recent move into new premises, the key factor was the difficulty of accessing computers and the Internet; now, however, in the new accommodation, the level and quality of resourcing, including the number of interactive whiteboards, are above average. The school has started to consider how to use these resources most effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the curriculum, and this is already apparent in mathematics and science.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Strong leadership which is committed to improvement.
- Good teaching is leading to improved achievement in all years.
- Good use of assessment helps pupils to learn because they know what they do well and what they need to improve but insufficient use is made of assessment data to analyse the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Lessons are creatively planned so that pupils learn with enthusiasm and enjoyment, although in some lessons the pace is too slow.

Commentary

122. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below average. Unconfirmed results for 2004 have continued a falling trend.

123. As they join the school, pupils' geographical knowledge is well below that of pupils of a similar age. However, they quickly learn the basics of interpreting Ordnance Survey maps and how differing standards of living can be measured. Due to the good teaching, achievement continues to be good in Years 8 and 9 so that by the end of Year 9 standards have much improved, though they are still below average. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is also below average overall, although should lead to GCSE results which are somewhat better than those of last year. All pupils, including those whose first language is not English, make good progress. High attainers reach

expected standards as they write confidently about transmigration in Indonesia. Low attainers identify river features well but have difficulty applying their knowledge, for example, in explaining the reasons for population distribution.

124. Classes are well managed and there is a good climate for learning. Pupils interact well with each other so that discussions in group work are thoughtful and help pupils to learn. Lessons are carefully planned with engaging starter exercises and a good variety of tasks and activities ensuring that pupils concentrate fully. The best lessons are timed well and also have an end task which effectively reinforces the learning. Pupils' work is regularly assessed. Support materials, including very good literacy help sheets for lower attainers, are fully integrated into the curriculum and teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils' needs enable these materials to be targeted well. However, there are insufficient support materials to challenge the highest attainers.
125. Leadership and management are good. There is a very clear, shared understanding of departmental priorities and a determination to raise pupil attainment at all levels. Teamwork is a strength. The work of the department is monitored well and the performance targets set for this year are challenging. The lack of textbooks, identified as a weakness in the last inspection, has been fully addressed.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Committed and innovative subject leadership.
- Good teaching, informed by the Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- Good assessment practice gives pupils the information they need to improve their work.
- There is no systematic development of ICT across the history curriculum.

Commentary

126. In 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A* to C was well below average. A-G results, however, were in line with the national average, suggesting good provision for less able pupils. Girls performed better than boys. As yet unvalidated data for 2004 results show significant improvement. The A-C figure was still below average but many achieved grade A. The achievement trend is therefore rapidly upward.
127. By the end of Year 9, standards are below the national average but improving. This reflects good achievement, given well below average standards on entry and particularly low levels of literacy amongst lower-attaining pupils. Higher-attaining pupils show good understanding of causal reasoning and empathy in studying the causes of World War 1 and the plight of conscientious objectors. Those with SEN, and pupils for whom English is not the first language, also make good progress because of inclusive teaching. Pupils are hindered, however, by insecure understanding of the nature and limitations of historical sources. By the end of Year 11, standards are still below average but almost in line. Consequently, achievement is again good, particularly in written English, which can be seen in well-structured coursework on the Elizabethan theatre. All pupils show critical awareness of the cause and speed of change in their study of medicine over time. Lower-attaining pupils do well, because teacher expectations are high and teachers help pupils to frame their written work well. Higher attainers can demonstrate their understanding of cause and effect but are otherwise insufficiently stretched. Neither ethnicity nor gender factors have a noticeable impact on the standards achieved.
128. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all Years 7-11. It is well planned and well organised and pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly positive. Most teachers use a good variety of methods which ensure pupil engagement in learning. However, teacher presentations tend to lack visual impact and shortage of textbooks is a continuing problem. Assessment arrangements in Years 7-9, although still developing,

are very good and teachers use marking to help pupils understand how to improve their work..

129. The clearest evidence of good leadership can be found in improving examination results. The head of department has a clear vision of where she wishes to take the department and is well enough informed about recent developments in the subject to achieve this. Her leadership style ensures a strong team ethos. Management is satisfactory. Systems are well known, but there is insufficient monitoring and sharing of good practice. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory but recovery from the low point between inspections has been very good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Insufficient evidence	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good leadership and teamwork.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Relationships are good, in the main, and pupils respond well to the subject.
- Methods of assessment and collection of data need developing, in order to monitor the achievement of pupils over time.
- Use of ICT to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

130. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the GCSE short course. Just under half achieved grades of A*-C in the summer of 2004. This represents standards that are a little below the national average; however, there is a rising trend over 2003 and the previous few years.

131. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are below the expectations of the Ealing agreed syllabus for the subject. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about achievement by the end of Year 9 due to the absence of assessment data in religious education for Years 7 to 9. It has only just begun to be taught as a discrete subject since September 2004. Year 9 pupils are beginning to develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the origins, beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other principal religions of the world. Year 7 pupils consider the different images of Jesus Christ as depicted in different cultural traditions, and are encouraged to use this experience to challenge stereotypes. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 show a good understanding of the differences between the Christian and Islamic views on medical issues and matters of life and death. They also have a developing understanding of race relations and of life in a

multi-ethnic society. Analysis of pupils' notebooks during the inspection shows that achievement by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory.

132. With the exception of one unsatisfactory lesson, all lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory, with some being good. In most lessons seen, teachers are enthusiastic and committed and use a range of effective approaches in the classroom. Good lessons are well structured with imaginative starts that engage the pupils. This results in pupils of all backgrounds making equally good progress throughout the lesson. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen, pupils' attitudes are poor and behaviour is unsatisfactory. This is a barrier to learning. In some lessons, pupils would benefit from the use of artefacts and other visual aids to sustain interest and enthusiasm for longer periods. Relationships are good in the main and pupils respond well to the subject. The quality of marking is good and, in most cases, pupils have clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. However, the use of assessment for target setting and planning pupils' work is underdeveloped. Currently, most teachers lack familiarity and confidence with the criteria for assigning different levels to pupils' work and this is lessening the effectiveness of assessment. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.
133. The department is led well, providing clear vision and direction for the subject. Management is satisfactory because the recently appointed head of department has not yet had time to embed good practice throughout the teaching team. Teamwork is good and members of the department contribute well to the development of resources to support pupils' learning. There are detailed schemes of work in place with clear links to personal, social, health and citizenship education. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The focus for further improvement should be on raising the attainment of pupils from all backgrounds through developing rigorous assessment procedures and delivering teaching that is consistently effective.

TECHNOLOGY

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9.
- Good relationships contributing to good pupil achievement.
- Good teaching overall.
- Good standards of practical work.
- ICT, including computer-aided design, is not fully implemented in pupils' work.

- Only one specialism is offered in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards in resistant materials are not high enough.

Commentary

134. The 2003 GCSE results were inline with the national average for resistant materials - the only specialism offered. Results were above average for A and B grades. In 2004, the GCSE results were well below average from unvalidated data. Results have been mainly below average since the last inspection.
135. Current standards in Year 9 are below average. This, however, represents good achievement as attainment on entry is well below average in terms of design and technology experience. Good work was seen in the Year 7 desk tidy project where good three-dimensional orthographic drawings and good annotation was seen. Good work was also evident in the Year 9 cushion project, where pupils were able to adapt research ideas to suit their own and give reasons why. Weaker work is usually because of poorer presentational skills, drawings in pen and not pencil, weaker evaluations and work incomplete. Current standards in Year 11 are below average in resistant materials. There is good work, as seen in the research into different forms of lighting, where good use of ICT and freehand sketching is seen, and good investigation of materials and methods of construction. Where the work is below average, it shows lack of depth in research, ideas are not developed in depth and poorer presentational skills. Achievement is satisfactory because the majority of pupils taking the subject are mainly low-attaining boys. Practical work is usually good. There is very little use of computer-aided design in folder work.
136. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a proportion of satisfactory and very good lessons seen. In the better lessons, learning is improved because of the teaching styles used, teachers' good subject knowledge, good pace, effective use of time and good use of resources. A Year 7 lesson increased pupils' learning about the use of templates when modelling ideas and in a Year 8 lesson pupils reinforced their learning about using the sewing machine safely in preparation for making a drawstring bag in textiles. Where lessons are not as good, there can be lack of pace, rather lengthy introductions or demonstrations or situations where pupils are off task. Because they are well prepared and know the pupils well, support assistants help to maintain the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of English language acquisition, so that they achieve at a similar rate to others. In most lessons, teachers use good questioning skills and have good plenary sessions to reinforce learning. Literacy skills are well supported with good use of technical language in most lessons. Pupils can manage the numeracy skills necessary but the use of ICT, including computer-aided design, does not feature strongly in pupils' work. Marking is usually helpful and supportive but can be over generous at times. Homework is set regularly.
137. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good in the current situation where the department is led by the overall head of the arts, design and technology faculty, who is not a subject specialist in design and technology. The new accommodation offers a positive learning environment and the department is well resourced, although some equipment is yet to be put into use. The floor surfaces can be slippery and this is a potential hazard. Support and technician help is good. Some teachers in design and

technology are non-specialists but colleagues support each other well. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, given the new accommodation, good assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 and the review of the curriculum.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

ART AND DESIGN

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Specialist teachers ensure pupils achieve well.
- GCSE standards are improving.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of courses.
- Poor acoustics in teaching spaces impedes learning.

Commentary

138. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average but show a rising trend. Pupils were most successful in photography and textiles. They were least successful in fine art.
139. By the end of Year 9, pupils' standards are below average, indicating at least satisfactory achievement since many pupils enter the school with well below average standards in the subject. Throughout Years 7 to 11, there are no significant differences in the standards and achievement of pupils according to gender, ethnicity or special educational need. Talented artists do well. Pupils develop confidence in a range of practical skills. During the inspection, particularly effective work was seen in textiles (felt making), photography (poster design) and sculpture. Drawing skills are variable in quality in all years. Sketchbooks are well used to collate and research ideas but are often marred by untidy presentation or weaknesses in literacy. Knowledge of artists and styles studied is often restricted and pupils are diffident at evaluating art products.
140. Throughout Years 7 to 11, teachers provide well-planned and progressive lessons that ensure pupils develop an unusually wide range of practical skills. Lessons are highly supportive, well disciplined and stimulating, enabling pupils to develop an enjoyment and enthusiasm for art. Pupils with special needs are well supported by the frequent individual attention offered by the staff of this unusually large department. A good range of resources is effectively used to enhance learning. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are insufficiently challenged in those lessons where teachers accept a modest pace of working. Opportunities are missed for incisive questions to ensure pupils fully

understand work set. Pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing or how they might improve further.

141. There is a clear vision for the department that is enthusiastically shared by all teachers. Good management ensures all teachers' views are valued and a rich, imaginative curriculum is available to pupils. Teachers provide good role models for pupils. The unsatisfactory acoustics of most art teaching spaces currently restricts teachers' oral delivery and pupils' reception of key information. There are currently insufficient computers in the art and design ICT suite to enable all groups to be taught effectively. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The focus for further improvement should be on course evaluation and assessment. This could help to consolidate the direction of the department and raise standards further.

DRAMA

Three lessons were seen in drama, which is taught as a discrete subject. From this very limited observation, provision in drama is **very good**.

142. Results in GCSE drama in 2003 were below the national average overall, but boys attained standards in line with national figures. Over time, there has been no consistent pattern in the relative performance of boys and girls, however.
143. In Years 7 and 8, pupils were seen to be working at a level above national expectations, indicating very good achievement. They co-operate very well in preparation and performance. Their evaluations show perception and increasingly thorough knowledge of technique and dramatic impact. In Year 11, the pupils preparing for GCSE are also achieving above average standards in performance and evaluation.
144. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to instill confidence and self-discipline in pupils of all ages and abilities. Lessons are very well planned and managed, building up pupils' skills and knowledge. High expectations of behaviour and performance lead to very good achievement. The frequent experience of pair and group work develops pupils' social skills, and they work together very productively. Effective modelling by teachers stimulates the pupils to aim for high standards in performance, which they frequently achieve. They clearly enjoy their drama, so they concentrate very well and are pleased when they succeed. They show respect for other pupils' performances and are generous in their evaluations. Drama is a very inclusive subject, enabling pupils with special needs and those for whom English is not the home language to be fully involved and achieve success. Talented pupils are also given scope to develop their skills. The scheme of work provides a very good balance between improvised drama and working from texts. Pupils' learning is enriched by theatre visits that include meeting professionals and taking part in workshops. Extra-curricular productions make a valued contribution to the cultural life of the school. The facilities for drama are very good already; when fully resourced with lighting, sound and curtains, they will be excellent. From the strong base reported in the last inspection, improvement has been good.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Because of good teaching, pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- Pupils from diverse cultures collaborate well together and feel valued.
- Many pupils learn to play instruments, which supports their work in the class.
- Although pupils use digital keyboards, access to computers is limited.
- Assessment is used regularly but levels are not always understood.

Commentary

145. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 matched previous years and were above average, with all pupils gaining a pass grade. The numbers gaining higher grades, however, dipped below average. Boys performed better than girls. There was no course running in 2004 because of insufficient numbers.
146. The standards seen are broadly average in Years 9 and 11. Because many pupils enter Year 7 with underdeveloped musical skills, this represents good achievement. However, two talented violinists in Year 7 have achieved very well by passing their grade 5 practical examination. Standards are rising because of the good quality of teaching taking place. As pupils of all abilities and cultures work well together, this makes a good contribution towards their personal development. About 150 pupils learn to play the usual school instruments but some are also learning to play sitar, tabla and harmonium. Many pupils take part in musical activities after school, which builds up their self-esteem and complements the work done in lessons.
147. Because teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good overall, pupils are inspired to do well. The pace, challenge and management of pupils ensures that they are motivated and work hard. No pupils were seen using computers but pupils regularly use digital keyboards that have editing and recording facilities. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are encouraged to develop their musical ideas and, because of the good teaching, many succeed in improving their composing and performing techniques. The pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour support their learning, as does the very good accommodation and resources. Marking and assessment are done regularly but some levels and grades are too generous and pupils are not always sure what they mean.
148. The department is managed well: very clear vision and direction is provided. There has been good improvement made since the previous inspection and both standards and the quality of teaching have improved. The focus for further improvement should be on achieving a better understanding of national assessment criteria.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision for the future.
- Teaching is consistently good and students learn well as a result.
- Though below average, standards are improving significantly.
- There are no opportunities for students take the full course GCSE examination.
- Much teaching time is lost travelling between the school and the playing field.

Commentary

149. The most recent teacher assessment indicates that the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 9 was well below average. There was no significant difference in standards between boys and girls or among different groups of pupils. The school has not offered physical education at GCSE level for several years.
150. Standards in the present Year 9 are below average, but they are higher in Years 7 and 8. Younger pupils are beginning to acquire and develop specific dance routines showing a range of clear techniques and individual expression. Pupils in Year 11 are now reaching average standards in indoor games, including basketball and badminton. Some individual pupils and school teams reach above average standards in football, rounders, athletics and basketball. Standards in the last two or three years have been adversely affected by the lack of access to facilities during the building work and, until this year, a shortage of curriculum time. Given their starting point and the ongoing problems caused by the disruption, the achievement of most pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity or special need, is good.
151. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are good. In some lessons, teaching and learning are very good. Lesson objectives are made clear, key words are explained and reinforced, tasks set are challenging but realistic. Relationships are positive and good-humoured, activities are well organised and pupils learn well as a result. In some lessons, pupils are given opportunities to show initiative, for example, by leading warm-up activities or acting as coaches or referees. Levels of participation are good and most pupils enjoy the subject. At present, curriculum opportunities are restricted because the outdoor facilities have not yet been built. The school does not offer the GCSE examination as a full course as part of the option choices. A considerable amount of teaching time is lost in travelling to and from the games field. The antiquated changing facilities at the distant playing field are in an appalling condition and cannot be used.

152. The department is being managed well in the current difficult circumstances. Leadership is very good. There is a strong team spirit among the staff and a clear determination to move forward once the new facilities are in place. Good improvement in the last year has seen the opening of the new sports hall. There has been a significant increase in curriculum time, which is now in line with government recommendations. The GCSE short course has just been introduced for all pupils in Year 10. The focus for further improvement should be on continuing to raise standards, offering GCSE as a full course and reviewing the curriculum content once the new outdoor facilities become available.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	N/A	Average
Achievement	N/A	Good
Teaching and Learning	N/A	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Insufficient evidence	
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are starting to recover now that there are sufficient specialist staff.
- Teaching is always good or better, especially as regards encouraging, focusing and challenging the pupils.
- There is much good practice in the teachers' assessment of learning.
- There is little use of computers to improve the quality of teaching and of learning.

Commentary

153. Until 2002, GCSE results were good in comparison with the national average, and getting better, and boys achieved much better than girls. In the last two years, due to staffing difficulties, results fell well below national standards and the success rate of boys fell sharply compared to that of girls. There are now signs of improvement.

154. Pupils enter Year 10 classes in business studies with a below average knowledge of the world of work and business practice and somewhat restricted vocabulary. Most are, however, determined to work hard; in doing so, they make good progress. Thus, even quite early in Year 10, most are gaining some grasp of the main business types and the main business functions, with a few being able to apply such ideas to small local firms. Most, too, enjoy the subject and the varied activities; however, those who find learning about business to be easy are less well stretched and can become bored. On present performance, most of these pupils, regardless of gender, are likely to attain the GCSE target grade C or to surpass it.

155. The quality of the pupils' learning on the GCSE course is overall good – they work hard and learn well. This particularly follows the teachers' strong encouragement of them, high expectation of them, and great challenge: most accept that challenge willingly, and as the pupils' attitudes are positive, they rarely become inattentive.

Lessons move fast and involve a good range of activities and resources, except that there is too little use of computers and modern communications, for instance, websites and spreadsheets, both in and out of lessons. Pupils with additional learning needs are provided with additional support by the class teacher, but this is sometimes at the expense of the rest of the class. Assessment is not consistent, but there is some unusually good practice emerging. This involves the use of clear objectives, leading to targeted assessment, to effective evaluation and eventually to the effective matching of teaching to the needs of all pupils in each class. The plans to spread this throughout the department are to be welcomed.

156. The current subject leader has shaped the subject's recovery by fast forming a closely knit team with a realistic vision, sharing good practice, and leading by example. Consideration now needs to be given to how to maximise the effective use of computers and communications by teachers and pupils, and to ensure that the accommodation is more conducive to learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school's plans for citizenship are now progressing satisfactorily but statutory requirements are not yet met.
- The school does not include citizenship in annual written reports to parents, which is a statutory requirement.
- Assessment of attainment and progress is not sufficiently consistent or systematic.
- The School Council provides pupils with good opportunities to develop a sense of responsible participation.
- Pupils are given good opportunities for discussion and debate.
- There is no up-to-date audit about the contribution made by other subjects.
- Pupils are not always clear about what citizenship involves and when they are studying it.

Commentary

157. Teacher assessment in 2004 indicates that the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 9 was broadly in line with national expectations. There was no significant difference in standards between boys and girls or among different groups of pupils.
158. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards and achievement because citizenship lessons for the whole school did not take place during the inspection, nor was a sufficient amount of written work available for scrutiny. In the one lesson observed in Year 11, where a small number of lower-attaining pupils are following the GCSE short course, standards were below average. Most pupils were able to comment sensibly about the role of special interest groups, using a topical local issue as their starting point. The majority of pupils in the class are on the register of special educational needs. Their achievement is good and most are on course to obtain a pass grade.
159. In the one lesson observed, teaching and learning were good. The teacher knew the pupils very well and catered for their individual needs very effectively. Objectives were realistic and the teacher had produced clear and appropriate resources. Citizenship is taught throughout the school by form tutors on a weekly basis as part of the PSHCE programme. Aspects of citizenship are reinforced in some tutor periods but this delivery is uneven. Whilst opportunities are sometimes missed, there were good examples seen in both Year 7 and Year 11 of citizenship topics being the main focus of the session. Some teachers provide good opportunities for discussion and debate. It is the school's intention that citizenship is also taught through other subjects. Citizenship is clearly identified in some schemes of work, for example, religious education. Elements of citizenship are evident in drama, geography and mathematics, but because these are not included in schemes of work, delivery is not consistent and the three strands of the National Curriculum requirement are not reflected. There is no up-to-date audit about the contribution that other subjects can and do make

towards increasing the pupils' knowledge of citizenship. Pupils are not always clear about what citizenship involves and when they are studying it.

160. There are examples of good practice. The way in which the School Council was elected and is organised provides pupils with practical opportunities to develop a sense of responsible participation, together with an understanding of a democratic process in action. The local Member of Parliament visited the school and was questioned by pupils. Some pupils take part in external projects and fund-raising activities, but these experiences are not undertaken by all.

161. The teacher with responsibility for citizenship has been in post for only a few weeks. A satisfactory start has been made in identifying what is in place and what needs to be done. The development plan rightly focuses on reviewing the current assessment arrangements. At present, these do not follow the recommended guidelines and are not sufficiently consistent or systematic. There is a need to provide staff with training about the distinctive nature of the subject and to improve existing resources. The school is currently not meeting its statutory requirement to include citizenship in annual written reports to parents, and this is unsatisfactory.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, nine 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	10	60.0	80.1	0	23.7	17.0	29.9
Biology	5	60.0	65.2	0	11.1	14.0	20.6
Business studies	1	100	76.4	0	16.3	20.0	26.2
Chemistry	10	50.0	72.7	0	13.9	19.0	24.1
Communication studies	2	100	86.4	0	23.8	35.0	32.0
Drama	4	50.0	86.5	0	19.6	12.5	30.6
English/English language	5	100	82.9	20.0	17.5	38.0	28.7
English literature	1	100	85.9	0	19.1	20.0	30.2
French	1	100	78.2	100	18.9	50.0	27.6
Geography	1	100	74.3	0	19.8	20.0	26.5
History	1	0	80.7	0	19.5	0	28.6
Information and communication technology	12	41.7	67.0	16.7	10.9	15.0	21.4
Mathematics	7	42.9	61.9	0	17.1	14.3	22.1
Music	2	100	86.5	0	21.4	25.0	30.7

Physics	1	100	68.6	0	14.4	30	22.7
Sociology	2	100	71.8	50.0	18.4	40.0	25.4

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	12	100	98.6	25.0	50.2	81.7	87.5
Biology	9	100	96.4	0	39.2	57.8	78.6
Business studies	2	100	98.7	0	36.8	80	80.1
Chemistry	6	100	97.6	16.7	49.0	66.7	84.9
Communication studies	10	100	99.4	20.0	37.8	86.0	82.1
Drama	7	100	99.5	28.6	40.1	77.1	83.6
English/English language	7	100	99.4	57.1	36.3	97.1	80.9
English literature	5	100	99.5	20.0	46.5	80.0	86.5
French	1	100	98.8	100	51.5	120	87.6
Geography	5	100	98.7	80.0	44.5	96.0	84.0
History	9	100	99.0	33.3	44.6	82.2	84.6
Information and communication technology	6	100	95.6	50.0	24.6	96.7	69.5
Mathematics	15	100	96.7	86.7	55.6	102.7	88.8
Other languages	1	100	96.9	100	64.5	120	93.8
Physics	11	100	96.7	36.4	44.6	83.6	81.7
Sociology	10	100	98.2	40.0	44.3	78.0	83.6
Spanish	1	100	98.3	100	50.2	100	86.9
Business VCE	13	100	65.0	7.7	14.6	69.2	60.1
Health and Social Care VCE	6	100	67.7	16.7	14.5	73.3	63.5
Art and design VQ	5	100	69.3	60.0	23.8	88.0	70.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was the focus of the inspection, and lessons were sampled in **media studies** and in **French**. In media studies, teaching is good, and the most capable students achieve high standards in producing original websites, films and publications. Standards overall are above average at A-Level and average at AS, indicating good achievement during the course. In French, teaching was good in both the lessons seen. Standards are average in Year 13, but Year 12 students have not, as yet, developed sufficient confidence in their own language skills.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	

Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to good achievement in both literature and language studies.
- In most lessons, students are actively engaged in their learning.
- Students have a positive attitude towards the subject.

COMMENTARY

162. In 2003, A-Level results were well above the national average in language and average in literature. AS Level results in language in 2003 were also well above average; numbers in literature were too small for national comparisons to be made, although all students achieved a pass grade. Similar results were attained in 2004. Over time, results in both subjects have improved.
163. In Year 13 work seen during the inspection, standards were in line with the national average in both language and literature. Since students studying both subjects had below the usual prior attainment for the courses, achievement in both subjects has been good. Students in Year 12 are still working below national average, reflecting their prior attainment, but good progress was seen in lessons at this early stage of the course. In the language course, the students in Year 12 showed growing confidence in analysing the persuasive techniques in a charity leaflet. In Year 13, three groups of language students successfully wrote three texts for different purposes and readerships. In a Year 13 literature lesson, the students showed good awareness of the literary and social context of William Blake's poetry. In their written work, these students organise their ideas well and support their argument with apposite and well-embedded quotations.
164. Teachers' good subject knowledge gives students confidence in them. In a few lessons, this knowledge should be more fully shared; in a few others, they should be given more scope to think for themselves. In the majority of lessons, however, they are given good opportunities to work together independently to develop their own ideas and judgements. Students work hard and most of them are willing to contribute to discussions and group activities. Some are reluctant to express their ideas in an extended way, but they all listen to each other's ideas with respect. Overall, they have a positive attitude to English, and they value the subject for its interest, usefulness and the opportunities it gives for success. They are given clear guidance on the examination requirements, and marking always includes helpful advice to which they respond well, improving their work. They make good use of Internet sources to increase their knowledge of the background of set books in literature and of research in language.
165. The staff responsible for sixth-form courses work effectively together and all groups benefit from the experience and expertise of two teachers. The focus for further improvement should be on involving all students actively in their learning and encouraging independent study.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

166. In nearly all subjects, students' communication skills are at least adequate for study at AS and A-Level, although in information and communication technology, standards in word-processing are below average.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and students learn well.
- Students are well motivated and work hard.
- The provision is well managed.
- The use of ICT needs to be developed to support learning.

Commentary

167. In the GCE A-level examination in 2003, the results were well above the national average. All students gained a grade and more than four fifths gained a grade A or B. The group was mainly made up of boys and their performance was much better than the girls'. These results are an improvement on the previous year. In 2004, there was a very small number of students who entered the examination, all gained a grade and three quarters gained a grade A.

168. In the AS level examination in 2003, the results were below the national average and worse than the previous two years' results. There was no AS level examination in 2004 as it has been deferred to January 2005.

169. The standards of work seen in the sixth form are above the national average. Students are making progress because of effective teaching. The students' competent algebraic skills enable them to cope with the differentiation and integration work. Good clear diagrams in statistics and mechanics helped the students to answer questions with understanding.

170. Teaching is nearly all good and students learn well as a result. Lessons are well planned. The pace at which the work is undertaken is well matched to the needs of the students. Questioning is skilful; the students answer questions confidently with a good level of understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they give clear explanations. On the one occasion teaching was less than good, the pace was too slow and the variety of activities insufficient. Much of the written work demanded of students takes the form of questions, which test the students' understanding. Homework is set regularly, together with tests and examination questions. This work is marked in a detailed way to help students make progress in their understanding.

Students in Year 13 were using graphical calculators, but there is a need to develop further the use of information and communication technology. Students find the work interesting and challenging. They are aware of their progress and predicted grades and recognise and appreciate the help and support given by the teachers. Relationships between students and teachers are very good.

171. Work is well managed in the sixth form. Staff co-operate in the planning and work well together under the good leadership given by the head of department. Teachers know individual students' strengths and weaknesses well.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

172. Students' mathematical skills enable them to achieve well in other subjects studied, for example, biology, geography and business studies.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was on biology, and physics was sampled via one lesson observation and a scrutiny of work. Standards are above average, the result of very good teaching.

BIOLOGY

Provision in biology is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Very good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers' knowledge of biology and effective planning to meet their individual needs enables students to make good progress and to achieve well relative to their prior attainments.
- Very good relationships and very positive student attitudes to learning are significant to their achievements and to improving standards.
- The availability of textbooks to support students' homework and independent learning is unsatisfactory.

COMMENTARY

173. 2003 AS results were below and A2 well below average when compared with the results for all students in maintained schools. Female students did better than males. These results were not as good as in 2002 when AS results were high when compared with students in maintained schools. Unconfirmed 2004 results are improved again for both AS and A2, thus continuing the fluctuating pattern of results over recent years.
174. Most students in Year 12 are achieving the higher expectations of the AS course at levels appropriate to their prior attainment, though some lower-attaining students have found the transition from GCSE difficult. Most research well, recording only key information from texts. Higher-attaining students bring a very good level of prior knowledge and understanding to lessons and discuss their work well. There is a similar picture in Year 13, with most students displaying a good level of practical skills, being able to relate their work well to everyday situations. Their literacy and numeracy skills support them well and they use ICT very well when researching and when making presentations. Most students display very positive attitudes to their work. They support each other well and are confident that they will achieve their ambitions at the school.
175. Teachers set high standards that are significant to students achieving well. They are very well qualified and plan well, and are working hard to make very good use of resources for effective learning. Teaching, and its impact on students, is much

enhanced by the use made of new interactive whiteboards to enrich lessons. They have high expectations and support their students very well, sharing assessment data with them so that they know how well they are doing. Students are well challenged but teachers do not use questioning to engage them sufficiently in the design process and in forming hypotheses during theory work.

176. There is a clear vision and a sense of purpose focused upon raising standards and a strong commitment to supporting future visions for the school. Rigorous monitoring of performance data triggers appropriate action. Teachers are very well deployed to biology. Accommodation is now very good and there is a good level of appropriate learning resources, but there are insufficient textbooks to ensure that all students are well supported with homework and in their independent learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The school's provision of information and communication technology (ICT) in the sixth form was sampled, and was judged to be **good**.

177. On the whole, the ICT-related skills, knowledge and understanding of students entering the sixth-form courses is below average, but the end results are average or, especially in the AVCE course, sometimes better than average. The students learn fast and achieve well, and none has failed to reach a pass grade in recent years. However, numbers have generally been small and the number of students discontinuing their studies during Year 12 has been a cause for concern.
178. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons move along quickly and there is plenty of variety in what the students do. However, the teachers' expectations and challenge of the students are not as high as those in the main school. Additionally, the students do not develop well in terms of the independent and collaborative learning skills which are more and more important as they approach higher education and the world of work.

ICT across the curriculum

179. There is, so far, no attempt to monitor the use of computers and communications to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the sixth form, nor is there any key skills teaching in these areas. Whilst students following formal courses in the subject make good progress as regards their skills, knowledge and understanding, and sometimes apply what they learn in their work in other subjects, the ICT competence of the majority of sixth formers is unsatisfactory. As a result, they rarely use computers to improve the quality of their learning, and are not well prepared for the needs they will face after they finish at school.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were inspected. In both areas, standards were above average and students achieved well.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers' very good knowledge of their subject and of the demands of the examination enables them to set high standards for their students.
- The very good working relationships between students and teachers encourage good debate and, as a result, students explore ideas and concepts thoroughly.
- Students have a very good attitude to their work so that their personal research is completed to a very high standard.
- Regular assessments give students an accurate knowledge of their achievement and of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

180. In 2003, results in the A-Level examinations were well above average. It is not possible to make national comparisons for 2004 but unconfirmed results suggest that students achieved very well when compared with their prior attainment.
181. By Year 13, all students, including those for whom English is not their first language and those with special needs, are confident learners, competently using ICT to research and to produce well written reports. Portfolios of work indicate that case studies are used well to augment essays, for example, on population distribution, weather phenomena and the causes and effects of global warming. Students put their sound geographical skills to good use when analysing geographical models and graphs. They respond well to their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. Class discussions are very good as ideas flow freely between students and teacher.
182. Good teaching ensures that students have a good balance of learning opportunities. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to constantly widen students' understanding by asking challenging questions in classroom discussion. Their up-to-date understanding of the demands of the A-Level examination ensures that students are well prepared. Teachers have high expectations of their students. As a result, case studies and reports are fully researched and responses to practice examination questions are detailed and accurate. Assignments are regularly marked and often graded to examination levels. Focused comments ensure that students are fully aware of their strengths and of what they need to do better. Students are appreciative of their teachers and confident in the support they receive.
183. Good leadership and management are ensuring consistently good teaching in the sixth form. Examination results are thoroughly analysed so that teachers can make the best use of the professional development opportunities offered by the examination boards to the benefit of the students. Since the last inspection, the department's high standard of performance has been maintained.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Innovative, student-centred teaching in Year 12.
- Good quality of essay works in Year 13.
- Good practice in the monitoring and assessment of students' work.
- Lack of consistency in teaching approaches.

COMMENTARY

184. Standards achieved in external examinations in 2003 were in line with the national average. According to unvalidated data for 2004, standards rose slightly but were still broadly in line with the average.
185. Standards seen in Years 12 and 13 are slightly above national expectations, showing good achievement, when compared with students' GCSE results. Students in Year 12 can select, analyse and deploy information to form judgements and test hypotheses. For example, they can analyse Fascist policies in Italy in 1919 and evaluate them in terms of relative popularity with the electorate; they then carry out the same analysis for 1921, noting changes in both policies and prevailing situation, in order to explain how and why the Fascists were successful in 1921 but not in 1919. Students in Year 13 produce well-structured, analytical essays. For example, in work exploring the extent to which Henry VII's reign marked a turning point in financial administration, they understand that they must first consider critically the prior achievements of Edward IV. In work on Stalinist Russia, they show some understanding of how and why historians' interpretations of events may differ, but need to deepen their appreciation of the historian's own context when evaluating secondary sources.
186. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching in Year 12 is particularly well-planned, well informed and innovative, recognising that variation in method and encouragement of students to become independent learners is as effective in the sixth form as elsewhere in the school. It is also inclusive, recognising that critical analysis needs to be well structured for students of differing abilities. In Year 13, where teaching is less inventive, students respond well enough but are less involved in the process of learning itself. The progress made by individual students is well monitored and the assessment of their written work meticulous. Relationships are very good.
187. The subject is well led and well managed in the sixth form. The head of department offers strong subject leadership and is determined, through strong teamwork, to build

on the successes of the last two years. The focus for further improvement should be on building more consistency into teaching approaches, through monitoring and the sharing of good practice.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design and music were focus subjects for the inspection. Lessons were sampled in media studies, where provision is **good**.

ART AND DESIGN

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Students achieve well because of good teaching.
- Students are very well prepared for further study.
- The quality and range of curriculum enrichment is outstanding.
- Students lack a dedicated workspace.

COMMENTARY

188. A-level results in 2003 were in line with national averages. All students secured a grade at A2, and half gained grade A or B. Results show a rising trend, especially in vocational courses.

189. The work seen during inspection was average across the wide range of courses offered. This represents good achievement, given the diverse range of standards at the start of the courses. Drawing skills develop significantly in work on the human body because of the provision made for life drawing classes. Design work on natural forms shows incisive research, well recorded in sketchbooks, building effectively towards final pieces in a range of media. Work in textiles and ceramics shows imagination in the assimilation of contemporary trends. Students can discuss their ideas with increasing confidence and relate their work to a range of artists. A minority of students is diffident in critical evaluation work and written work is marred by weaknesses in standards of literacy. There are no differences in the achievement of students according to gender or ethnicity. Talented students achieve well.

190. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students benefit significantly from the many teachers who are practising artists. Frequent individual tuition is available to extend students' practical skills. The imaginative range of teaching approaches provides a particularly good preparation for higher education courses. Expectations are high, particularly in the demands made on students to explore contemporary work through gallery visits and working with a range of visiting artists. Assessment is

rigorous, and weekly targets are set and monitored. Consequently, students know how well they are doing and how they might improve further.

191. Departmental leadership is very good. There is a strong vision for art education shared by all the teachers. Visual Arts College status has enabled an outstanding range of curriculum enrichment, including numerous projects with national and international galleries and colleges. Art makes a significant contribution to students' cultural education. The exceptional range of integrated courses and the use of the new premises are well managed. The department is already seeking to address the current issues, in particular the lack of a dedicated art space for the sixth form and the serious problems created by the poor acoustics of the main teaching areas. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. The focus for further improvement should be on ICT provision for art and design outside the dedicated ICT suite.

Music

Provision in music and music technology is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The teaching is good and encourages students to learn well.
- The introduction of music technology has been popular with students.
- Students are highly motivated and their attitudes are very good.
- There is a need to raise further the standards of those who have not previously done a music course.
- The recording studio is not yet equipped and this inhibits students' learning.

Commentary

192. The AS music results in 2003 were above average and all students gained a pass grade. In 2004, the pass rate was below average. The three A2 students all passed in 2004 and one student, now studying music at university, gained a higher grade. Female students generally do better than male students. The music technology course is in its first year and has not been examined yet.

193. Standards in work seen for both courses in Years 12 and 13 are broadly average. This is good achievement, particularly as the popular music technology course attracts students who have not done music before. Because students take part in the extra-curricular activities, this adds value to their musical experience. Students speak highly of their courses and would recommend them to others. All four of the A2 music students are considering taking an arts-related course when they leave school.

194. Teaching is good and students improve their learning because lessons are challenging and well planned. However, as the recording studio is not yet fully equipped, music technology students are restricted to working on digital keyboards to develop their sequencing, recording and arranging skills. The good teaching of the music course enables students to develop their ability in performing and composing. They make critical judgements about styles and structures and work hard to improve aural skills and general musical knowledge. The assessment of students' work gives them a good indication of their present performance and likely grades.
195. The department is well managed and clear vision and direction is provided. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection – standards are higher and the quality of teaching is much improved. The focus for further improvement should be on widening opportunities for music technology students.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are starting to recover now that staffing shortages have been overcome.
- Teaching is consistently good, especially as regards encouraging, focusing and challenging the students.
- Students' work is not adequately evaluated against specific learning objectives.
- There are major barriers to the access to ICT in lessons and the students' progress is restricted as a result.

Commentary

196. In recent years, the numbers of students entered for the various sixth-form courses in business studies have varied significantly, as has the balance between male and female students. The success rate has varied from year to year. In the AVCE course, where the number of students is highest, the proportion of students reaching the highest grades of A or B has increased fairly steadily. Results in the sixth form are average overall.
197. The students' work in and out of lessons, as assessed during the inspection, broadly supports those findings. The proportion of students not continuing to examination level is above average, but most are keen to work hard and do well, and both male and female students mature quickly and reach average standards in almost all aspects of business studies. Their grasp of financial management and accounting practice is particularly good.

198. Students work hard because expectations are high, and teachers provide every encouragement. The pace and variety of styles in lessons are good, and homework is well used to help the students gain familiarity with the various skills and concepts at a high rate. In most sixth-form classes, however, only a minority of students seem keen to contribute. Because of this, their learning can be rather passive, and consequently, not as effective.
199. Of the three teachers who contribute to sixth-form work in business studies, only one is a qualified teacher in the subject. However, this situation is having no negative impact on quality because the subject leader, in the school briefly on a temporary basis, has worked very hard to produce a caring, focused and effective team, and sets a very good example. A major management problem is that only one of the two business studies rooms is provided with computers, leading to too little use of computers to improve teaching and learning, and accommodation is cramped.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

200. Health and social care courses were sampled. One lesson was observed in Year 12 and one in Year 13. Teaching and learning are good and students are achieving well. GNVQ students in Year 12 were able to comment on concepts like diversity and equality with some accuracy, but were less confident when considering individual rights and responsibilities. In Year 13, where students are studying at AVCE level, they needed considerable prompting from their teacher to recall their earlier work on Piaget's stages of cognitive development. Most students in both groups appear to lack confidence when asked to make oral contributions, whilst their written work is much better. In Year 13 in particular, several students have produced portfolio work of a very good standard. They are on course to obtain similar results to those of 2003, which were above the national average.

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

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