

INSPECTION REPORT

CARSHALTON BOYS SPORTS COLLEGE

Carshalton

LEA area: Sutton

Unique reference number: 102998

Headteacher: Mr S Barber

Lead inspector: Mr T Feast

Dates of inspection: 20th - 23rd September 2004

Inspection number: 268769

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Modern (non-selective) |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 11 - 18 |
| Gender of pupils: | Male |
| Number on roll: | 1067 |
| School address: | Winchcombe Road Carshalton Surrey |
| Postcode: | SM5 1RW |
| Telephone number: | (0208) 644 7325 |
| Fax number: | (0208) 641 8721 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr R Collier |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1 st February 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Carshalton Boys Sports College is an average-sized non-selective school for students aged 11 - 18 in a local education authority (LEA), which selects students for its schools on the basis of prior attainment. The school is now a popular choice with parents and has continued to grow since the last inspection. The attainment of the students on entry to the school varies and is well below the national average for the current Year 7, but the roll does include boys whose attainment is in line with or above the national average. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is above that found nationally. The school serves parts of Sutton with significant concentrations of social deprivation. The students come from a wide variety of home circumstances but overall the circumstances are well below those found nationally. The number of students with mother tongues not believed to be English is higher than in most schools, but the number eligible for additional support is very small. The percentage of students identified by the school as having special educational needs is above the national average. The range includes those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The percentage of students provided with statements of special educational needs by the LEA is above the national average. The school has identified a very small number of students from traveller families on its roll. There are a very small number of students who are identified as refugees or asylum seekers. The number of students who are in public care is very low. The number of students transferring to and from the school other than at the planned time of admission in September is relatively small. There has been a reduction in the turnover of teaching staff in 2004 but over previous years turnover has been high and recruitment to posts, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, has been difficult. There has been a considerable turnover of middle managers in the last two years. The school works as a specialist Sports College in partnership with other local schools and was designated a Training School in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|
| 3650 | T Feast | Lead inspector | |
| 12682 | J Griffin | Lay inspector | |
| 20527 | B King | Team inspector | Mathematics |
| 30648 | B Skelton | Team inspector | English |
| 32878 | S Goldsmith | Team inspector | Science Physics in the sixth form |
| 15277 | C Vidler | Team inspector | Information and communication technology |
| 7084 | J Haslam | Team inspector | Design and technology |
| 31688 | B McGonagle | Team inspector | Art and design Citizenship |
| 30114 | A Kenward | Team inspector | Geography |
| 15576 | D Nebesnuick | Team inspector | History |
| 33242 | S Wall | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages |
| 11672 | P Harle | Team inspector | Music |
| 15312 | K Lord | Team inspector | Physical education |
| 12179 | L Moscrop | Team inspector | Religious education |
| 3731 | W Robson | Team inspector | Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Carshalton Boys Sports College is an effective and improving school, which gives satisfactory value for money. The headteacher and leadership team have been successful in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- The school's commitment to providing a positive experience for all students is very good.
- The literacy skills of the students are poor overall and this hinders their learning.
- The students' capacity to work collaboratively and independently is unsatisfactory.
- The inconsistency in the setting of quality homework, the planning for different capabilities in classes and the assessing of students' work to show how to improve are unsatisfactory.
- There is a lack of consistency across subjects in supporting the development of students' skills with information and communications technology (ICT) in Years 10 and 11.
- The school involves students very well and seeks and acts on their views constructively.

The school was last inspected in February 1999. Since then the **improvement has been good**. The school has made good progress in developing effective systems for monitoring and supporting teaching, which has had a positive impact. The improvement in the quality of curriculum planning is good, which has helped to improve students' learning. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the use of the learning resource centre. The improvement in the use of ICT to improve the quality of teaching has been good, but it is not yet consistent across all subjects. There has been a good improvement in the quality of accommodation, although some curriculum areas are still in temporary accommodation. Teaching time in Years 10 and 11 has increased and is in line with national guidelines. Health and safety issues in design and technology have been resolved. Sufficient time is provided for religious education in Years 10 and 11.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance | | all schools | | | similar schools |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| Year 11 | GCSE/GNVQ examinations | n/a | E | E | C |
| Year 13 | A/AS-level and VCE examinations | E | E* | E* | n/a |

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - very low.*

Similar schools are those where similar percentages of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 11, students attain standards well below those nationally but standards have improved since 2000. The percentage of students who gained five or more passes at grades A*-C rose from 23 per cent in 2000 to 30 per cent in 2003 and the improvement continued in 2004. The trend in improvement is in line with the national trend. The achievement of students is satisfactory. In work seen in Year 11 during the inspection there were departmental variations. In English, attainment was above the national expectation: in science and mathematics, it was below. In ICT, music, physical education, history, geography, citizenship and design and technology,

attainment was in line with national expectations. In religious education and modern foreign languages, it was below.

By the end of Year 9, students attain levels that are well below the national average. In work seen during the inspection attainment was below national expectations in English, mathematics and science, ICT, modern foreign languages and geography. It was in line with national expectations in music, history, physical education, citizenship and design and technology. It was well below in religious education. While the results in national tests since 1999 have shown an improvement, the trend is below the national trend. The improvement seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 11 is linked to the improved stability of staffing and its effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress against their personal targets, as do the students with English as an additional language. The achievement of students from minority ethnic groups is in line with that made by students overall.

The quality of students' personal development, through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Attitudes and behaviour are good, although a small minority of students have poor attitudes and behaviour. Students' attendance is in line with national figures.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning across Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. During the inspection much teaching that was good or better was seen and this reflects an improvement on the quality demonstrated in last year's monitoring and evaluation audits. There is an inconsistency in the planning to meet the varying needs of all students across departments. There is an inconsistency between departments in the quality of homework, the assessment of students' work and the guidance given to students on how to improve.

The curriculum overall is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are not met for religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in ICT in Years 10 and 11. The requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not fully met. The partnership with parents, local schools and the community is good overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Governance is satisfactory. Management of the school is good. There is a positive ethos in relation to standards, the valuing of all, the quality of teaching and the personal development of students.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are very satisfied with many aspects of the school's provision but some concerns were raised, including the standard of behaviour of some students, the incidence of bullying and the quality of homework. Most parents are positive that where there is bullying, it is tackled well. Students are very positive about the school. Some expressed concern about the behaviour of others, the incidence of bullying and the quality and regularity of the setting of homework. The team agrees with the parents about the setting of homework and thinks that the

school deals effectively with the poor behaviour of the small minority who transgress and where incidents of bullying take place.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To plan consistently to improve the students' literacy skills.
- To set homework which consistently extends students' learning.
- To plan consistently to meet the differing needs of students in all lessons, especially those with special educational needs.
- To plan consistently to develop students' skills in working independently and collaboratively.

and, to meet the statutory requirements:

- For collective worship for all and religious education in Years 7 to 9.
- For ICT for all in Years 10 and 11.

THE SIXTH FORM AT CARSHALTON BOYS SPORTS COLLEGE

There are 114 students in the sixth form, making it smaller than the average sixth form nationally. Most students join from within the school. Currently the majority study a range of academic courses to AS levels, with a much smaller number progressing to Advanced Level. A range of vocational courses has recently been introduced. As a result, the numbers in Year 12 are significantly larger than in Year 13, with a growing number of students taking a mixture of academic and vocational courses. To date, effective collaboration with local schools has been limited in terms of shared or linked provision. There are very few students with special educational needs or English as an additional language in the sixth form.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students. Standards on entry are below those typically found. The retention rate within the sixth form is **unsatisfactory**, with significant student mobility in Years 12 and 13. The majority of students who remain proceed to higher education. A growing proportion of students are taking advantage of the new vocational courses to broaden their qualifications. Students play a satisfactory part in school life. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Whilst leadership at departmental level is good, the sixth form leadership has been slow to convert the school leadership's vision into courses that match the needs of its intake and this is unsatisfactory. The sixth form is cost effective overall and provides satisfactory value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The sixth form leadership is not sufficiently strategic in its work.
- Attendance levels are good.
- Students have good attitudes and behave very well.

- Students are well supported and receive good academic advice and guidance in relation to careers and future courses.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently developed or tailored to meet the diverse needs of students.
- The sixth form does not meet the statutory requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship or access to religious education.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected. The focus subjects were English, mathematics, physics, physical education, engineering and information and communication technology (ICT).

| Curriculum area | Evaluation |
|---|--|
| English, languages | Provision in English is satisfactory. Standards are well below the national and communication average. Teaching, learning and achievement are all satisfactory. |
| Mathematics | Provision is satisfactory on the re-introduced AS course. Standards are below the national average. Teaching is good and learning is satisfactory. |
| Science | Provision in physics is satisfactory. Standards are well below the national average at AS and Advanced Levels. Teaching and learning are good and students' achievement is satisfactory. Students' opportunities for independent study are limited and there is insufficient use of ICT to support their learning. |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel | Provision in physical education is good. Standards are broadly in line with the national average. Teaching and achievement are good. Students' learning is only satisfactory, as many students are not self-motivated, active learners. |
| Engineering, technology | Provision in engineering is good. The standard of work seen manufacturing is above course expectations. Teaching, learning and students are all good. |
| ICT | Provision is good. Standards are above the course expectations. Teaching and learning are very good and students' achievement is good. Students are well motivated and keen to do 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.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students are satisfied with the personal support and guidance provided. The inspection confirmed that this support is good, including the guidance on future courses and careers. Students are well known as individuals and are well cared for.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The overall leadership is unsatisfactory. It lacks sufficient strategic direction or focus. The vision of the governors and school leadership team has not been converted into a curriculum to meet the needs of the sixth form's intake. Departmental leadership and management are satisfactory. Performance data is carefully analysed and used effectively to track students' progress. As at the time of the previous inspection, there is no act of daily collective worship for sixth formers, but a good assembly with an appropriate opportunity for reflection was observed. The students do not have appropriate access to religious education as required by the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this is unsatisfactory.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are positive about provision in the sixth form. They appreciate the way staff treat them as young adults and the way their views are heard and taken on board. They rightly talk

positively about the commitment and enthusiasm of their teachers. Students value the ready access to reliable computers. They talk positively about the school's improving reputation and would recommend the sixth form to others. They do not identify any significant areas for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

By the end of Year 11 students' **standards are well below the national average** and their **achievement is satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in art and design and history at GCSE.
- The improving trend of 5 or more GCSE passes at A*- C.
- The current attainment of students in many GCSE courses is in line with course expectations.
- Students' standards in literacy and numeracy have an adverse impact on their attainment across the curriculum.
- The achievement of students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is often less than those with other learning and literacy difficulties.

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 30.9 (30.1) | 33.4 (33.3) |
| mathematics | 32.1 (31.5) | 35.4 (34.7) |
| science | 31.1 (30.7) | 33.6 (33.3) |

There were 178 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

| | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades | 30 (28) | 52 (50) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades | 73 (88) | 91 (91) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades | 92 (96) | 96 (96) |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 24.6 (28.5) | 34.7 (34.8) |

There were 181 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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 | 57.3 (80.8) | 89.4 (92.6) |
| Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades | 6.7 (7.9) | 36.1 (35.5) |
| Average point score per pupil | 98.3 (121.9) | 258.2 (263.3) |

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

1. The students, including those from minority ethnic groups, enter the school with attainment overall that is well below that found nationally, especially in respect of their literacy skills. In the GCSE examinations, standards are still well below the national average and students' achievement is satisfactory. The school has improved its results since the last inspection. Since 2000, the percentage of students who gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C rose from 23 per cent to 30 per cent in 2003 and the trend continued in 2004, the current figure being 32 per cent. In the period 1999 to 2003, the trend in improvement in results is in line with the improvement nationally. These results are in line with similar non-selective schools nationally. The school's GCSE targets for 2004 were generally met. One of the reasons that the school's standards are well below the national average is the lack overall of the highest grades A* and A, which reduces considerably students' average point scores. This is not unexpected in a non-selective school in a local authority that selects by attainment on entry to secondary education at the age of 11. There are, however, a number of boys each year who do attain a considerable number of GCSE grades overall, with a significant percentage of grades at A* and A. In 2003 the percentage of boys attaining A* grades in history was considerably above the national figure for boys, and in combined science and English it was close to the national figure. Figures for the 2004 results show good performance against national performance in history, physical education and art and design. The achievement of higher-attaining students matches that of the rest of the peer group.
2. Standards in the national tests for students aged 14 have been well below the national average in the period 2000-2003. These results represent satisfactory achievement by the students. In 2003 about 40 per cent of the students achieved below the national expectation (Level 5) in English, mathematics and science, reflecting the non-selective nature of the school and the poor standards of literacy on entry overall. These factors reduce the average points scores of the students considerably. At the other end of the spectrum, particularly in mathematics and science, about a quarter of the students attain levels in excess of the national expectation (Level 6 and above). In 2004 the percentage of students attaining the national expectation rose considerably in English and mathematics, where targets were met, but declined in science, where they were not met. The decline in science reflected the staffing situation during the year. The improved results overall also reflect an improvement in attendance in the school. At a time of falling attendance nationally, this school's attendance rose by 0.8 per cent.
3. The students' attainment seen during the inspection shows an improvement on the GCSE results reported in 2003 and 2004 and was below the national expectation overall. This reflects the improved staffing situation in many curriculum areas and the school's commitment to improving teaching and learning. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. In Year 11, attainment in English and citizenship is above course expectations. In ICT, art, music, history, geography, design and technology and physical education it is in line with course expectations. In religious education and modern foreign languages, attainment is below course expectations. It was below expectations in mathematics and science. In Year 9, attainment was in line with national expectations in art, citizenship, music, history and physical education. It was below in ICT, English, mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages and design and technology and it was well below in religious education. Attainment well below expectations reflects the impact of the lack of specialist staff. Students' attainment overall is still hindered by standards of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

4. The achievement of students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Students with learning and literacy difficulties achieve better than those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties because of their more positive attitudes and willingness to learn. For example, they achieve very well in booster reading classes taught by teachers and assistants from the special needs department. They make good progress in English lessons because teachers take their needs into account and teaching assistants support individuals effectively. Their progress in mathematics and science is satisfactory.
5. The achievement of students who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. Some individuals make good progress. The school takes the needs of its students with English as an additional language seriously and as a result the support they receive is effective. The team of staff identifies the needs of these students at an early stage and plans appropriate support. The achievement and attainment of students from minority ethnic groups are in line with those of their fellow students. The standards attained by the different ethnic groups in 2004 did vary but in most cases the numbers were too small to be statistically significant.

Sixth form

6. The examination results in 2003 were well below the national average and showed a sharp fall on the previous year. Results improved in 2004, coming back to the standards seen in 2002. No school targets for sixth form results were set in 2004. A large proportion of the students achieve pass grades at Advanced Level, but very few achieve A and B grades, reducing average point scores considerably. Students' achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 7 to 11 and students' personal development is also good. The vast majority of students show good attitudes towards school and their work. They behave well within a very good and mutually supportive working environment and form good relationships with staff and fellow students. There are, however, pockets of poor behaviour that have an adverse effect on learning in some lessons. Attendance is satisfactory, but punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students take a deep pride in their school, and are determined to succeed.
- The Sports College status gives a real boost to students' views of themselves and the school within its community.
- Students are very supportive of each other in lessons and around the school.
- Students' moral and social development is good.
- The use of tutorial periods to support students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
- Punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

7. The vast majority of students are very proud of their school and like being here. The key reason for this is its status as a Sports College, and the impact of this in the local community. Students are very positive about their relationships with teachers and other adults in the school. The atmosphere in lessons and around school is of strong mutual

support. In lessons, students show good attitudes to their work, and respond very positively to the school's belief in them. Their ability to concentrate and work hard grows rapidly from the beginning of Year 7, and many examples of pair and group work were seen during the inspection. Their best work is seen in practical subjects such as music, physical education and ICT, but good quality responses were also seen in subjects such as history. Although most students try very hard, their interest is sometimes less effectively kindled in lessons where the approach is more formal and literacy tasks predominate. Above all, students respond positively to good teaching.

8. Students support and encourage each other. It is seen as a good thing in the school to succeed, and the minority of students, who have negative attitudes or disrupt lessons are regarded with disapproval by their peers. Teachers value the students and their work, and praise is a common factor in lessons; but it does have to be earned. Students are taken seriously and their views are listened to; they feel secure in asking questions and value the responses. This support continues from many staff outside formal lessons, and students use this access to staff well. There is a strong community atmosphere, which pervades students' learning.
9. The school's code of conduct is the main feature underpinning the good behaviour. Both Year 10 and 11 students talked about this as a major reason for good behaviour in school. Respect between students and staff is mutual, and students recognise and value this. The good behaviour also applies outside lessons and around the school; the dining hall is civilised, and any staff supervision is informal and very low key. Even the narrowest and most overcrowded areas in corridors were used responsibly, and good manners are the norm. The high credibility and obvious presence of senior staff around the school have a positive impact on students' attitudes and behaviour. Students agree that there is a little bullying, almost always name-calling, but that it is effectively dealt with. Students believe that racist incidents are rare and dealt with well. The school keeps a diary of racist events, but they are clearly a rarity and are dealt with very effectively. Students told the inspection team that the year co-ordinators were the first port of call for almost any issue, and that it was very rarely necessary to go any further.
10. Students with special educational needs have positive attitudes to the support they receive. This is particularly apparent when they are taught in small groups by the special needs department. Students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are often held back by their negative attitudes but respond well to firm class management and the support from staff in the recently established learning inclusion centre.
11. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, with only occasional opportunities for reflection on the deeper things of life, and inspiration is missing in obvious places such as art and design. The scale, mystery and magic of space, for example, play little part in science education. Tutorial periods are not used consistently well to support students' spiritual development and this is unsatisfactory.
12. Provision for moral education is good, with students learning about right and wrong as both moral precepts and as appropriate behaviour in a social context. Science addresses the issue of the consequences of discoveries and actions, linked to the concept of moral responsibility. The special educational needs department uses the school's code of conduct to help students define for themselves what behaviour is

appropriate in society. In physical education good use has been made of the Paralympics to reflect on moral issues.

13. Provision for social education is good. Students accept responsibility for their own work, but do their best work when receiving the close moral support of a teacher. Students feel valued and value the work of others. There are good opportunities provided through the School Council and through Sports College status for students to develop their social skills.
14. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. In English, Shakespeare is studied and is also used as a starting point for characterisation and improvisation. World music forms part of the curriculum for students in Years 7 to 9. In mathematics, insufficient emphasis is placed on important world influences, such as that of the Arabs. There is insufficient emphasis in modern foreign languages on supporting students' cultural development.
15. In 2003-2004, attendance improved to levels close to the previous national average, with a significant decline in the level of unauthorised absence. The school's measures to combat absence, including first day contact, are good. Attendance is at similar levels to those reported at the last inspection, in comparison with a downward national trend. Punctuality is unsatisfactory, however. A minority of students arrive late for registration. For some this is because of factors beyond their control, such as the vagaries of local public transport. Most students get to lessons promptly during the day, due in significant part to close supervision by senior staff.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.7 | School data | 1.8 |
| 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 (2002/3).

16. The number of fixed-term exclusions is now low, and historically the number of permanent exclusions is low. Exclusions are explicitly linked to breaches of the school's code of conduct, and the impact of them is that they are very effective overall in preventing further exclusions. The number of fixed-term exclusions last year was a third lower than in the preceding year. While last year there were different rates of exclusion for different ethnic groups, the current information shows a similar low rate of exclusion among the different ethnic groups of students. The school has recently created an internal exclusion unit to reduce the level of fixed-term exclusions. This was being used effectively at the time of the inspection but it is too soon to determine its effectiveness in reducing the rate of fixed-term exclusions and the incidence of poor behaviour in classrooms.

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White - British |
| White - Any other white background |
| Mixed - any other mixed background |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani |
| Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi |

Exclusions in the last school year

| Number of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 941 | 76 | 2 |
| 32 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background | 16 | 2 | 0 |
| Black or British - Caribbean | 14 | 3 | 0 |
| Black or British - African | 22 | 6 | 0 |
| Black or British - any other Black background | 17 | 4 | 0 |
| Chinese | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 3 | 3 | 0 |

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

Sixth form

17. Nearly all sixth formers are proud of their school. Teachers are friendly and helpful in relation to problems or queries in subjects or other matters. The subject enthusiasm shown by most teachers raises the students' interest and encourages them to do as well as they can. Most students consider they are treated like young adults. This is reflected in the fact that their views are taken seriously by adults. Good computer facilities and the friendships with other students also contribute significantly to students' positive attitudes towards the school and their studies. In nearly all lessons, students listen well and show good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Students' behaviour is very good in the sixth form. Relationships between staff and students and among students are very good. Students' involvement with the School Council is good and this supports well their personal development.
18. Sixth formers' attendance and punctuality are good. The practice of getting all students to arrive at school for registration at the start of the day is an effective measure, helping to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **satisfactory**, as is the quality of students' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is considerable expertise in using behaviour management strategies well.
- There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning following the school's focus on this.
- The setting of homework, which challenges the students and extends their learning, is unsatisfactory.
- Planning, to meet the differing needs of students in lessons, is inconsistent and this is unsatisfactory.
- Planning in lessons, to develop students' abilities to work independently and collaboratively, is inconsistent and this is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 151 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| 2 (1.3%) | 30 (19.9%) | 75 (49.7%) | 37 (24.5%) | 6 (4%) | 1 (0.6%) | 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.

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is similar across Years 7 to 11, although more very good teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9, as was the majority of the unsatisfactory teaching. This satisfactory teaching leads to students learning satisfactorily and attaining standards which are comparable to similar schools. In lessons seen during the inspection there was an obvious improvement in the quality of teaching and learning when compared with the results of internal and external monitoring audits last year. This reflects both the improved stability of the staffing and the impact of the leadership team's concentration on this aspect of the school's provision. In lessons seen during the inspection the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in over 95 per cent and in over 70 per cent it was good or better. This was a good improvement on that seen at the last inspection.
20. The school has made very clear its high expectations about the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning. This is reflected in the planning of lessons to an agreed format, which is well linked to the Key Stage 3 Strategy's recommendations. The planning focuses on the teaching methods to be adopted and this has resulted in most teachers adopting strategies which motivate and engage most students. The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and this is reflected in much of the provision for the different groups of students. The quality and consistency of the homework set are unsatisfactory. Parents and students both commented adversely on this and it was clear that whilst the school has a clear policy for homework, it is not yet being consistently followed by all teachers. The quality of the teachers' assessment has improved since the last inspection but, particularly in Years 7 to 9, there is insufficient guidance on what steps students should take to improve their standards of performance. There is not the consistent use across departments of work that has been marked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades and the giving of this to students to guide them in identifying targets on how to improve. There is evidence of some very good planning to meet the differing needs of students within individual classes, but these practices are not yet consistent across all lessons and across all departments. This lack of consistency, particularly in the core subjects, partly reflects the turnover of staff over the last two years and the subsequent difficulty in managing a consistent approach across all staff. Similarly, there are good examples of planning in lessons to develop students' capabilities to work well, both individually and collaboratively, but this also is not yet consistent across all lessons.
21. There are variations in the quality of teaching and learning seen across departments. During the inspection it was particularly strong in history and music, where they were very good. In ICT, geography, art, design and technology, physical education and citizenship, they were good. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, they were satisfactory. In religious education, they were satisfactory and in modern foreign languages, they were unsatisfactory.

22. The teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Subject teachers are aware of these students' needs and support them well individually. However, their planning is not always fully effective, particularly in respect of students with behavioural difficulties. Teaching assistants provide good support in many lessons and give teachers very useful information about the progress of individual students. They ensure that students with literacy difficulties understand instructions and complete their written work. They are less effective in ensuring that students with behaviour difficulties concentrate and do not distract others. Where necessary, students with literacy difficulties are taught in small groups withdrawn from mainstream classes. Teachers and teaching assistants in the special needs department have very good knowledge of methods of teaching literacy. A good variety of activities in these lessons, where students are withdrawn or work in small groups, interests and motivates students, who learn very well as a result. Across the curriculum there is insufficient planning to develop consistently students' literacy and numeracy skills, and this has an adverse impact on attainment overall. Teaching in the learning inclusion unit is very good. The support team for students with English as an additional language is effective but classroom teachers do not always use the information about these students to modify their lesson planning.

Sixth form

23. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory, resulting in students learning satisfactorily. The students respond positively to the teachers' methods, working hard and productively. The teachers do not plan sufficiently to develop students' capabilities to work collaboratively or to carry out independent study, and this does have an impact on the number of students attaining the highest grades.

The curriculum

The school provides a curriculum which satisfactorily meets students' needs, with good opportunities for enrichment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not meet statutory requirements for ICT in Years 10 and 11 and for religious education in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The curriculum for students with special educational needs is good.
- Opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities are good.
- Curriculum opportunities to support improved literacy and numeracy skills are unsatisfactory.
- The quality of support staff is good.
- Accommodation has improved overall since the last inspection.
- Staffing is much improved in 2004-2005, with less teacher turnover and fewer vacant posts.

Commentary

24. The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 meets statutory requirements in most subjects. Currently a small group of students in Years 10 and 11 do not have an ICT component in the course of studies. The religious education scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has made changes to the curriculum following designation as specialist sports college and from implementing the

Key Stage 3 strategy across the curriculum. These changes followed a curriculum review, involving heads of department in a consultative process, leading to changes in the length of lessons and the introduction of enrichment time for physical education. Physical education entitlement has risen to three hours per week for all students in Years 7, 8 and 9 and the introduction of GCSE physical education for all students in Year 10. Staff see these changes as positive and contributing to raising the self-esteem of the students, using sport as the prime mover. Departments have benefited from the monies coming from specialist status and this had led to some increased resources, for example, computers in science to access data used in physical education. The school has used the Key Stage 3 strategy to tackle improving students' skills in literacy and numeracy but this is not yet consistent across all departments and lacks co-ordination.

25. Students in Year 9 go through a thorough process, in consultation with parents, to make decisions about their GCSE courses. The result is that most students take at least eight subjects at GCSE. There are a number for whom this is not appropriate and the school has made alternative provision for them, involving more vocational courses. The school is aware that this area of provision needs to be extended, including through links with other local schools and colleges.
26. Most Year 10 students take a discrete ICT course. A group of about 20 students take a business course with a significant ICT component. A number of Year 10 and 11 students are not taking discrete ICT courses but using ICT in other subjects across the curriculum. The school is auditing this provision but currently, for these students, their entitlement is not being fully met. ICT is well used in all year groups in citizenship, but the computer suite in design and technology is not yet used effectively.
27. In religious education, sufficient time has now been allocated to the subject following the last inspection but the scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the subject's role in enriching the curriculum and students' spiritual development are limited.
28. The school has identified the need to offer more vocational courses in Years 10 and 11, working in partnership with the local college, developing NVQ engineering and more links with the work-related curriculum. Currently this provision is satisfactory.
29. There is good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education which is taught through a co-ordinated programme in which citizenship is the main strand, taught by a specialist team. This area of the curriculum is well supported by links with outside agencies. The work experience for two weeks in Year 10 for all students is seen as a positive element of the curriculum by parents and students alike.
30. A range of alternative courses available for disaffected students, those at risk of exclusion and students on the special educational needs register makes a good contribution to inclusion. The Building Bridges project, run by an external agency, supports the development of social skills, and other college courses provide alternative avenues for some students and facilitate other routes to success.
31. Provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school provides a suitable mix of support in lessons and teaching in small groups. However, students with dyslexia do not have sufficiently frequent tuition to improve their literacy skills, even though they achieve well in their weekly withdrawal lessons. The special needs

department's homework club offers valuable support for a number of students. A few students with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties receive individual support in the school's learning inclusion centre and the school intends to extend this very good provision. In Years 10 and 11, students have good opportunities to gain entry-level qualifications in several subjects. Some of these students follow a study skills course to support their work in other subjects. Communication between these subject departments and the special needs department is insufficient. As a result, work on this course is not linked closely enough to students' subject course work.

32. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme attracts about 100 students and leads to gains in personal growth, collaborative work and links to the community. A wide range of enrichment activities across the subjects provides for extension learning and opportunities to practice and develop skills in a variety of ways. These include on-site clubs, representative teams, visits and trips, which further support the students' personal development. Revision classes for GCSE take place at Easter and after school and there are also revision clubs for students in Year 9. Students' participation overall in these activities, including the arts, is good.
33. Staffing difficulties still exist in some curriculum areas but staff turnover has been significantly reduced, with just three permanent vacancies at the time of the inspection. There is currently no permanent head of mathematics and in the English and religious education departments there are insufficient permanent, specialist staff.
34. The school utilises the services of a large number of overseas-trained teachers, and monies from the Government Offices of London facilitated the visit of the headteacher to Australia on a recruitment drive. These teachers bring a high level of competence in key teaching skills and many make a commitment to stay for a number of years. They have helped to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.
35. Changes in support staff, to bring them more in line with the needs of the school, have led to some new appointments, which have improved the quality of provision. The increase in subject technicians has had a positive impact on learning and some support staff have undertaken training so that they can cover for absent staff. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have focused the relatively small uncommitted contingency fund on improving curriculum provision. This has resulted in departments being better able to resource their curriculum needs.
36. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection, but there are still issues in the music department, with the two specialist rooms being some distance apart, and the one next to the main hall creating difficulties for making music during assessment/examination times. Some departments are housed in the temporary mobiles and, whilst the rooms are big and airy, they are not ideal. New buildings, for example, the Bevan building and the soon-to-be-completed Healthy Living Unit bring quality to the accommodation and a rolling programme of replacements and maintenance helps to give the school a good appearance.

Sixth form

37. There has been an expansion of courses in the sixth form, with a higher uptake of vocational courses in this second year of provision. Students have taken some time to see the value of these Level 2 courses, given parental aspirations for their sons to study

at more advanced levels, as their neighbours' children who attend selective schools are doing. This discrepancy in understanding the value of these courses has led the school to actively promote the courses and to try to mix and match courses to meet the individual needs of the students.

38. There is serious competition from local further education colleges and the school is striving to re-establish links with Carshalton Girls School and Carshalton College. At the moment there is limited attendance of boys on courses at the local girls' school or the local college. This does restrict the curriculum realistically available to this school's students.
39. The school tries to offer flexibility when it cannot accommodate particular subjects and when there are subject clashes. Vocational courses, such as NVQ engineering, ICT, applied business and construction, are being developed. In science there is a move to core and extension service courses in 2005, following concern about AS and Advanced Level course results.
40. Adherence to traditional routes, such as Advanced Level English, is not meeting the needs of the majority of students and group numbers in a number of subjects are too small. The school believes that there are some students who are not ready for the world of work at 16 and they are encouraged to return to school and follow one-year courses, including foundation courses. Some Year 14 students have returned to school after college courses to follow AS courses and the school recruits a number of girls from local schools who wish to follow courses not available to them elsewhere. This adds a new dimension to the single-gender experience. The school does not currently meet the requirements for religious education in the sixth form but PSHCE, physical education and some community activities extend their moral and social development.
41. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good and students have opportunities to extend their role through leadership roles such as mentoring younger students, coaching sporting activities, refereeing games, participating in the School Council and managing the school's Breakfast Club.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares well for its students; it gives them good support, advice and guidance. There are very good measures to involve students in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Student induction to Year 7 is very good.
- The support, advice and guidance for students are good.
- Key subject targets do not get sufficient emphasis in academic reviews.
- The school regards the views of students as important to its work and acts on them.

Commentary

42. Student induction arrangements are very effective. Visits and a summer school are important parts of the preparation. Once students join, important features include an early emphasis on building teamwork and a pastoral evening for parents. Year 7 students, who

had recently joined, told inspectors how well supported they felt and it was evident that this made them want to do their best. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are well considered and properly carried out. First aid provision and the school's risk assessment procedures are good. Form tutors and other staff know the students well and recognise their needs. They act quickly if a student is unhappy or under pressure and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle in. As a result, based on survey returns, nearly all students have a good and trusting relationship with at least one adult. The needs of the minority of students with a range of special educational needs are carefully considered and effectively supported.

43. The support of students' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent and effectively shared with students and parents. Where there are concerns, the year co-ordinators and form tutors act quickly to ensure students are aware that improvement is needed. In Years 10 and 11, two academic review days are held and there are plans to extend this approach to earlier years. Closer inspection of the targets set at review days reveal that they primarily relate to students' attitudes, supporting their personal development very effectively. Key subject targets do not have sufficient emphasis to support systematic academic improvement, however. The advice and guidance on future courses and career options is good in Years 9 to 11. They include an Industry Day in Year 10, when external speakers provide insights into their businesses and careers.
44. The very positive relationships between most staff and students form a secure basis from which to hear individual and groups of students' views. Surveys of students' views are a well-established feature, in relation to bullying and racism in Year 8, for example. The School Council's discussions give management some important insights into the issues that concern students, such as toilets, playground surface and access to water. Councillors and other students speak positively about how students' views have influenced improvements in these features. Councillors are involved in the interviews for new staff. Students' views were also sought in relation to the school's name change and suggestions for additional clubs. Students' learning styles are evaluated as part of induction to Year 7, but this is not subsequently backed up with lessons on learning to learn or study skills until students are much older.
45. The school communicates well with several support agencies for students with special educational needs. However, despite the school's best efforts to obtain specialist provision for students with speech and language difficulties, some of these students do not get the help to which they are entitled. The Connexions service provides very good guidance and support for students at risk of exclusion, many of whom have special educational needs. A key issue at the last inspection concerned the lack of IEPs for students with special educational needs. All students with statements of special educational needs and those identified as needing Action Plus now have IEPs, but students' targets are not sufficiently precise to measure progress and subject teachers do not always use the limited information they provide effectively. Students with behavioural difficulties are not always provided for in teachers' planning of strategies which will improve their motivation. However, staff in the learning inclusion centre are now introducing targets for students with more severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. These targets enable the students to be provided with more focused support and guidance.

Sixth form

46. There is a strong emphasis on providing good impartial advice and guidance to students prior to entering the sixth form. During Year 11, students are made clearly aware of the entry requirements and most have an interview with the Connexions adviser. The primary aim of the interview is to clarify whether their best option is joining the sixth form, moving to a college or pursuing work-based learning opportunities. Sixth form induction is somewhat limited, however, apart from discussions with individuals about minimum entry requirements for particular courses. This may contribute to the significant drop-out rate from courses during both Year 12 and 13. Progress reviews are held termly, with an important emphasis on getting students to identify and work on key improvement areas. Guidance on the next stage of education or career, after Year 12 and 13, is also good. The contributions of outside speakers from universities and other organisations are highly valued by students. There is a sensible emphasis on getting tasks, such as the preparation of personal statements, completed as early as possible to allow the maximum time for study in Year 13.
47. Sixth formers take an active part in running the School Council. Their views have also been influential in introducing some vocational courses, such as construction.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are good, making an important contribution to students' opportunities and experiences. Links with the local community make a good contribution to students' personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school operates a genuine open-door policy and provides very good information on students' progress.
- Parents contribute significantly to the good partnership.
- This specialist sports college has created an exceptional range of links with local sports clubs.
- The school has begun to work productively with some local secondary schools.
- The physical education department provides very good support with physical education teaching in local primary schools.
- The lack of shared provision with local sixth forms and colleges limits students' choice of courses in the sixth form.

Commentary

48. The school's measures to ensure satisfaction and to address any concerns or complaints are very good. The school is rightly regarded as being very open and welcoming by parents. For example, the headteacher holds a daily parents' surgery for half an hour, prior to the start of school. The written annual and interim reports and parents' evenings are scheduled to ensure termly updates on students' progress. The written information is of good quality, giving students and parents a clear indication on students' effort, achievement and areas for improvement. The school regularly seeks the views of its parents. As a result, it is well informed about the things they like and would like to see improved. Whilst it has sought to address parents' concerns, there has been insufficient improvement in the consistency with which homework is set to extend students' learning, but there has been a good improvement in the school's tackling of unacceptable behaviour and incidents of bullying.

49. There is a high level of parental attendance at parents' evenings, awards evenings and sporting events. They respond in significant numbers to the school's surveys of their views. The overall success of the parental links is reflected in the positive parental survey.
50. The special educational needs department invites parents to annual reviews of their children's progress but only a small proportion attend. The department is therefore investigating different means of encouraging their attendance, other than a mere written invitation. The department has good links with local primary schools. As a result, information about Year 7 students with special educational needs is available before they enter school. All teachers are efficiently informed of these students' needs and difficulties, although this information is not always used effectively to aid teachers' planning in meeting the differing needs of these students.
51. Aided significantly by the specialist sports college status, the school has an exceptional range of links with a very wide range of sports clubs, ranging from Australian Rules football to korfbal. As a result, students have exceptional opportunities to sample different sports. School plays its part as a resource for the local community. Community education classes on computing, music, art and food are held in the school. The sports hall and gym are also regularly used. Public services, such as police, fire and health services, enrich the curriculum with workshops on careers, personal safety and healthy living. The local church and other faith groups contribute to assemblies and the religious education curriculum. Most subject departments have good community links. The school works productively with a wide range of outside organisations, such as Connexions and a range of the local authority staff and staff from other agencies.
52. The links with local schools and colleges make an important contribution to students' opportunities and experiences. The links between the school and its four main contributory primary schools are very well developed. Physical education department staff provide professional development for primary staff and teach lessons to primary pupils, supported by Carshalton students. Combined with a summer school, this also helps to provide a smooth transition for students from primary school. Good links with a number of local secondary schools have developed significantly in the past year. As a result, the school is a partner in a teacher training consortium with four secondary schools. It works with two other secondary schools on the development of middle managers as part of the *Leadership Improvement Grant (LIG)* scheme. Links with the local grammar schools are still limited, however. There are good links with a number of teacher training colleges, which have become more significant since gaining training school status.

Sixth form

53. Parents' views on the sixth form are positive. In the main, sixth form students are positive about what school offers them. Most students confirm that they are treated as young adults and are given some opportunities to take responsibility.
54. Sixth formers visit a number of universities, to attend talks and as part of the *Aim Higher* scheme. Students in science and technology get insights into work in different industries and business as part of a program of visits and talks. There is limited linked provision with other local secondary schools or the college, however. As a result, students' practical choice of sixth form courses is more limited than it could be with shared provision.

55. Charitable fundraising is an important part of the activities in which sixth formers play a key part. For example, students organise and deliver food parcels to senior citizens before Christmas. Each year, students on physical education courses take the Community Sports Leadership Award and organise a range of sporting events for primary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is very good.
- The leadership of the senior managers presents a good role model for the rest of the school.
- Governors support the school well.
- Leadership in the sixth form is unsatisfactory.
- Some statutory requirements are not met.
- Middle management shows some inconsistencies in effectiveness and approach.

Commentary

56. The school benefits from good leadership, particularly from the headteacher, who is dynamic and presents a clear vision for the future of the school. He is ably supported by the senior managers, who work well as a team to implement the vision. Leadership is committed to raising levels of achievement and is eager to change and adopt initiatives to that end. Specialist Sports College and Training School status, for example, have both been granted recently and development plans show clearly how they will be used to raise levels of attainment. Leadership promotes a positive ethos where everyone is valued as an individual. Students' and staff views are regularly sought and acted upon. Students show a sense of pride in their school. Leadership and management concentrate on breaking down barriers to teaching and learning and the effects of this are starting to be seen in improving examination results. The school's links with providers of initial teacher training are good.
57. Management of the school is effective. The school has had a high staff turnover rate for some time, with large numbers of unqualified, overseas-trained or newly-qualified teachers. This situation is now very effectively managed by a very thorough programme of support and training for staff, which is resulting in more stability and improved retention of teachers. The school is managed as a 'learning community', not just for students but for staff also. Professional development and training are taken seriously; the use of video material of lessons to exemplify good practice, both in the school and at other schools, is one example of innovative and successful practice observed. The leadership group uses performance data well to evaluate the overall performance of the school. However, although data is available, it is not always targeted sufficiently to judge the effectiveness of specific initiatives. At middle management level, data on student performance is available but is not yet used consistently well to track progress and to identify areas that need attention. Staffing difficulties have hindered the implementation of a consistent approach.
58. Leadership and management of the school's provision for students with special educational needs are satisfactory. The work of teaching assistants is well managed and

monitored closely by the special educational needs co-ordinator. However, students' progress is not monitored closely enough and the special needs policy lacks criteria for evaluating the success of the provision. Support for students with learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties has, until recently, developed separately. Many of these students have a range of difficulties; management of support for these students is therefore inefficient and teachers' responsibilities are unclear.

59. Governance is satisfactory overall. The governing body is very supportive of the school. It has good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is involved in the development of its identified priorities. For example, it was particularly supportive in the school's bid for Specialist Sports College Status. However, the governing body does not ensure that statutory obligations in relation to collective worship, religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form and ICT in Years 10 and 11 are met.
60. The financial management of the school is very good, well controlled and effective. Consultation on the setting of the budget is comprehensive and finances are used in a targeted way to tackle identified priorities. Systems for monitoring spending are effective and the principles of best value in the school's policy document are followed. Balances at the end of financial years are used to support initiatives identified in the School Improvement Plan to raise levels of achievement.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 4,240,497 |
| Total expenditure | 4,224,670 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,971 |

| Balances (£) | |
|--|---------|
| Balance from previous year | 141,337 |
| Balance carried forward to the next year | 162,179 |

The sixth form

61. In the absence of a permanent head of sixth form, leadership is currently unsatisfactory. There is a clear vision for the future of this area but it is not yet being translated into effective practice. There is a clear whole-school commitment to the retention and the development of the sixth form, but numbers of students staying on after Year 11 are low, although some improvement was seen in 2004.
62. Management of the sixth form is satisfactory. The curriculum has not been fully developed to encourage students to stay on and learning relies too heavily on teacher-led activities. The Sixth Form Improvement Plan is clear and takes into account the results of wide consultation. However, its implementation is impeded by the absence of a permanent head of sixth form to drive developments forward. Students are known well as individuals in the sixth form and their progress is tracked effectively using comprehensive data.
63. Financial analysis of the sixth form is detailed and reveals that there is no adverse effect on the provision of resources in Years 7 to 11.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

What is the effectiveness of work-related learning?

Provision for work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

64. Provision for work-related learning is satisfactory. Work experience is very well established and the school has used this to develop close links with local businesses. Similarly careers provision is sound and specialist sports college status is helping to raise the aspirations of students. The school has appointed a co-ordinator, has followed the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance and produced a development plan to ensure that by the time students reach the end of Year 11 they will have had a thorough introduction into the world of work. The plan fails to identify clear objectives and planned innovations are not yet fully costed. However, it is to be revised in the light of the current audit of existing provision within each subject area. Provision of work-related learning across the curriculum is inconsistent. Stronger departments such as history make good progress in developing skills of enterprise but others, including modern foreign languages and geography, are content only to suggest possible careers. Nonetheless there is a strong commitment to improve this aspect of provision and the school has agreed to be part of a local study to assess its impact on individual students as they progress through Years 10 and 11. The school is well supported by local authority initiatives to improve vocational provision in all local schools.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Stable staffing and better teaching have led to good improvements in results at GCSE.
- Students' poor literacy skills and poor behaviour in some lessons limit the range of teaching strategies and thereby the quality of learning.
- There is not yet a consistent approach to raising literacy standards across all departments.
- Marking is not consistently used in Years 7 to 9 to indicate to students what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

65. Standards achieved by students in national tests at the end of Year 9 were below the national average for boys in 2003 but improved in 2004. The proportion of students gaining grades A*-C in English at GCSE was just below the national figure in 2003. In 2004 the standards achieved in GCSE English improved for the third successive year. Results in GCSE English Literature were exactly in line with the national level for boys in 2003 and improved significantly in 2004. These results demonstrate good achievement by the students in Years 10 and 11.
66. Standards seen in lessons in Years 7 to 9 during the inspection were below national expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards seen in a scrutiny of work over the last year indicate that progress has been better recently and is the result of more stable staffing and of better teaching. Standards seen in lessons in Years 10 and 11 were above course expectations and this was confirmed by the scrutiny of students' work for GCSE. These students' achievement has been good. Students with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and make good progress. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as they should.

67. Teaching is satisfactory overall and in Years 10 and 11 it is good. Teachers have a good command of the subject and this is strongest in Years 10 and 11. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 makes good use of the National Strategy, with an effective emphasis on developing language skills. Students are not good listeners and do not work well together in discussion. This limits the effectiveness of the teaching and the range of teaching styles available, for example, investigative activities and group work. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, it was because the teacher's strategies did not control disruptive behaviour of some students and this behaviour damaged the overall progress made by the class. Even in good lessons with effective teaching, teachers have to work hard to sustain high standards of behaviour and to maintain the motivation of a significant minority of students. In the best lessons, aims are clearly defined so that students understand what skills and knowledge they will gain. An evaluation at the end of the lesson confirms their achievement ready for the next lesson. However, the gains for students are not always presented with enough clarity to motivate them. Teachers set high standards of behaviour, but expectations of quality and pace are not always high enough. Homework is not always set on the specified days and is not challenging enough. Marking in Years 7 to 9 is variable. Most teachers correct mistakes in expression and spelling but there was no evidence of corrections being required to be done. Most teachers praise students' personal achievement, but set them too few targets. The best marking adds an indication of what they should do to improve their work but this is not always the case. Descriptors of National Curriculum levels and attainment targets are displayed in classrooms but not in exercise books to which students could refer. Teaching at GCSE is better. It is more focused on examination specifications and students have a good understanding of what they need to do. The behaviour of the students is consistently better in Years 10 and 11 and teachers are able to build on mature and positive responses in high levels of discussion. Marking is helpful and the accuracy is confirmed by external examiners.
68. The leadership of the subject is good and has led to improvements in teaching and learning through a more stable team of teachers. Teaching styles developed from the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and improved schemes of work focus very directly on the skills students need to succeed. The biggest improvements in teaching and learning have been in Years 10 and 11 and have resulted in a significant improvement of standards. The curriculum is good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the examination boards. Teachers work well with support staff so that students with special educational needs achieve well. Extra-curricular provision is good. The management of the subject is good. Problems of recruiting well qualified teachers have been tackled effectively by the school. Teachers work well together and morale is improving. Staff are well deployed and there is good monitoring of staff performance, linked to good opportunities for professional development.
69. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the last two years. Schemes of work are better than they were and the staffing of the subject has improved. The quality of teaching and learning is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Standards at the end of Year 9 in national tests have improved in relation to students' prior attainment and in comparison with schools in similar contexts. Students who take English Literature at GCSE are now reaching standards much higher than boys nationally. Results in English Language at GCSE have improved steadily over the last three years and are now better than those of boys in all schools across the country. The use of ICT does vary but is satisfactory overall.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. The school's planning recognises the importance of improving students' language skills as a central element in improving their learning. On entry to the school many students have skills that are well below average for their age and represent a significant barrier to their learning. Almost half of the current Year 7 entered the school with a reading age two years below their real age and one boy in eight has a reading age of seven years or below. This restricts students' ability to tackle a range of literacy tasks across subjects. Many students find it hard to listen to instructions and to work together in discussion. Many are not good listeners and this has a bearing on the behaviour of some groups. Teachers in mathematics had to insist on students listening carefully to the answers of others. In a Year 7 drama lesson the teacher frequently had to remind boys to show proper respect for the performance of fellow students. In many lessons the teachers' questions were limited to factual enquiries or the meaning of terms. Follow-up questions challenging the student were rarely used. With the exception of the highest attainers, most students have difficulty in explaining the stages of a mathematical process. Lack of investigative discussion results in lack of extended writing to develop a point of view or explain a case. There are examples of good practice to develop literacy skills, but the teaching for these skills is not consistent across the school nor within departments. In design and technology subjects, literacy aims are written into lesson plans. Key words are well used in "starter" activities in science. In geography and history, important words are displayed for specific topics and are repeatedly referred to. In a Year 11 media studies lesson some excellent teaching of specialised language, like "non-diegetic soundtrack", very effectively introduced new terms and reinforced them many times. Teachers read well to students, but students are not asked to read aloud and few volunteer. There were good examples of students reading well and being listened to in silence in a geography lesson. In design and technology, students are encouraged to read for research and to write evaluations of their work. Subjects like English and history teach students to distinguish between biased and objective accounts. Older students develop abilities to make subtle judgements, for example, in history, drama and literature. High-attaining boys in Year 11 were observed in a good discussion of *The Lord of the Flies* based on perceptive readings of character and dialogue.
71. The library is too small for a school of this size. It is welcoming and is the base for a weekly reading club, but the stock of books is too small. Restricted ability to read from the page or the screen means that scope for independent research is limited and students are more dependent on notes than they would otherwise be.
72. Writing skills do not develop as well as other skills. Match reports in physical education convey excitement through expression, but sentence construction lacks control and accuracy. The standard of written work in geography is below average at all ages and there is little evidence of free expression or extended writing. Notes and bullet points predominate. In English lessons teachers helped students compose good examples of writing on the board on which they could model their own writing. Many examples of the good use of writing frames were observed in history and there were good examples of structured extended writing. Written work in GCSE history is in line with national standards. The use of writing models is insufficiently developed across all subjects. Students make unsatisfactory progress in language development so by the end of Year 9 their skills are still below the national median for their age. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is better and is reflected in the improving GCSE results in English. The school has a

Literacy Co-ordinator and a literacy policy has been introduced with the support of the local education authority. A literacy group, established in the summer term, has begun to lead the work of subject departments. The Literacy Policy has insufficient details about practical ways in which literacy skills can be built into lesson plans to improve teaching and learning and is not being followed effectively in all subjects. The use of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Modern foreign languages

French is the main foreign language in the school. Italian is taught to one class in Year 11.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge but rely far too heavily on English in their teaching.
- Teaching lacks pace and variety and, as a result, students' interest soon wanes.
- Students' progress in acquiring oral and listening skills, particularly the higher-attaining students, is too slow.
- Teaching materials are appropriate to the students' capabilities but overhead projector (OHP) transparencies are poor in quality.

Commentary

73. Standards attained in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below average in 2003 and similar results were achieved in 2004. GCSE results in Italian in 2003 were well below the national average and students did not achieve as well in Italian as in their other GCSE subjects. GCSE results in the French short course in 2003 were well below the national average. Standards seen during the inspection in Years 9 and 11 were below national and course expectations and this current attainment represents satisfactory achievement by the students.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Teachers are all fluent in the foreign language being taught but use far too much English in their teaching. This seriously impedes students' acquisition of speaking and listening skills, which are weak in all years. Teaching too often lacks pace and variety of activity to keep students motivated and interested in their learning. As a result, they make slow progress in all language skills, especially in Years 7 to 9. Expectations, especially of the higher-attaining students, are too low and students rely heavily on prompts and copying rather than learning to use the foreign language creatively and independently. The implementation of the National Strategy in Years 7 to 9 is developing. Summing-up sessions, at the end of lessons, are not used sufficiently to give teaching more focus. The quality of materials is satisfactory but OHP transparencies are of poor quality and often leave the students guessing what they are meant to portray or convey. Text books are available but each student does not have his own copy. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient guidance to students on how to improve.
75. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Leadership aims to develop effective teamwork and is ambitious in its vision for the future of languages in the school. There is a clear desire to raise levels of attainment but this is not yet happening. The foreign

language teachers are generally inexperienced and include teachers who are unqualified, new to the profession or who have trained overseas in other subjects. This situation presents a real challenge to the recently appointed head of department, who is learning to develop her skills to support improving teaching and learning. The scheme of work and staff handbook are useful documents but do not contain sufficient emphasis on language teaching techniques to guide less experienced colleagues.

76. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Few of the identified issues at that time have been tackled and the key issue of raising standards of attainment remains a concern. Importantly, teaching that was previously described as sound is now unsatisfactory and has become a key issue for attention and action.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is now improving following significant staffing problems in recent years.
- New teaching staff are integrated well into the department.
- Planning of lessons is good, with flipcharts well used.
- Use of ICT in mathematics is significantly underdeveloped.
- Students are insufficiently aware of what they must do to improve their standards.
- Extension work, especially homework, is not demanding enough..

Commentary

77. The school has experienced significant staffing problems in mathematics over recent years. This instability has contributed to unsatisfactory standards, although in lessons and work seen during the inspection, there are positive signs of improvement.
78. Students enter the school with overall standards below those nationally and in national tests at the end of Year 9, their performance is well below the national average and below that of similar schools, though comparable to other non-selective schools in selective boroughs. The proportion of students reaching the various levels has remained much the same for several years whereas nationally it has increased steadily. Attainment at the highest levels (Level 6 and above) was best in 2003 but not sustained in 2004. Achievement is unsatisfactory, and though higher attainers and some very low attainers make satisfactory progress, an improvement of just one National Curriculum level is made by most students.
79. In the GCSE examinations about one-quarter of students have gained A*-C grades in recent years, except in 2002, when 33 per cent did so. These results are well below the national average. In 2004, results improved on those of 2003, but remain well below course expectations. An occasional candidate attains an A grade. In 2004 two boys were awarded A*, the first time this has occurred at the school. The percentage of A*-G grades awarded is just above national averages. Overall, the performance of students in mathematics is below the standard they reach in other subjects. There is insufficient evidence for a statistically valid comparison of performances of students from different ethnic groups.

80. For this year the department is fully staffed. Inspection evidence and work seen in lessons show teaching and learning to be satisfactory and improving. Lesson planning is good and attempts are made to make lessons interesting and to motivate the students. The department has made good use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Almost all lessons seen were at least satisfactory, with several being good or very good. Higher quality lessons stimulate students and have a variety of activities that keep students interested and engaged. Good notes are given and followed to effect, as in a Year 8 higher-attaining class lesson on factors, and in a Year 9 lower-attaining class lesson on sequences. Most students take reasonable pride in the presentation of their work but not all show all steps of a calculation. Teaching overall is better than learning, because the limited attention span or individual needs of students are insufficiently recognised, or the slow lesson pace results in students losing concentration. Students with special educational needs receive specialist support in lessons, enabling them to concentrate and make appropriate progress. Some students of different ethnic heritage make good progress but overall, progress of such students is not significantly different to that of their peers.
81. During the inspection students were orderly and attentive. Most applied themselves well to their work and many have good relationships with their teachers. Higher-attaining students show greater application and have clearer understanding of mathematics, and their work is of good standard. Average-level attainers show wide variations in application and appreciation of concepts; presentation varies from good to scrappy, attention to detail is weak and both class and homework assignments are often incomplete. Corrections are rarely done. Poor knowledge of basic arithmetic impedes progress. Starter activities in mathematics often focus on numeracy. Boys can write out sequences and plot co-ordinates. Most are competent in the use of calculators, but many have weaknesses in basic arithmetic processes, such as in calculation of perimeters and areas of shapes. They can draw bar and pie charts and simple graphs, but interpretation of results is weak. Higher-attaining students can develop algebraic expressions, deal with indices, calculate probabilities, calculate using Pythagoras and understand basic trigonometry.
82. Students do not write down sufficiently in each lesson clear and structured notes that they can use as exemplars in solving problems. The amount of homework set is often insufficient and/or not demanding enough, so students get inadequate practice in skills. Students are competent at handling data but weak in analysing it or in interpreting results from graphs, as shown in Year 11 coursework assignments.
83. A few assignments used ICT to good effect but little other evidence of the use of ICT in mathematics was seen. Whilst aspects of National Curriculum requirements are partially addressed through ICT lessons, this is not sufficient. Integration of ICT into mathematics teaching is unsatisfactory.
84. There is an acting head of mathematics for the Autumn term, with some support from the former post-holder. Some teachers are relatively new to the English educational system, or inexperienced, but the overall quality of mathematics provision is improving. Assessment records concentrate on examination results and target grades, with limited ongoing tracking and monitoring of student progress. Specific target-setting is not developed sufficiently, and this results in students not knowing sufficiently clearly what they must do to improve. Schemes of work have been updated but ICT links are missing. Other documentation is fragmented. The transition units do not always seem to produce

the results desired. There is provision for catch-up classes, booster classes and revision courses, but their effectiveness is variable. Leadership and management are satisfactory in view of the circumstances, and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, although several features still need attention. The quality of teaching has certainly improved, and improved learning and higher standards are being seen in lessons. Students are not yet reliable at independent or collaborative work, so investigative topics have to be carefully managed to avoid disruption. There is insufficient planning to meet individual students' needs or to use student self-assessment reviews effectively.

Mathematics across the curriculum

85. The succinct numeracy policy statement contains guidance on methods to use and lesson styles. It is supplemented by useful booklets on calculation methods and on charts and graphs. These are distributed to all teachers to assist teaching in other subjects.
86. Numeracy is used well in the history curriculum, percentages being used in a Year 7 decision-making exercise on claimants to the throne in 1066, and in Year 10, graphing of payrates in 1906 or of women in munitions factories. Design and technology provision is also good, covering measurement, calculations, graphs and use of formulae. In both geography and science, numeracy is less satisfactory, not as well developed as in many schools, and graph work tends to be too basic. A good opportunity for numeric development in religious education was missed when considering the status of asylum-seekers and immigrants. Work on rhythm and pattern in music, on proportion and scale in art, and on pulse rates in physical education are satisfactory but poor understanding of metric units as against imperial was apparent in one exercise with Year 10 boys. However, there is a lack of a consistent approach to numeracy across the curriculum overall and its use is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The improvements in national test results of pupils in Year 9 and GCSE examinations in Year 11 have been gradual and sustained.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- Teachers have realistic expectations and provide challenging work which extends all students.
- Teachers' approach to assessing students is inconsistent and the marking of students' books does not help them to understand what they need to do to improve.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support students' learning.

Commentary

87. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in 2003. However, there have been gradual and sustained improvements in these test results during the past four years. These have contributed to a trend which is equal to the national trend. The percentage of students attaining the national expectation (Level 5 or above) is higher than that in both English and mathematics and is above the national

average for similar schools. Results in 2004 fell considerably but the standard of work seen during the inspection improved and was below that expected nationally; students' achievement is satisfactory.

88. GCSE results in 2003 were well below the national average. There has been a gradual and sustained upward trend in results, which is broadly in line with the national trend. Students' performance in double award science is generally equal to their performance in most of their other subjects. Relatively large numbers of students opt to follow the single award science course and their performance is significantly below that in most of their other subjects. Since the attainment of students had been well below the national average at the start of Year 10, their achievement during their GCSE course is satisfactory. Standards of work seen during the inspection represent improvements on previous years but are still below the national average overall. Students from ethnic minorities achieve as well as the rest.
89. The quality of teaching overall in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, teaching ranges from poor to very good, with almost all lessons observed being at least satisfactory and over a third being good or very good. In Years 10 and 11, all teaching is at least satisfactory, with over half those lessons observed being good. Teaching is varied and well matched to students' learning needs and reflects the impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Whilst all teachers attempt to interest the students in the scientific ideas being taught, the most effective lessons are those where a direct connection is made between the students' own experience and where they are able to appreciate the relevance of the subject matter to their own lives. Teaching is sensitive to the needs of the students, offering appropriate challenges which explore and develop their understanding of scientific ideas, but based on realistic expectations for groups of differing attainment, including those students with special learning needs. The department has a clear and explicit policy on the marking of students' work and how assessments are recorded. However, teachers' practice is inconsistent. Some students have the required recording sheets in their books and some students' written work is marked regularly. Whilst the teachers' comments in the books are generally positive and supportive, they do not help the students sufficiently to understand what they have to do to improve. Despite the improvement of facilities within the department since the last inspection, the use of ICT in lessons is rare. Although it is used by a few teachers to interest and engage students and by some students to present their homework, it is not incorporated into the schemes of work and insufficient use is made of its full potential to support and improve students' learning in science.
90. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a coherent drive for improvement based on the careful analysis of student performance data. The management of improving the staffing situation has been good. Teachers share a common purpose and provide mutual support based on a coherent sense of direction. The accommodation is very good. The laboratories are well maintained and the department is well organised, with a good range of resources. The staff handbook is a comprehensive document, which is very effective in supporting both newly qualified and other inexperienced teaching staff. The progress of the department since the last inspection has been good and it has the capacity to improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Statutory requirements for ICT across the curriculum are not met in Years 10 and 11.
- Good leadership and organisation are directly contributing to improving standards in ICT.
- Thoroughly planned ICT lessons involve and engage all students in effective learning.
- Teachers' understanding of their subject is very good and this ensures that students learn ICT skills quickly.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to apply and develop their ICT skills in other subjects.
- Very good specialist accommodation provides teachers with good facilities to support different teaching methods.
- Teachers do not adequately develop skills of independent learning.

Commentary

91. The standards of ICT skills of students starting their secondary education are very variable but, given the relatively poor literacy and numeracy skills, overall standards on entry are well below national expectations. By the end of Year 9, students' ICT skills are still below national standards but they do show improvement and achievement is, therefore, good. In Years 10 and 11 not all pupils continue with ICT. Those students who take ICT GCSE and vocational qualifications continue to make good progress and their achievement is good. Their standards are in line with course expectations. However, other students are reliant on opportunities within other subjects to consolidate and develop their ICT skills. As these are not provided in all subjects, achievement for this small group of students is unsatisfactory, and achievement overall in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. There has been a steady improvement in standards since the last inspection and in 2004 the pass rate for those taking the GCSE full course exceeded 50 per cent for the first time.
92. Teaching and learning are good. High quality schemes of work and lessons plans have recently been introduced. These incorporate a good variety of stimulating activities and teachers are able to use their very sound subject knowledge to ensure that students learn ICT skills quickly. Excellent use is made of projection equipment and all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. The response of students to this is very positive and all are keen to do well. Their behaviour is very good, and those spoken to said that ICT was one of their favourite lessons. In the past, assessment has been inconsistent, with varying degrees of assistance to help students improve their grades. These shortcomings have been corrected and assessment is now linked closely to national curriculum criteria. However, opportunities for students to develop and consolidate their learning in other subjects are still limited and this means that students are not able to take full advantage of their good grounding in basic ICT skills. ICT teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to work collaboratively and there is inadequate preparation of students for the world of work. Staff do not plan sufficiently to develop the capacity of students to work independently. Insufficient information is given to staff about the particular requirements of those students identified as having special educational needs.
93. The recently appointed head of department has had a very significant impact in ensuring that there is a much higher level of consistency in all aspects of departmental planning. He leads a team of very committed and hardworking teachers who combine well to ensure that ICT plays a greater role in contributing to the raising of standards of achievement in all subjects. The headteacher has a clear vision of the future contribution

of ICT to the curriculum and students' learning, and has ensured that shortcomings in resourcing have been resolved. There is still much work to be done in ensuring that all departments utilize these to the full and consider strategies by which ICT can be used to raise standards in all subjects. The school has recently appointed a new systems manager and there is now a much clearer division of roles and responsibilities within the department. The addition of enhanced ICT systems will be needed to improve the school's capability and ensure that the good improvements made since the last inspection are maintained.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. Where students are given access to ICT facilities in other subjects, they demonstrate satisfactory expertise and good confidence. However, a number of subjects do not make sufficient use of ICT, for example, science, design and technology and art and design. In subjects where it is used, for example, in history and geography, it is not used sufficiently to develop students' capabilities to carry out research and work independently.
95. Curriculum mapping has not been completed across all subjects and departments are therefore not always aware of their planned contribution to developing students' ICT skills or personal development and their contribution to assessing students' attainment and areas for improvement.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is staffed by experienced, committed teachers.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- There is insufficient field work and use of ICT to develop students' research skills and capacity to work independently.
- More able students do not have sufficient opportunities to work collaboratively and independently.

Commentary

96. Students who enter the school with well-below-average standards in core subjects of English, mathematics and science make satisfactory progress in their geographical

studies during Years 7, 8 and 9. In 2003, standards in the teacher assessments for students in Year 9 were below the national average, whilst in 2004, standards fell well below this level. These standards show the adverse effects of the students' low levels of literacy and numeracy.

97. Standards attained by the students in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were below the national figure, but comparable to that of similar schools. The percentage of students attaining grades A*-C rose slightly in 2004 but still remained below national figures. Between 95 per cent and 100 per cent of the students gain a GCSE pass at A*- G in each year and this is close to national standards. This represents good achievement by students by the end of Year 11. Students are assisted by their teachers' expertise and very good learning resources. A Year 11 class studying the characteristics of volcanoes looked at a computer slide show presentation interspersed with Internet and video clips to make learning as interesting as possible. Students with special educational needs do as well as other students in the school, and make good progress. More able pupils, whose progress is satisfactory overall, are not given sufficiently frequent opportunities to work independently, or with each other, and to access the Internet for information during lesson time.
98. All the teaching and learning was at least satisfactory; teaching was good overall. Lessons were characterised by whole-class teaching; students with low attainment benefited from this tight control. Those students with special educational needs were well supported. In a good Year 9 lesson, which focused on conflict in the National Parks, the teacher led a class discussion on the views of different groups associated with the Parks to identify the salient points. However, there is still insufficient use of a wide variety of teaching approaches, including the use of planned fieldwork activities. Assessment is very good; exercise books are all marked to date. The best practice involved teachers providing a clear indication of what students had to do to reach a higher grade in their work. A Year 7 class was told to label their maps and drawings in order to reach a higher level; students then graded each other's work to drive the message home. In Years 10 and 11 this very good assessment helps to identify the particular needs of students and gives them a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve their grades.
99. The head of department has provided the teachers with complete schemes of work and individual lesson plans with all resources. However, the main achievement of the good leadership and management demonstrated is the warm, supportive atmosphere that the team of staff has created to encourage students to achieve well. The booklets stapled at the front of exercise books and setting out the content of the course, homework grades and targets provide good information for students and parents. Altogether, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The department's planning does not yet focus sufficiently on improving GCCE grades further and improving the provision of more opportunities for fieldwork.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has ensured that students' achievement is very good.
- Very good teaching supports very effective learning.

- Very high teacher expectations encourage very good student attitudes towards the subject.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills, or to strengthen their research and independent learning skills.
- There is a good range of fieldwork visits that supports the students' interests and skills in history. The regular weekly history clubs provide very good opportunities for extra-curricular interests.
- There is currently no local history module in the nineteenth century British curriculum unit.

Commentary

100. Standards attained are in line with national averages in Year 9 and Year 11. As a result, students' achievement is very good overall. GCSE examination results in 2003 were at the national average for all students; in comparison with similar schools, the results were well above the national average. Taking account of their prior attainment, all students achieved very well and for some students, whose literacy skills were poor on entry, this represents excellent achievement. History secured as many A* grades in 2004 as the total in the rest of the school. The unconfirmed 2004 results indicate that 50 per cent of students secured A* to C grades. These standards and achievement are a reflection of the stability of the staffing of the department and the very good teaching and learning they secure.
101. By Year 9, students develop a very good range of historical skills; they are aware, for example, of the significance of primary and secondary sources. By Year 11, students develop a very good knowledge of the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
102. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. Teachers plan and organise their lessons very well to provide a very effective and structured learning environment. Teachers have very high expectations of the students, who are keen to learn and show very positive attitudes to their studies. Behaviour is very good in all classes; a strength of the department. There are some very good question-and-answer sessions, with a very strong emphasis on key words and concepts, with the full range of students making contributions. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are very well supported through structured worksheets, an emphasis on literacy skills and very strong teacher support. Assessment is good and contributes well to students knowing what it is they have to do to improve. There is a very good programme of fieldwork, both day and residential, and the weekly history clubs enable many students to make very good progress. Information and communication technology opportunities are included in the curriculum; however, they are insufficient to provide good support for individual research and study skills.
103. Leadership and management of the department are very good, with a very clear vision for further developments and a very strong emphasis on developing a very effective and committed team that contributes to good practice within the school. The schemes of work are comprehensive; however, there is currently no local history module in the nineteenth century module. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because teaching and learning are stronger, students' achievement is very high and there is very effective leadership. Overall, this is a very effective department.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is now sufficient time in Years 7, 8 and 9 to meet statutory requirements.
- There is no scheme of work or lesson plans which adequately reflect the statutory requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The staffing situation is unsatisfactory and is having an adverse effect on students' attainment and progress.

Commentary

104. There are no GCSE examination results from 2003. In 2004, standards attained by the students in the GCSE Short Course are below the national average of 2003. Around 28 per cent achieved the higher grades of A* to C. All students achieved the grades of A* to G. The standards of attainment seen during the inspection in Year 11 are below the course expectations. Students can discuss many aspects of the course, such as the problem of suffering, but they find it more difficult to express with confidence the religious perspectives on these topics. The quality of writing is variable but there is good extended writing in some books. Students use ICT to extend their learning. Achievement is satisfactory.
105. At the end of Year 9, standards are well below those indicated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Students can refer to various festivals and rites of passage in world religions but they are less certain about the basic belief systems which lie behind these. Their knowledge and understanding of Hinduism and Buddhism are not as strong as their knowledge and understanding of other religions. Students can make good verbal responses to many issues in their learning but their written skills are less strong; achievement is satisfactory.
106. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. Where the teaching is very good, the subject matter is presented clearly and there is a confidence in the subject content. Consequently, the pace is fast and students are engaged in their work and learn a great deal in the time available. Where the teaching is satisfactory or unsatisfactory, the teaching skills are good but the subject content is not presented with the clarity and depth required. The pace is often slow as a result and students cannot always understand what they have to do. This leads to some unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but there is insufficient use of different tasks and resources for them which would be of additional help to both them and the higher- and lower-attaining students. Students who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Homework is set and an assessment policy is in place; they are effective in supporting students' achievement. Lessons overall do not make a consistently good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
107. The staffing of the department is unsatisfactory. The head of department is a non-specialist teacher and around 75 per cent of the department's teaching is being done by non-specialists. This is having an adverse effect on the students' attainment and progress. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no scheme of work or lesson plans which adequately reflect the statutory requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and its requirements are not being met in Years 7 to 9. Departmental monitoring of teaching is not being carried out. Progress since the last inspection on the issue of

time for Years 7, 8 and 9 has been good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The overall quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Students' achievement is good.
- The lack of computer equipment restricts the range of curriculum opportunities.
- Attainment in Years 10 and 11 is below average.

Commentary

108. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, attainment is below the national average and in 2004 no students were assessed as attaining above the national expectation (i.e. Level 6 or above). In the 2003 GCSE examinations for design and technology, results were below the national average overall. The GCSE results for 2004 show a significant improvement over the previous year.
109. Work seen during the inspection confirmed that standards have improved. By the end of Year 9, students make good progress and their attainment was in line with national expectations. They produce articles of good quality, but they lack the skills to express their ideas well and communicate their designs clearly. Students' attainment by the end of Year 11 is below course expectations. They make satisfactory progress when considering their standards when they start the course. Higher-attaining students are capable of high quality work, as can be seen, for example, in the detailed and well presented project folders and the good quality practical project work. In general, students make limited use of computers, particularly computer-aided design and manufacture. Students are challenged to focus clearly on the requirements of the GCSE examination. As a result, they understand what they need to do and are helped to reach higher grades.
110. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations to engage students. Effective classroom management is based on good relationships. The good range of activities ensures that all students are actively involved in their learning. Lessons are sharply focused and the objectives are shared sufficiently with the students. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and new knowledge is introduced as and when it is needed, so that students use it immediately to develop their understanding. Teachers work well with students with special educational needs, helping them to progress well. Students' work is marked regularly and teachers provide encouraging, motivating comments that show students

how to improve. These assessment outcomes are used consistently and effectively by teachers to adapt their future planning and teaching

111. Leadership and management are good. The head of faculty has rightly focused on lesson planning to improve teaching, the use of assessment and the tracking and monitoring of student progress and attainment to help raise standards. Systems for assessment and monitoring of students' progress and attainment are now well developed and are good. Although assessment systems are well established, information from assessment is not used to set departmental targets. There is very good technician support. The lack of computer equipment restricts the range of curriculum opportunities.
112. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9.
- Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above the national average for similar schools.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- There are limited opportunities for students to produce images using ICT.
- There are limited opportunities for students' self-evaluation of their work.

Commentary

113. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is below national expectations as students enter with weak drawing and painting skills. However, they enjoy the subject and they make good progress in their first year. In Year 8, this good progress is sustained and by the end of Year 9 there is evidence of improved control over a range of different media and materials, and the standard of work is in line with national expectations. Achievement from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9 is therefore good.
114. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, standards were well above the national average, with 66 per cent of students achieving the highest grades A* - C, by comparison with the national figure for similar schools of 53 per cent. The students' performance in art and design was much better than in all of their other subjects. However, there has been a decline in the number of students achieving the highest grades in the 2004 examination, which can be attributed to staffing issues. Students with special educational needs are very well integrated into teaching groups and given good support. Achievement from the start of Year 10 to the end of Year 11 is satisfactory.
115. Teaching is good overall. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and come to lessons well prepared. Management of students is usually good, but there were instances when the classroom organization was weak. Teachers have high expectations of

students and homework is set and marked and feedback provided for students on a regular basis. The pace of lessons is usually good, but there are missed opportunities for greater variation in the manner in which subject matter is introduced at the start of lessons. At present, very little use is made of modern technology in the form of photography and ICT by staff and students.

116. Most students settle readily to the tasks that are set by their teachers, and some Year 8 groups are beginning to produce work of a standard that is above national expectations. They work with reasonable concentration and in Years 10 and 11, many are beginning to demonstrate the capacity for working independently when carrying out research. The standard of work produced by Years 10 and 11 is currently in line with national expectations. Students' learning is good in lessons.
117. Leadership is good and management satisfactory. The head of department has a very clear vision as to how the department should develop and he is a very good role model for students and staff alike. There is presently an effective team in place, after some staffing difficulties last year. Assessing, tracking and recording systems are in place but there is a lack of opportunities for student self-evaluation.
118. Students have very limited access to modern technology, in the form of ICT or photographic equipment in the art studios. Improvement since the last inspection is good, especially in relation to the accommodation. Results in the 2003 GCSE Art and Design examination were well above those for similar schools nationally. Teaching is now good in Years 7 to 9, resources are good and accommodation is very good.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships in lessons, which makes students feel secure and able to take musical risks in a supportive environment.
- There is very good planning and preparation, which ensures access to the curriculum for all in Years 7 to 9.
- Achievement is good.
- The assessment scheme is built on firm foundations, but does not yet build in self-assessment linked to National Curriculum criteria and levels.
- Accommodation has not improved since the last inspection and this is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

119. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is well below national expectations in music, with many students having few skills and little experience. Attainment is in line with national expectations by Years 9 and 11. There was no GCSE examination group in 2003. However, over the last ten years, results have been steadily improving; in 2002 they were below the national average, and the 2004 results showed continuing improvement, with 67 per cent being A*- C grades. Students with special educational needs achieve and attain as well as their peers. There is no evidence that difficulties with language or literacy stand in the way of the progress of any student. The keyboard improvisations based on

Pachelbel's *Canon* demonstrated by Year 8 students during the inspection were of very high quality, and they were justifiably proud of themselves.

120. Achievement is good overall. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and those who chose the subject for GCSE maintain this good progress. All students work at their own level, and make good progress. Extension activities are always present, and students use them well. The frequent pair and group work encourages individual progress, and careful deployment to groups by the teacher ensures effective support for the less skilled. The students support each other exceptionally well, and are very enthusiastic about each other's success.
121. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9, good in Year 11 and very good overall. The quality of provision is based on teacher enthusiasm and commitment. It is supported by very good preparation and planning and linked to clear targets and effective strategies for delivery. Relationships are very good, and a very creative working environment is linked to high expectations of attitudes, behaviour and commitment. Students learn by aural analysis, skill development, trying out new ideas and by doing and then refining what they are doing.
122. Leadership and management are very good, and are based on inspiration, expertise and a commitment to the students. The accommodation has not improved since the last inspection, when it was an issue. It is not suited, leading to inefficient use of resources. Sound proofing is poor, there are not enough practice rooms and one room is next to the hall which is used as a venue for external examinations. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with world music playing a strong part. Work-related elements are related to teaching and learning style, and often by implication. The use of ICT is at an early stage of development. Assessment is built on a firm foundation, but does not yet adequately include students' self-assessment against national curriculum criteria and levels in all topics. Attitudes and behaviour are very good; students arrive expecting to enjoy the lessons, and are aware that hard work is also necessary. Music supports the extra-curricular provision of the school well.
123. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, but the issues concerning accommodation are still unresolved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 9 are well above the national expectation and standards on the GCSE course are well above the national average.
- The department is well managed, with strong leadership and a good vision for the future.
- Teaching is good throughout the department, with some very good teaching in the GCSE course.
- All students achieve well, with the more able making very good progress.
- The department contributes well to the students' personal development and raises their self-esteem.
- The linking of student experience into the wider curriculum is underdeveloped.

Commentary

124. Standards in GCSE were above the national average for boys, with 56 per cent of the students attaining grades A* to C in 2003. In 2004 the results improved considerably and 83 per cent of the passes were at A* to C grades. The more able students reach a high standard in their practical work. In the GCSE theory lessons students show limited writing skills. Teachers use marking well to give diagnostic feedback for improving the quality of assignments and emphasise the importance of this to raise standards in all lessons.
125. Standards in Year 9 teacher assessments in 2003 were well above the national average and stayed at that level in 2004. Students achieve well in the practical performance of skills and the more able demonstrate a good standard of technical mastery by the end of Year 9.
126. Standards seen during the inspection through lesson observation were in line with national and course expectations overall and higher in some lessons, particularly with more able students. Insufficient time has passed, from the beginning of the new school year and the introduction of new and more advanced skills, to see these technical skills mastered.
127. Students enter the school with poor literacy skills and the department works hard to include aspects of oracy in all lessons, through planned opportunities for speaking, direct questioning and paired evaluation work. Key techniques of throwing, catching and passing a ball, plus body management, are not evident on arrival in Year 7. Concentration on developing skills, with time on task to consolidate, helps students to improve. This is well supported by the generous curriculum time, beyond that expected nationally, as part of the enrichment of this curriculum area through specialist sports college status. Students with special educational needs are well supported by staff and they achieve in line with other students. Students develop an understanding of health and fitness and are able to observe and comment on strengths and weaknesses in others. Students do not naturally link their learning to other experiences, both within and beyond the physical education curriculum.
128. Teaching and learning are good across the department, with some very good teaching in GCSE classes. Effective behaviour management and very good classroom organisation give teachers a firm foundation for skill development. Opportunities for students to achieve within the curriculum and beyond, through teams and competitions, are further supported by strong affirmation of effort and achievement in lessons. Participation is good, with lively pace and a high level of activity. Relationships are good and students respond to teachers' high expectations, trying hard and working productively. In GCSE theory lessons, students do not approach their learning with an enquiring, active attitude. Teachers work very hard to help students improve. Teachers are conscious of the students as kinaesthetic learners and offer a range of practical activities, including in GCSE theory lessons, so that students can see the relevance of their learning. The use of Dartfish computer software helps students to evaluate their own performance and see what they need to do to improve.
129. Students have a broad and balanced curricular experience, taught by staff deployed to their strengths. The introduction of Australian Rules Football, taught by the two overseas trained teachers, has brought a new and exciting challenge. The extended curriculum

time of two-hour blocks has facilitated the use of off-site provision, which provides wide curricular experiences for all students in high quality environments and makes links to community provision which they may wish to access after leaving school. The subject provides a very good range of activities to support the enrichment curriculum and students and parents alike are appreciative of this. Take-up is good and there is evidence of students being successful at regional and international levels.

130. Accommodation is good, but GCSE theory lessons are taught in mobiles. Whilst there is a designated classroom, the number of classes now taking GCSE means that some classes do not benefit from the good displays there. Completion of the Healthy Living Unit will make a significant difference to the accommodation, providing a theory base with interactive whiteboard and networked communications, plus fitness equipment. This will make a strong link to the National Healthy School Standard that the school is currently involved with.
131. Leadership and management are very good, with clear procedures and practices. A strong, united team of enthusiastic and committed teachers has been developed, who have a strong role model in the head of department. The department leads the school in continuous professional development (CPD) and stands as an example of good practice. The use of other teachers in the enrichment lessons spreads this expertise across the school. The school works well with other schools, particularly local primary schools, in supporting good practice.
132. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have increased, health-related exercise is more consistently taught and applied; provision has improved through the introduction of the enrichment curriculum, whilst accommodation and teaching in Years 10 and 11 have significantly improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

The quality of provision of citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management provided by the co-ordinator are good.
- The school has produced a very good citizenship development plan.
- Students are developing greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
- Students' achievement is good.
- Some subject areas have been slow to respond to the introduction of citizenship in their schemes of work.

Commentary

133. The standard of work that Years 10 and 11 students are producing for their GCSE examination in citizenship is above the course expectations. They participate in a variety of school-based and community-based activities which enable them to demonstrate greater understanding of their role as individuals operating within society, Achievement is good in this newly established course and students are becoming more aware of their

rights, responsibilities and duties as citizens. Students in Years 7 to 9 are producing work of a standard that is in line with national expectations. They too, are actively involved in the life of the school and the community and learn about fairness, social justice and respect for authority. They learn about human rights issues throughout the world and the need for responsible action. Students with special educational needs are very well supported and integrated into teaching groups. The achievement of students from Years 7 to 11 is good, students in Years 10 and 11 maintaining the good progress of previous years.

134. The quality of teaching and learning is good and in some subject areas students are given the opportunity to explore moral, social and political issues. In Years 10 and 11 they examine the legal, political, constitutional and economic systems that have a direct impact on their lives. Planning by teachers is good. On a regular basis students are given a new theme, such as the "Recycling Scheme" which involved five students in setting out to improve the environment in and around the school. They produced a very good written document that included a highly detailed activity log. They made very good use of ICT, photography and communication skills. In other subjects, such as design and technology, students work as mentors for other students with the intention of helping them make progress. Students are encouraged to reflect on the impact of technology on society. The department's schemes of work link these activities directly to citizenship. In science, students have investigated the use of steroids by athletes. Assessment involves both self-assessment by students themselves and assessment by teachers. At present there is insufficient consistency across all subject areas.
135. The school has produced a very good citizenship handbook in which the aims of the programme are very clearly stated. The close relationship between the spiritual, emotional and moral development of each student and the citizenship programme is established. The teaching team is made up of a subject co-ordinator, who has the support of other teachers, tutors and year co-ordinators. Members of the senior management team are also directly involved in the teaching of the citizenship programme. Wherever there are gaps in specialist knowledge, external agencies are employed to provide to provide training for staff. Citizenship classes are timetabled for students from Year 7 to Year 12. There are also activities in tutor time, in assemblies and in subject areas across the school. However, some subject areas have been slow to become actively involved in the teaching of citizenship across the whole school.
136. There is a very effective School Council to which students elect representatives. This introduces them to the notion of voting, which is central to citizenship. The school operates a highly successful Peer Mentoring Scheme, which helps students improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This scheme is also responsible for enabling students to devise strategies that are designed to reduce anti-social behaviour in and around the school.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, six subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. The focus subjects were English, mathematics, physics, physical education, engineering and ICT. Biology in Year 12 and BTEC food and nutrition was sampled.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Art and design | 4 | 75.0 | 73.8 | 0 | 16.7 | 20.0 | 25.6 |
| Biology | 4 | 25.0 | 62.9 | 0 | 10.9 | 5.0 | 19.7 |
| Business studies | 3 | 33.3 | 75.6 | 0 | 15.4 | 6.7 | 25.5 |
| Communication studies | 4 | 50.0 | 84.5 | 0 | 19.5 | 12.5 | 29.9 |
| English literature | 1 | 0 | 83.8 | 0 | 16.3 | 0 | 28.6 |
| General studies | 2 | 50 | 71.6 | 0 | 16.2 | 10.0 | 24.6 |
| History | 1 | 100 | 79.3 | 0 | 16.5 | 0 | 16.5 |
| Information and communication technology | 4 | 50 | 65.8 | 0 | 10.2 | 12.5 | 20.8 |
| Mathematics | 14 | 0 | 58.7 | 0 | 15.8 | 0 | 20.7 |
| Other social studies | 12 | 33.3 | 65.7 | 0 | 12.4 | 10.0 | 21.6 |
| Physics | 14 | 7.1 | 64.8 | 0 | 11.6 | 1.4 | 20.5 |
| Sports/PE studies | 5 | 80 | 70.9 | 0 | 7.9 | 18.0 | 21.2 |

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 | 6 | 100 | 97.7 | 33.3 | 41.5 | 66.7 | 81.9 |
| Biology | 1 | 0 | 75.2 | 0 | 34.6 | 0 | 75.2 |
| Business studies | 6 | 100 | 98.7 | 16.7 | 34.9 | 66.7 | 79.1 |
| Communication studies | 8 | 100 | 99.0 | 12.5 | 33.0 | 72.5 | 79.0 |
| English literature | 8 | 100 | 99.2 | 12.5 | 46.1 | 55.0 | 86.2 |
| History | 4 | 100 | 98.9 | 0 | 40.8 | 55.0 | 82.8 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Information and communication technology | 7 | 100 | 95.4 | 14.3 | 24.0 | 62.9 | 69.0 |
| Other social studies | 12 | 58.3 | 96.1 | 0 | 36.6 | 30.0 | 77.1 |
| Physics | 4 | 50.0 | 80.6 | 0 | 42.9 | 25.0 | 80.6 |
| Sports/PE studies | 4 | 100 | 97.6 | 25.0 | 24.8 | 60.0 | 71.1 |

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in AS and Advanced Level examinations have been well below national standards.
- Current standards and achievement have improved.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Teaching styles do not sufficiently promote independent learning.

Commentary

137. Standards attained in the AS examinations in 2003 were well below those achieved by all male students nationally, in terms of pass rates, average points scored and the proportion gaining the higher grades A-B. Judged by the same measures the standards achieved in 2003 at Advanced Level were also well below the national levels for all male students. In 2004, standards at Advanced Level did improve and all students passed, with one of the five gaining a grade B.
138. Achievement in the sixth form has been below average, as a result of a combination of factors. The attainment level on entry to the course has historically been low and a significant number of the higher-attaining students in Year 11 choose to pursue sixth form education elsewhere. Small group sizes have restricted the teaching and the educational experiences open to the students. Students' expectations have been low and the department is successfully working to raise levels of cultural awareness through extensive extra-curricular enrichment activities. Linked to this is a commitment to promote students' self-confidence by teaching them the skills which would permit a greater sense of responsibility for their own independent learning. A scrutiny of their written work indicated that the majority of students currently make satisfactory progress and this was confirmed by standards seen in lessons, which were currently in line with course expectations.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate enthusiasm for their subject. Texts and assignments are well chosen. Teachers develop good relationships with students and demonstrate very good language and personal skills to maintain a high level of discussion. Where teaching is less effective, it encourages a passive approach and does not meet the department's aim of making students more responsible for their own learning. Marking is very good, precisely related to course attainment objectives and offering students precise guidance about how to improve their work.
140. Leadership of the subject is good because there is a vision and a commitment to raise standards and the cultural awareness of the students. The management of a difficult staffing situation has been well handled. Teachers who share the teaching work well together and have their own strengths. There are possibilities for other teachers to learn by taking some responsibility for sixth form teaching and offering students the benefit of a different voice and different point of view. The priority for the department is to ensure that the quality of teaching develops to increase pace and rigour in lessons, challenging students to take personal responsibility for more of their own learning.
141. There has been an unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection, but in the last two years, standards have improved and numbers opting for English in the sixth form have begun to increase.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

142. The literacy skills of sixth form students are weak, restricting the quality of the education they receive and the progress that they make. The speaking and listening skills of students are below the level needed for challenging work in the sixth form. Group discussion in a Year 12 English lesson was limited to checking the meaning of words in a poem and did not reach a more extensive discussion about the ways in which those words were used. Debates to explore hypotheses in sixth form science lessons were brief and restricted. However, in the best lessons, students reach a high level of discussion. In a Year 13 media studies lesson on the subject of cultural identity, two students explained very well why the term "Asian" is too vague to describe adequately any one of a range of cultural backgrounds. Year 13 students discussing anti-Semitism as the background to the novel *Schindler's Ark* managed a mature discussion involving subtle judgements about motives, social pressures and individual morality,
143. There is evidence that limited reading skills also hamper achievement. Students reading aloud from a science text book had difficulty with technical vocabulary. In English, teachers read for the students instead of asking them to read. Students in a Year 12 drama lesson had difficulty reading a Shakespearean passage and did not recognise the change in language from Brecht to Shakespeare. The Library Resource Centre is inadequate for advanced work in a school of this size. Some subject departments, like English, have advised on the provision of background materials to support AS and Advanced Level work, but overall the facilities for independent research from text or screen are inadequate. A scrutiny of work in the sixth form revealed very little evidence of Internet research.

144. Writing skills are weaker than other skills. Physical education theory work showed poor sentence construction and spelling and punctuation are too often inaccurate. There is insufficient emphasis on independent writing in sixth form science, where writing is generally limited to note-taking. In an English lesson, Year 12 students had to be prompted to make notes at appropriate times and then wrote the minimum. Aware of students' language weaknesses, teachers often take on themselves the responsibility for moving the lesson forward, for example, chairing question-and-answer sessions when group discussion would be better or giving out notes when individual research would have made students more responsible for their own learning. Teachers generally lead evaluation sessions rather than asking students to report on their discussions. In over-compensating for the relatively weak literacy of students, they risk discouraging the independent learning and study skills necessary for the students to attain the highest grades at this level.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- AS-level mathematics has been reintroduced into the sixth form curriculum.
- Results in previous years have been unsatisfactory.
- In the absence of a permanent head of mathematics, leadership is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

145. In September 2004 the school reintroduced an AS mathematics course into the curriculum. Seven students currently study it; most having grades B or C at GCSE. The students are rising well to the challenge of the new core modular course, with appropriate initial topics chosen for teaching. The students show interest and good application, being able to differentiate and integrate simple algebraic expressions and evaluate direct integrals. The enthusiastic teaching motivates and encourages them and the current quality of teaching is good. Currently students' standards are below course expectations and their achievement is below that expected, but their learning in lessons is satisfactory.
146. Two years ago the school had decided to discontinue AS and Advanced Level on-site mathematics courses, since students had been achieving poor results, many having only studied the Intermediate tier at GCSE. Abler students tended to leave for other schools, and those remaining found difficulty in coping with the demands of the courses. Temporary collaborative provision was made for a small number of boys to attend courses at the local girls' school, whilst remaining on CBSC roll, but success rates remained low.
147. In 2003-2004 four boys in their second year in the sixth form did continue with AS level mathematics at the school, three gaining an AS award at grades D or E in the summer examinations of 2004. This was a good achievement, as each took a different combination of modules, part self-taught, part teacher-taught. Whilst provision of a variety of modules is commendable, the effectiveness of doing so is debatable. Decisions have yet to be made as to the modules current students will finally take. In the absence of a permanent head of department, leadership is unsatisfactory and there is not yet a clarity of vision or action taken having monitored performance data.

Mathematics across the curriculum

148. At this early stage of sixth form studies there have been few opportunities for the application of mathematics in other subjects. Students can perform calculations, read scales accurately and record data satisfactorily, although some had difficulty in constructing a graph of experimental results in science. As most have moderate skills in mathematics on entering the sixth form, particularly in analysing and interpreting information, development work is inhibited, so topics have to be geared to recognise this.

SCIENCE

The focus was on physics. Only biology in Year 12 was sampled, as there are no students currently studying biology in Year 13 or chemistry in both Years 12 and 13. Results in 2003 were well below the national average in biology. The teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson observed. This observation and the scrutiny of students' work show that the students make satisfactory progress compared to their GCSE results.

Physics

Provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- Standards in both AS and Advanced Level examinations are well below the national averages.
- Current standards show an improvement and are below course expectations.
- Teaching is good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support students' learning.
- Students' opportunities for independent learning are inadequate.

Commentary

149. Standards attained in both AS and Advanced Level examinations since 2000 have been well below the national average. The number of students completing the Advanced Level course is small but has remained stable for the past five years. During this period larger groups of students have started the AS level course in Year 12 but about half of them either leave the school or cease their study of physics after having completed the AS examination. In Year 13, students' achievement is satisfactory based on their GCSE results. The results from their AS module examinations during Year 12 confirm this.

150. Teaching is good overall. Two lessons were observed, taught by different teachers, and both were good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear objectives, which are shared with the students. Both teachers have realistic expectations of the students and provide individual support sensitive to their needs without compromising on the challenge of the work undertaken.

151. Good working relationships exist between students and their teachers, based on mutual respect and good humour. Students enjoy practical activities and are interested because

the teacher shows the relevance of the physics being taught. The teachers provide feedback to students on the accuracy of their work and suggestions for what they have to do to improve. The teachers recognise that students find independent study difficult. However, the tight structure of the work they present to the students prevents them from adequately developing these skills. Whilst some students do use ICT to complete their homework, teachers do not use it routinely in their work and exploit its particular advantages to fully support students' learning in physics.

152. The leadership and management of the department are good. Roles and responsibilities are clear as a result of good planning. Students' performance in the subject is regularly and exhaustively reviewed and analysed. Their progress during the course is closely monitored and their aspirations are kept high as the target-setting process is well established.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very well organised teaching enables students to develop sophisticated ICT skills.
- Good planning ensures that students are well prepared for examinations.
- All sixth form students have easy access to computers which means that ICT can be used by all departments.
- The vocational curriculum is not developed fully enough to meet the needs of students in the sixth form.

Commentary

153. ICT courses are popular options in the sixth form and attract many students who have been successful in their GCSE examinations. Although numbers taking examinations have been small, results in 2003 were close to national averages, and as standards of entry into the sixth form are relatively low, achievement is good. Standards seen during the inspection were above course expectations
154. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well planned, expectations are high, and great skill is shown in translating the requirements of the ICT specification into assignments which can be easily understood by students. Their responses are very positive and a small number of students show exceptional ICT skills. Lower-attaining students can take GCSE ICT but this offers little added value to those courses currently on offer in Years 10 and 11. There is almost always space on computers for students of all sixth form studies but not all subjects fully exploit the additional opportunities offered by ICT to extend and develop learning.
155. As with the main school, the leadership and management of ICT in the sixth form are good, but curriculum provision is not satisfactory. Although ICT is both a popular and successful option, the full AVCE award is not available and this means that there is much less time to develop skills of independent learning and depth of understanding of ICT applications which would further increase the employability of students taking these courses.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

156. Students have appropriate ICT skills to support their learning in sixth form subjects but not all subjects make full use of both these skills and the ICT facilities to support the development of students' capabilities to work independently and carry out research skills effectively. Physical education is an example where the resources are appropriately used.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The focus was on NVQ performing engineering operations, and BTEC food and nutrition was sampled. Five sessions were observed.

Technology

Provision in technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have a very good grasp of concepts and apply them well in assignments, when answering questions, during discussions; overall, they are achieving well.
- Teaching and learning are good; the sessions were very well structured, with a range of activities which effectively help students to build up their knowledge and understanding.
- Students work very well together, sharing ideas and information freely.
- The subject areas are well led and managed.

Commentary

157. There is good provision for both subjects. Students study food and nutrition at BTec Level 2 and performing engineering operations at NVQ Levels 1 / 2. Students make good progress and their achievement is good.
158. The 2003 results for the performing engineering operations course were above the course average but the number of school entries was low. All students who took the examination gained a pass grade.
159. The standard of work of current students is above the course expectations. Students are achieving well. In the lessons seen they were doing well as a result of effective teaching which demanded much of them. The lesson structure and activities clearly focused their learning. Students recall knowledge well and apply it in a range of contexts, and they show a good level of confidence.
160. Teaching was good and students learnt well as a result. The principal features of the good teaching were clear objectives, sharp planning, brisk pace and a range of teaching strategies to bring about learning. The teachers had good subject knowledge and used this very well in discussion, questioning and demonstration of the tasks set. The lessons provided opportunities for students to practice what they had been shown and their skills and knowledge improved as the lesson progressed. In the lessons students had opportunities to work as individuals to formulate ideas, prepare specifications and practice skills. Students responded confidently to the activities.

161. Students learn well. They are attentive, work productively and respond very well to the supportive teaching and different learning styles they experience. They rose to the challenge of manufacturing products and creating recipes for a specific purpose. In the lesson, time was used very well. Students support and help each other effectively and, in groups, talk and listen to each other in a mature way as part of their learning. Students are always very confident when offering ideas in open discussion and this was seen in the lesson where students were evaluating different types of ingredients and recipes when preparing a menu.
162. The good teaching and learning result from work in the faculty being well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. The planning effectively reflected the course requirement and determined the level for good teaching. Recording of progress and target setting, based on careful analysis of student performance through review, evaluation and assessment, is well established. Learning outcomes are sharply focused.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards attained are adversely affected by students' weak literacy skills.

Commentary

163. Students are offered a varied curriculum, with opportunities to take AS or BTEC levels to meet personal needs. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good practice, and a great emphasis placed on learning through doing. Teachers prepare well for all lessons and relationships are friendly and supportive.
164. Standards are broadly in line with national expectation and numbers on the courses are buoyant. Standards of literacy affect performance in the theoretical aspects of learning. Extended writing in assignments is weak and teachers are exploring alternative assessment methods where possible. Standards in the practical aspects are good, with the more able achieving well, building on the good experiences of the GCSE course.
165. Students are not self-motivating, active learners and teachers work hard to support them and help them improve. Students access ICT whenever possible as an aid to their writing and work shows evidence of the use of websites.
166. Opportunities to take the Community Sports Leader Award are not available currently, but some students have taken refereeing qualifications and support the school teams. Students on the BTEC course take coaching qualifications which equip them to support students in school and also in Leisure and Recreation employment beyond school. Students taking the subject continue to support school activities well.

167. Leadership is very good. There is a clear vision of how the subject will support the development of a relevant sixth form curriculum and extend the opportunities for students' personal development and the steps necessary to achieve this. Management is good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Sixth form grade</i> | <i>School grade</i> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school | 4 | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | | 3 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 | 3 |
| Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school | 4 | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | | 6 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | | 3 |
| Attendance | 3 | 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 | | 4 |
| The quality of teaching | 4 | 4 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 5 | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 4 | 3 |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 | 3 |
|--|---|---|

| | | |
|--|---|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 4 | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 5 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 | 3 |

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