

INSPECTION REPORT

HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL

Hendon, London

LEA area: London Borough of Barnet

Unique reference number: 101366

Headteacher: Rabbi David Radomsky

Lead inspector: Brian Rowe

Dates of inspection: 07 – 10 September 2004

Inspection number: 268817

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

Deleted: SMT

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of students:	11-18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1078
School address:	Holden Hill Road Hendon London
Postcode:	NW4 1NA
Telephone number:	020 8203 1411
Fax number:	020 8202 4526
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Benjamin Conway
Date of previous inspection:	January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hasmonean High is a mixed, voluntary aided, comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18 from Orthodox Jewish families, situated in the London Borough of Barnet. The school operates on two sites for boys and girls, one and a half miles apart. Boys and girls are educated separately. The school has been awarded specialist Business and Enterprise College status and gained a School Achievement Award for significant improvement in examination results during three consecutive years from 2000 to 2003. It is over-subscribed and pupils come from a large catchment area across North London. Some of the pupils come from families that are economically and socially disadvantaged, but most are from professional and business backgrounds. There are currently 1,078 pupils on roll, including 245 in the sixth form, making it an average sized secondary. The sixth form is much larger than normal as almost all pupils stay on to continue their education in school. The proportion of boys (526) to girls (552) is similar in each year group. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a very much lower proportion than average, and none are at the early stages of using the English language. There are very few refugees in school. About 5 per cent of the pupils receive free school meals and this proportion is well below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. About 19 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, of whom 22 have a Statement of Special Educational Need. These proportions are average when compared to other secondary schools. Staff turnover is very much lower than most London schools, although there has been some difficulty for recruiting staff in some subjects. Parts of the school benefit from new buildings, but the boys' site is especially cramped and short of space.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1695	Brian Rowe	Lead inspector	
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	
23393	Brian Dower	Team inspector	English
33595	Martin Marsh	Team inspector	Mathematics
33505	Mehar Brar	Team inspector	Science English as an additional language
13805	Lyn Lowery	Team inspector	Design and technology
33838	Derek Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
33173	Malcolm Doolin	Team inspector	History Special educational needs
31441	Maggie King	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
2032	Chris Polyblank	Team inspector	Music
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education - boys
32226	Christine Hough	Team inspector	Physical education – girls Citizenship
15277	Chris Vidler	Team inspector	Business education Economics
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Art
4727	Jeff Hale	Team inspector	Geography
32582	Stephen Manning	Team inspector	Post-16 psychology
32251	Peter Bratton	Team inspector	Supporting mathematics

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
Head Office
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hasmonean High is a very effective school that provides good value for money. The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputies, provides very good leadership. His vision and effective management initiatives have significantly improved the school, resulting in higher standards, success in national awards and designation as a specialist business and enterprise college. Teaching, learning and students' achievements are improving as a direct result of high expectations and the school's perceptive use of self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school creates a positive religious community where pupils feel secure, are happy, very well cared for and determined to learn.
- Standards are very high and pupils achieve very well because of their very positive attitudes to learning, well developed learning skills and determination to be successful in their studies.
- The headteacher, the deputy head in charge of the girls' site and other key staff share a clear vision for future developments and are providing very effective leadership that is raising standards and improving the curriculum and quality of education.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent.
- The school does not ensure sufficient co-ordination of whole school and national initiatives.
- Governors and senior staff do not sufficiently celebrate the strengths of the school with the parents and the local community.
- Some poor accommodation on the boys' site restricts learning and curriculum development.
- The provision for teaching music is outstanding.

Overall, improvements since the last inspection have been good. The issues identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 11 and Year 13 results

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

Key: A* - very high, A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

The achievement of pupils is excellent and standards overall are very high. The school has continued to improve upon the high standards and achievement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above those expected nationally, but build on them very effectively. Standards are very good across the year groups as a result of the very good learning ethos, pupils' very positive attitudes and teachers' subject knowledge. In tests taken at the end of Year 9, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average. GCSE results overall are very high in comparison to those found nationally. The proportion of girls and boys gaining five or more GCSE passes above a grade C is very high in comparison to the national figure, placing them in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally. In many subjects a very high proportion of pupils achieve the top A* and A grades. Provisional results for 2004 give a similar picture. Students in the sixth form achieve very well with examination results that have continued to improve in recent years and are well above the national average.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, throughout the school is excellent. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They behave well and develop very positive relationships with each

other and staff. In a few lessons when teaching is less effective, the behaviour of boys is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good and learning is very good because of the pupils' positive attitudes and determination to succeed. Arrangements for assessing students' work are satisfactory and improving, but inconsistent across subjects and the two sites. There are examples of very good and excellent teaching to be found in many departments, but teaching is still too variable in quality, with some of it unsatisfactory, especially on the boys' site.

The school's overall educational provision has many strengths. These include the level of care and support and guidance given to pupils and the school's links with the community. There are no significant weaknesses and the school is determined to improve all aspects of the education it provides.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality and effectiveness of governance and leadership are very good. A significant strength is the very good leadership and commitment of the headteacher to ensuring high academic standards and maintaining adherence to the Orthodox Jewish culture and traditions. Leadership and management are raising standards effectively. Management at all levels is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection through staff training and greater emphasis on self-evaluation. The monitoring of teaching and learning by a few subject leaders is not sufficiently rigorous.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are largely supportive of the school. They value the high quality education and strong Jewish morals it upholds. However, a significant minority of parents is often highly critical of the school, without justification. Students hold very positive views about school. They especially value the safe, secure environment and the care teachers provide. They feel that their opinions are heard, valued and acted upon. Girls, for example, are pleased that the uniform is changing; boys would like better quality accommodation.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the co-ordination of curriculum initiatives between subjects and across the two sites in literacy, assessment, information and communication technology, English as an additional language, citizenship and work related learning;
- encourage governors and senior staff to celebrate the strengths of the school more regularly with the parents and local community;
- maintain the drive to improve the quality of accommodation on the boys' site.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

in boys' physical education in Years 7 to 9, citizenship and work related learning.

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good and it provides good value for money. Standards are very high and examination results have improved considerably over the last few years. The quality of teaching and learning is good, which ensures students achieve very well. The sixth form students are very well supported and guided as a result of caring staff and very good leadership and effective management.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are very high and examination results have continued to improve in recent years.
- Students are exceptionally well motivated to succeed and take considerable responsibility for their own learning.
- Both school and community benefit greatly from the dedication and enthusiasm students show in helping others and raising money for charity.
- There are far reaching opportunities for students to extend their personal development through an extensive programme of visits, speakers and opportunities to take responsibility for organising activities.
- Very good vision and leadership underpin the excellent ethos and rising standards.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English & modern languages English	Provision is very good . Students attain well above national standards in examinations and the quality of work seen is high. Achievement is very good as a result of students' mature attitude to work, very good teaching and effective leadership and management of the subject
French	Provision is very good . Results for A level in 2003 were above average and improved considerably in 2004, with the majority gaining A grades. In lessons, students respond very well to very good teaching. Girls achieve very high standards in all language skills.
Mathematics	Provision is very good . Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this, coupled with students' extraordinary self-motivation, ensures students of all abilities achieve exceptionally high standards. A key feature is the very high level of support available to students outside lessons.
Science Biology	Provision is very good . Attainment and standards are very high. Students are highly motivated to succeed and respond well to challenging teaching. Very positive student and teacher relationships support the learning. The best teaching has challenge and variety and promotes independent learning.
Humanities History	Provision is very good and most students achieve very well. Teaching is very good: it is challenging and imaginative. Leadership and management on both sites are very good.
Psychology	Provision is very good for girls, whose attainment is excellent, but less so for boys, whose attainment is only moderate. Teaching is now good. Students are exceptionally highly motivated and eager to learn.

Business studies	Provision is good . Attainment and standards are good and students are determined to succeed. Although staff are relatively inexperienced, they are highly committed to improve the quality of learning and teaching is satisfactory.
Economics	Provision is very good . Attainment and standards are very good and course work is used very effectively to develop independent learning. Teaching is effective and students receive good support. Leadership and management are good and leading to developments in the subject.
Visual and performing arts Art	Provision in art and design is very good . Standards are very high and students achieve very well. Teachers use their specialist knowledge very effectively to guide and support students. Students respond very positively, are highly motivated and develop high levels of independence in their learning.
The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the college. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.	

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The overall quality of support and guidance are very good. Students are very well supported. Staff care about them and keep a close check on how they are developing as individuals. Students also give each other help where needed. There is a varied programme of speakers which helps to ensure students are well prepared for life when they leave school. Relationships with staff are very positive. Students are kept a close eye on by all staff and their academic progress is very carefully monitored. In addition, students provide their own supportive network to look after those who need extra help. Students' views are valued and the school council, under sixth form leadership, is helping to influence change.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership is very good and provides a clear vision for the sixth form, ensuring an excellent ethos. Management is good and does well to overcome many of the difficulties associated with the split site. Governors raise money to fund small single sex teaching groups in the sixth form. This is beneficial in maintaining the high standards. There are inconsistencies in the quality of subject management, especially with regard to rigorous self-evaluation.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are extremely happy in the sixth form and very complimentary about all the opportunities on offer. They especially value the support teachers give them and the friendships they make, which often last a lifetime.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils is **excellent** and standards overall are **very high**. The school has continued to improve upon the high standards and achievement identified at the previous inspection. Students in the sixth form achieve **very well** with examination results that have continued to improve in recent years and are **well above** the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes that contribute significantly to the standards they achieve.
- Test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 are very high.
- Achievement is very good in the majority of subjects by the end of Year 9 but is weaker in art and design, design and technology and in geography.
- Standards attained in GCSE examinations are very high in comparison to the national picture with a very high proportion of boys and girls gaining the top A* and A grades in most subjects.
- Achievement by boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 is very good and is particularly high in biology, physics, chemistry, art and modern foreign languages.
- Standards are well above average and achievement is very high in the sixth form, particularly in mathematics, art and design and French.
- English language and literacy skills and competence in mathematics are very good and support high achievement in many subjects.
- The behaviour of a few boys adversely affects their achievement.

Commentary

Years 7 to 9

1. The school rigorously examines and monitors performance data in its quest to drive standards still higher. This and an increasing focus on teaching and learning have contributed significantly to improvement. The table below indicates that standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 are well above average. These results represent very good achievement by boys and girls. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' work during the inspection reflect these results. Overall, across other subjects achievement by boys and girls is very good, although standards are variable, reflecting some variability in the quality of teaching and subject leadership. For a small minority of boys their behaviour adversely affects their achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. In design and technology and geography, standards are in line with expectations and achievement is satisfactory. In art, standards are below expectations because the curriculum is too narrow and lacks sufficient range and challenge. Across Years 7 to 9 teachers support pupils very well which contributes to their success.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.8 (37.1)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	40.0 (39.8)	35.4 (34.7)
science	36.7 (36.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 188 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Years 10 and 11

2. The table below indicates that students reach standards that are very high compared to the national average. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades is very high compared to similar schools. Achievement overall is excellent throughout Years 10 and 11. Pupils build very well on their standards by the end of Year 9. Attitudes to learning by the great majority of pupils are exemplary and help them attain very high standards. Pupils

appreciate the very supportive teaching that prepares them well for GCSE examinations. The excellent achievement is reflected in pupils' outstanding GCSE performance. In 2003 GCSE average points scores for pupils placed them in the top 5 per cent of pupils nationally. Each year a very high proportion of pupils achieve the highest A and A* grades across many of their subjects. Results in biology, physics, chemistry, art and design and music are especially good, including some very high achievement by pupils with special educational needs. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards are well above average across all subjects with the exception of business education and boys' physical education, where they are average. The 2004 examinations continue the trend of improving results.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	87 (87)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	48.8 (49.1)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 157 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form

- Standards in post-16 examinations have been well above average and results have continued to improve in recent years. There are some 23 advanced courses on offer including advanced vocational business education. Students are exceptionally well motivated, have extremely high expectations and almost all go on to follow higher education courses. Very good subject teaching coupled with a very strong work ethic supports high standards. Standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average and achievement is excellent overall with notable strengths in mathematics, art and design and French. The standards and achievement of female students in psychology are excellent, reflecting the very good provision for the subject.

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	95.0 (96.5)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	66.8 (69.1)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	325.0 (311.1)	258.2 (262.3)

There were 125 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to their work and school are **very good** and their behaviour is **good** overall. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **excellent**. Attendance is in line with the national average and **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The spiritual quality of the school is exceptional, with the Orthodox Jewish faith firmly at the centre of all aspects of school life. The pupils' respect and pride in their religion and culture are extremely high.
- Pupils have an uncompromising thirst for knowledge and a passion to achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Pupils work tirelessly to help other Jewish peoples around the world.
- Pupils give extensive support for each other in a spirit of comradeship and family belonging.
- Girls' behaviour is very good, boys behaviour is good, but at times deteriorates when teaching is not effective.

- Sixth form students have an impressive capacity to learn for themselves and they have high expectations of their own performance.

Commentary

4. Pupils have an overwhelming desire to succeed and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. They are demanding consumers who expect the best from their teachers. This is a major factor accounting for their very high standards of achievement. For instance, if they do not understand something, they will ask and ask until they do. They also support each other to a high degree. Frequently, heated conversations in lessons, which at times look as though pupils are being inattentive, especially from the boys who are more lively and outspoken than girls, are about the work they are studying.
5. The results of the Ofsted questionnaire indicate a significant level of concern about behaviour from both parents and pupils. Pupils were much more positive though when inspectors spoke to them during the inspection. Inspectors judge that girls' behaviour is very good and boys' is good. Both boys' and girls' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection as a result of management initiatives.
6. Occasionally, when lessons are not effectively managed or challenging enough to maintain interest, boys misbehave. However, boys' behaviour is improving and the school has put many measures in place to ensure this continues. Cramped accommodation, overcrowding, lack of sufficient playground space or a field, coupled with the long periods of time boys spend concentrating, are all mitigating factors. Bullying is not a significant problem in the school. Inspectors found pupils to be much more supportive of each other than is often seen. Relationships are generally very good between everyone.
7. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The excellence of the spiritual opportunities really encapsulates what is special about life at Hasmonian. Pupils lose themselves in their own prayers and show impressive amounts of self-discipline in undertaking daily religious observances. They work and play in this strong Jewish framework, which encompasses them from their first day in school.
8. Prayer times and assemblies are deeply meaningful occasions bringing pupils together as one family. They really do care for each other. As mentioned several times during the inspection by different people, friendships here often last a lifetime. Helping other Jewish peoples is very important, one example being the annual visits to Russia, helping children in local schools. Another is helping children with cancer in Israel. They take complete ownership of charitable activities and fundraising occupies much of pupils' time both in and out of school. They raise very large amounts of money.

Attendance

9. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average. It is good compared with many London schools. Pupils' timekeeping is satisfactory and has improved compared with the last inspection, when many pupils had slipped back into habits of poor timekeeping. The school are now implementing stricter measures to monitor those who are late. Ensuring pupils are punctual is an ongoing issue for the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/04

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.7	School data:	0.3
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

Exclusions

10. Exclusions are rarely used and the rate is low, comparing favourably with other schools. The rate of fixed term exclusions for boys has significantly fallen in recent years. Their use serves to remind boys that the school sets strict boundaries for behaviour, over which they have stepped. Further transgressions are rare. There have been virtually no exclusions for girls in recent times.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - any other white background	835	33	2

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

Sixth form

The attendance and attitudes of the sixth form students are **very good**. Their behaviour is **exemplary**, conforming to school rules and readily accepting responsibility.

Commentary

11. Students are very mature and have excellent attitudes to their work. A strength is their capacity to learn for themselves, together with very high expectations of their own performance. These excellent attitudes are reflected in their attendance rate, which compares favourably with the main school. An important characteristic of sixth formers is the professionalism they show when raising money for others. The enterprising boys excel themselves in this respect. These businessmen and women of the future are highly organised and extremely successful in all they do.
12. Both boys and girls play a crucial role in school life and the school encourages this as much as possible. This is one reason why the personal development of sixth formers is excellent. Their involvement with younger pupils really does benefit everyone involved. A particular strength is the sisterly friendship and support (*Kesher*) for Year 7 girls.
13. Inspectors were moved by the 'Rising From the Ashes' presentation during an assembly, when sixth form girls spoke about their trip to Polish concentration camps. "We came to see what we could take out from all this pain and loss, what we could salvage from the destruction". This was a highly spiritual occasion.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The overall quality of the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form is **good**. The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities, is also **good**. Accommodation is good at the girls' site, but much is poor on the boys' site. The quality and quantity of resources to meet the needs of the Years 7 to 13 curriculum are **good**. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **very good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. The extent of the school's involvement of pupils in its work and development is **satisfactory**. The partnership with parents is **good**. There are some **very good** community links. Relationships with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good**. The quality of students' learning in all years is **very good**. Assessing pupils' work is **satisfactory** in Years 7 to 11 and **good** in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high proportion of excellent and very good teaching is a significant strength.
- The determination to achieve well and the very positive attitudes to learning by the pupils are key reasons why attainment is so high in many subjects.
- There is insufficient attention in some subjects to matching work to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities.
- Regular school reviews ensure that senior staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, but there is insufficient monitoring by some subject leaders.
- Teaching and learning in music are excellent.

Commentary

14. The overall quality of education was judged as satisfactory at the last inspection and has improved considerably to become good. During the last four years important strategic decisions have been made to raise standards and improving teaching has been a main focus for staff development. Effective management has ensured that improvement to teaching and learning has been accomplished in many subjects and examination courses. The pupils are very positive about the school and the teaching they receive. They are well behaved overall and have very positive attitudes to their work. The school makes a substantial contribution to their personal development. Teaching is good overall throughout the school.
15. Inspectors judge the quality of teaching and learning from a wide range of evidence that includes observing lessons, an analysis of past test and examination results, a scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils about their work and analysing school data and documentation. During the inspection 140 lessons were observed. The observations confirmed the school's own self-evaluation that, overall, teaching and learning are good. A summary of the teaching is shown in the table below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 140 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
12 (8.5%)	35 (25%)	56 (40%)	26 (18.5%)	11 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. The above table indicates a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching and also some unsatisfactory teaching. During the inspection the most effective teaching was observed in the Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. In these years, teaching and learning are frequently very good or excellent, but there are still examples of unsatisfactory lessons. The majority of unsatisfactory teaching was found in Years 7 to 9 and is related to insufficient planning to match work to the students' ability, lessons that lacked pace and rigour and where learning was too slow. In a few lessons unacceptable behaviour was the reason for unsatisfactory learning. Some of the unsatisfactory teaching was because teachers have not yet developed their skills for effectively managing pupils' behaviour. This is especially the case on the boys' site. In a few subjects there is insufficient internal self-review leading to strategies for improvement, but in others this is a very strong feature. There are examples of very good teaching to be found in all departments. A significant number of parents have major concerns about teaching, but these were not borne out during the inspection.
17. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work. Most have highly developed learning skills and they readily conform to school rules and conventions. For many, their literacy and numeracy skills are very high for their age. These features ensure that learning is very good and pupils make good progress in lessons.
18. Pupils with special education needs are mostly taught in main school classes. They benefit from high quality support in lessons. Most teachers are aware of the needs and difficulties of the pupils with special education needs. The few students with English as an additional

language who need specific support receive help on an individual basis. Their progress in aspects of their language development is not recorded in sufficient detail.

Sixth form

19. During the inspection 34 sixth form lessons were observed. Nearly half were very good or excellent, 82 per cent were good or better and 94 per cent were satisfactory or better. Two lessons were unsatisfactory. A scrutiny of students' work and talking with students confirmed this good level of teaching and learning. The teaching has improved over the years because of the intervention of the senior management team who monitor the quality of teaching and learning and the support given to students on a regular basis. This improved teaching is having a direct impact on students' achievement and standards of work. Regular feedback on how well students are doing is provided and they are appreciative of this drive to raise standards.

Assessment

Commentary

20. The use of assessment is satisfactory overall. This represents good progress since the last inspection as few effective systems were in place. The school has developed a range of assessment strategies for monitoring pupils' progress that are used to good effect in some subjects. It is outstanding in music where the school is working with a local education authority consultant to develop assessment for learning to disseminate across the school. Teachers use assessment to set targets for improvement and to track pupils' progress. However, this is much stronger on the girls' site where there is greater support and more time for pupils and teachers through the personal, social and health education programme. The girls are aware of their targets and have a realistic understanding of what needs to be done to improve, but this is not the case with many of the boys. One area for further development is the use of assessment data for planning lessons to meet the needs of specific groups of students. Marking is inconsistent across subjects, across sites and within some departments. The assessment co-ordinator is providing good leadership by providing training, conducting audits of provision and working with the local education authority consultant to ensure the success criteria on the school's development plan are achieved.

Sixth form

21. The use of assessment is good overall. Students' progress is monitored very thoroughly at important stages in their courses and is used to target extra support and give feedback on progress. There is particularly good practice in English where marking is thorough and comments on students' work support their learning very well. As with the main school, marking in some subjects is inconsistent, but students in all subjects are aware of how well they are doing and what they can do to improve.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form is **good**. The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities is also **good**. Accommodation is good at the girls' site, but much is poor on the boys' site. The quality and quantity of resources to meet the needs of the Years 7 to 13 curriculum are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and is much improved since the last inspection.
- The 'informal education programme' is excellent.
- The whole-school co-ordination of literacy, ICT, work-related learning and citizenship, and their contribution to other subjects, is unsatisfactory.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Accommodation on the boys' site is unsatisfactory and constrains teaching and learning.
- Resources, including the provision of qualified teaching staff, are good.
- Provision for vocational education remains too narrow.

Commentary

22. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. However, in boys' physical education in Years 7 to 9, citizenship and work related learning, not all the statutory requirements relating to the curriculum are met. Teaching time allocations are satisfactory and the length of the school week considerably exceeds recommendations. Not all schemes of work adequately ensure gifted and talented pupils or pupils with special needs are adequately catered for, but new schemes have been recently developed and frequently revised for every subject. Whole-school co-ordination of literacy, ICT, citizenship and work related learning is weak. Timetabling lessons across the two sites is extremely challenging and some teachers have to travel between the two sites, reducing effective teaching time in some subjects.
23. The range of options in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Provision for several subjects, particularly ICT, is much improved. New personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes have been introduced, though their links with other subjects need extending. New GCSE courses have been introduced in Years 10 and 11. The school accepts that the curriculum remains largely academic in nature, but its attempts to establish links with local colleges to provide more vocational options have not been popular with parents or pupils.
24. The weaknesses in the school's commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity, identified in the last inspection, have now been fully resolved, other than in respect of the differences in the quality of accommodation between the girls' and the boys' sites and their impact on teaching and learning. The provision for pupils with special education needs is good.
25. Whilst most parents acknowledge the improvements in the curriculum, a significant minority of pupils and parents, both in the main school and in the sixth form believes the school offers insufficient options or opportunities for enrichment. Inspectors do not accept this criticism, however. Inspection evidence indicates the range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities to be good. Other pupils, when questioned, speak warmly of the Arts Enrichment Day for Year 8, recent educational visits to Israel, Ypres and the Yorkshire Dales, the Business and Enterprise day for Year 9 and the residential weekends.
26. Senior managers and the governing body take a very active and well-informed interest in the development and effectiveness of mainstream curricular and extra-curricular provision; consequently, the school has successfully addressed most of the criticisms raised in the last report and has markedly improved the curriculum it offers its pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory overall; it is excellent on the girls' site but the cramped teaching rooms and lack of recreation areas on the boys' site are unsatisfactory and markedly constrain teaching and learning. Resources, however, which include the numbers of qualified teaching and support staff, are good.
27. The special educational needs department is highly regarded by parents for its ability to meet a wide variety of pupils' curriculum needs. Pupils with special educational needs are very enthusiastic about the work of the department and have great respect for the staff and the help they are given both in lessons and when they are withdrawn. The department is justifiably proud of its enrichment work including trips to London and on all trips. The school ensures that they include pupils with special educational needs and that they are properly supported.

Sixth form

28. Students have choice of a wide range of A-levels, as well as an interesting range of additional courses. The range of options at post-16 is extensive, with good provision in many areas, and the curriculum has benefited from the new courses introduced since the last inspection. These include computing, a Beis Midrash¹ programme, psychology, textiles, accounting and GCE business studies. Provision for ICT in the sixth form is good. A sixth form Encounter Conference, which has been organised as part of the informal education enrichment

¹ A religious education programme for boys in the sixth form.

programme, is an imaginative and excellently led innovation. Students take an active role in the informal education programme offered to younger pupils and this involvement enhances their own personal development very well. However, the school has not yet developed sufficient vocational education to meet the needs of some students.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **very good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. The extent of the school's involvement of pupils in its work and development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys and girls are cared for very well, in a family atmosphere, with the Jewish faith at the heart of everything.
- There are very good systems to help new pupils settle in and feel at home.
- Teachers have a genuine interest in ensuring their pupils do well and they keep a careful check on how they are progressing.
- The quality of pastoral support has improved, especially for boys, and there are a number of effective systems in place. Timetable restrictions dictate that there is less pastoral time available for boys than for girls.
- The sixth form personal, social and health education programme is innovative and uses outside speakers well.

Commentary

29. This is a school where relationships are warm and caring. This is equally so for boys as well as girls. There is a family atmosphere in the school based upon the strong principles of the Orthodox Jewish faith. Pupils are full of praise for the support their teachers provide. Careful attention is paid to aspects of health and safety and child protection procedures are clearly understood.
30. Inspectors were fortunate to be present during the first few days of the new school year. Only into their fourth day at school, Year 7 pupils were happy and buoyant, responding enthusiastically to the problem solving games during a 'getting to know you' session. This was organised by the Informal Educators, whose remit is to get to know the young people outside the classroom in order to develop friendships and offer informal support. This is a particularly strong aspect of the good procedures for induction and pastoral support. Year 7 girls are fortunate to have continuous support from sixth formers via the highly successful 'sisterhood' system. Sixth form boys undertake a similar role, but lack of time due to their off-site religious studies makes this partnership more difficult to sustain.
31. Pupils learn in a close and supportive community where they are well known to their teachers. Small class sizes help make this more possible. Subject teachers have an intimate knowledge of how their pupils are doing and pupils themselves show initiative by finding out how they can improve. Pastoral monitoring is somewhat more rigorous for girls, who have the benefit of a form tutor period each week. Boys' considerable daily religious commitments means there is little available time for this kind of session and consequently the provision is not as strong as for the girls.
32. A significant minority of parents raised concerns over the quality of pastoral support for boys. The inspectors found that the level of pastoral care for girls is excellent and good support is given to boys. It is partly this difference in quality that makes some parents very critical of the school, but in reality the level of care overall is very good. The school has improved the quality of pastoral support and guidance since the previous inspection. There are more key support personnel in post to support the boys, especially in Years 7 to 9. The use of detentions is falling and behaviour improving. Both boys and girls have equal access to a relevant range of counsellors. Staff on the boys' site do the best they can with the limited time available.

33. The school council meets fairly regularly with sixth form students taking the lead. They have recently been involved in looking at healthy eating and have spearheaded changes to the girls' school uniform.
34. The number of pupils requiring support with English as an additional language is very small. Pupils join and leave at different times during the year. The key staff are knowledgeable about the pupils concerned. Support for these pupils consists of in-class support, modification of resources, peer support and translation. This support is informally co-ordinated between key staff and helps pupils make good progress. However, the school does not supplement this informal system by collecting and analysing data about how effectively these pupils learn. Currently, the school cannot rigorously evaluate its support for these pupils.

Sixth form

The quality of support, advice and guidance for sixth form students is **very good**.

The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

35. Students feel very well supported, largely because of the very good relationships they have with their teachers and the sense of belonging that has been created. The quality of personal support and guidance is very good. Staff are meticulous in their knowledge of how students are progressing, mainly because of these very good relationships and the care they show. There is a very good personal, social and health education programme, which makes excellent use of highly skilled professionals at the pinnacle of their careers; a surgeon, professor, Member of Parliament and an astronaut are all previous visitors.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The partnership with parents is **good**. There are some **very good** community links. Relationships with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are very supportive of the school; they value the high academic standards and strong Orthodox Jewish values.
- The parents' association is very active and provides immense financial support.
- A significant minority of parents are highly critical of the school, often unjustifiably so.
- Staff spend considerable amounts of time talking to parents about their children.
- Links with the Jewish community around the world are very strong.
- The school is not doing enough to share and celebrate its strengths, to counteract the negative views held by some members of the Jewish community.

Commentary

36. Parents value the strong religious ethos and values that the school provides. The parental community regards the educational success of their children very highly. They are very well served by the school in this respect. As a token of parents' faith, they make substantive financial donations to help support the Jewish Orthodox education provided. The parents association is very supportive and they organise frequent, social, educational and fundraising events.
37. As part of the inspection process, parents were invited to complete a questionnaire and a meeting for parents was held before the inspection started. These processes raised the fact that a significant minority of parents, who expressed a view, have concerns about different aspects of the schools' work. The number of highly critical written replies was more than usually seen, especially for a school that has such a very high level of academic success. These concerns mainly centred on teaching, boys' behaviour, the level of boys' pastoral care and lateness of teachers to lessons because of the split site.
38. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching was good overall, although there is still variability, with some of it unsatisfactory, especially on the boys' site. Boys' behaviour is

usually good, but there is some unsatisfactory behaviour when teaching is less effective. The quality of boys' pastoral care is good and explained fully in the previous section. Inspectors' judge punctuality as satisfactory, but the split site does cause some disruption to learning.

39. A few parents are often harshly critical of the school, often unreasonably so. As one parent humorously said, "There is almost a culture that things are never good enough!" For many parents, Hasmonean High is their old school and this familiarity, together with memories of how things used to be, may cloud their view of what is actually happening.
40. The community is a very close one and rumours spread quickly. Again, this closeness means that perceptions are often not accurate. Governors and senior staff have not challenged this outlook enough. Staff spend inordinate amounts of time with individual parents, discussing their children and often sorting out misconceptions. There are not enough opportunities taken to challenge these preconceived ideas. The new middle-school information evening is one move in this direction.
41. One of the schools' aims is to help pupils become "committed and caring members of the wider community". It successfully achieves this and support for and involvement with Jewish peoples, in this country and around the world, is extensive. Its role as a Business and Enterprise College is taking effect and there are some positive sixth form business links developing with a non-Jewish school in the area. The school has developed good links with other schools and colleges and this aspect of school life is rapidly expanding and improving.
42. The sixth form has some very good links with the national and international Jewish community. Students give of their time freely to help others. For example, sixth form boys help lead prayers in local Synagogues. Nearly all students move on to various *Yeshivos* or Seminaries in other countries because of the school's strong international links and good reputation. The sixth form takes full advantage of its contacts and invites many leading professionals and organisations in to help broaden students' outlook on life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is **very good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Other key staff with management responsibilities provide **very good** leadership. The quality of management throughout the school is **good**. The school is on two sites that are 1.5 miles apart and this poses a considerable barrier to managing the school cohesively and making efficient use of staff and time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- The governing body is well organised and has a clear vision of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors do not sufficiently celebrate the successes and strengths of the school.
- There is inconsistency in the monitoring procedures in some departments.
- Performance management, induction procedures for new teachers and in-service training for staff are well organised and effective.
- Key staff who manage the sixth form are clear about future developments and their leadership is very good.

Commentary

43. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for just over four years. In this relatively short time his strong leadership has influenced significant changes in almost all aspects of school life. Since his appointment examination results, curricular provision, departmental management and buildings have all improved substantially. He is harnessing the considerable potential of both staff and pupils and much progress is being made. Under his guidance the school has obtained Business and Enterprise status, which has resulted in the school being able to offer a wider range of vocational studies, improved ICT provision, and create stronger links with local schools and Middlesex University. He has a very clear vision of what Hasmonean High School seeks to achieve and is putting in place the

measures to ensure the school is successful. The headteacher is very well supported by a highly committed and hard working senior management team. Central to these measures is the commitment for pupils to develop a set of values, principles and beliefs that are based unambiguously on the Torah to inform their perspective on life and their conduct as Orthodox Jews. This commitment permeates all aspects of the school's life and is shared by all those involved.

44. The headteacher is a very visible presence around the school and is very approachable to pupils, parents and staff. However, while he and his senior management team deal quickly and professionally with parents' concerns, some parents feel they are not sufficiently well informed about the internal organisation of the school life and its day-to-day running. The result is that some of them are unclear about why decisions about their children are made. The headteacher and his deputy, who is in charge of the girls' site, have complementary skills, work very well together, and between them form a highly professional and very effective leadership team.
45. The overall quality of governance is very good. The governing body serves the school very well. Governors are committed to the school's development and there is a well-organised committee structure that ensures that all aspects of the school's life are closely monitored. Members of the governing body bring to it a wide range of professional skills and experiences that they are very glad to use to the benefit of the school. While the governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, it is not actively enough involved in the promotion of the school to parents and within the local Jewish community.
46. There has been very good improvement in the quality of leadership since the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher has overseen highly significant changes that have improved the ethos of the school and the way school policy decisions are made and implemented. The management of departments is much improved and the effective use of performance management is helping the school's aspirations to be translated into practice.
47. Management has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. The head and deputies have established very good self-evaluation systems, based on regular, rigorous and honest monitoring. The information is used to inform action planning and this has been a key feature in the significant improvements in standards and quality over the last few years. A comprehensive programme of professional development for staff with management responsibilities has been undertaken and there are now some examples of excellent middle management practice, such as in modern foreign languages and music. However, there is inconsistency in the rigour of evaluation and monitoring at departmental level. Many cross-curricular aspects such as citizenship, work related learning, literacy and ICT are not well co-ordinated across departments or the two sites.
48. The school receives extensive private donations that it uses to help maintain the unique culture and ethos which is such a considerable strength of the school. Long-term financial planning to address the school's priorities, as set out in its very good development plan, is made more difficult by the uncertainty regarding the extent, timing and focus of these donations. Internal financial procedures are secure and robust. Despite the high costs per pupil the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,787,096	Balance from previous year	35,109
Total expenditure	4,817,061	Balance carried forward to the next	5,144
Expenditure per student	4,444		

49. Arrangements for appraisal through performance management are very good, based on a well-developed policy. The targets for each teacher include at least one that is directly linked to pupils' progress, which is having a positive impact on examination results. The school

makes good use of internal and external resources to provide in-service training to its staff. This includes arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers and others who are new to the school. Partnership with a range of higher education providers involves the school very well in initial teacher training. Given its location in London, the school is very successful at recruiting and retaining staff to teach the subjects of the curriculum. There is remarkably low staff turnover.

50. The special educational needs department is very well led and managed by an experienced and well-qualified partnership of the special educational needs co-ordinator, who manages the boys' site, and the deputy special educational needs co-ordinator, who manages the girls' site. They have a very detailed knowledge and understanding of their students and of their needs. They lead a highly committed and capable team who are also well qualified and skilled. The department is very well supported by their line manager and by a very enthusiastic governor who makes regular visits to the department. The support staff are deployed across subjects and support the school and department's policy of inclusion in lessons, often using their own subject knowledge and skills, for example in history and science, to help learning. Support staff keep detailed records of students' progress in lessons.

Aids and Barriers to raising achievement

51. The school has accurately diagnosed its aids and barriers to raising achievement. Significant aids include the very positive attitudes of the students to their learning and their strong sense of belonging to the Jewish community. The school has many effective strategies in place to support learning and raise students' achievement. The two most significant barriers are the split site and the small, cramped and old accommodation on the boys' site. A large part of the accommodation on the boys' site is a grade II listed building and adaptations are difficult to achieve. The site is too small and boys have very restricted room to play and rest. The split site creates financial wastage and a loss of staff time when travelling between the sites. As boys and girls need to be educated separately, many initiatives have to be organised and implemented twice. The school has initiatives to overcome these disadvantages, but inspectors agree with the school's long-term aspirations to move to adjacent sites.

Sixth form

The governance of the sixth form is **very good**. Key staff with responsibilities in the sixth form provide **very good** leadership. The effectiveness of the management of the sixth form is **good**.

Commentary

52. Governors raise money to fund small single sex teaching groups in the sixth form. Although not cost-effective the sixth form provides good value for money. Senior staff who are involved in managing the sixth form have a clear vision for future development. This has led to a continual rise of standards in recent years. Students achieve very well, helped by their mature and positive attitudes to learning and the school.
53. The academic needs and aspirations of students are met very well through the well-planned curriculum and many opportunities for full involvement in the life of the school. They are proud to belong to the school and willingly embrace its values of hard work, academic success and religious ethos. Virtually all Year 11 students stay on at the school and this is a measure of the regard with which the sixth form is held and of its effective management.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

54. Provision for work-related learning is satisfactory. The local Barnet Business and Education partnership and other community links have been used well to develop pupils' understanding of commerce and industry; they have become assiduous fundraisers. A well-organised work experience programme has been established and careers guidance is of good quality, although the amount of curriculum time allocated to careers is unsatisfactory. Whilst individual subjects, such as history, economics, business studies and science, have made good contributions to work-related learning, as with other subjects, the school has not yet identified a co-ordinator to lead this subject across the school as a whole. The school has recently received specialist college status to develop business education and this initiative is having a growing impact on the courses offered to pupils.

Impact of the split site

55. Orthodox Jewish law require that boys and girls are educated separately. Hasmonean High school operates on two sites that are over 1.5 miles apart. The density of London traffic means that travelling between sites can regularly take over 15 minutes. The school has several strategies in place to manage operating on two sites. However, the financial cost and management time required is considerable. The split site reduces the efficiency of its use of resources and adds time spent by staff commuting between the two sites. Staff are often late to lessons and although there is a split site cover staff arrangement in place, there is a reduction in learning during the lessons effected. The management of subjects between the two sites is made more difficult and in some subjects this is impacting on the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The school has considered rearranging the school day and how it deploys staff across the two sites. Although there is no easy solution, the current arrangements can be improved upon with a thorough analysis of staff deployment and timetabling. There is little doubt that the school's desire to be based on adjacent sites would make it much easier to co-ordinate departmental work, improve punctuality to lessons and bring about significant savings in resources.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The overall quality of provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Pupils have excellent analytical skills and are confident in their use of the English language.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and so make considerable progress in their studies.
- Very good teaching and effective leadership and management are raising standards further.
- The poor accommodation on the boys' site restricts the range of teaching strategies used.
- The quality of some pupils' experience of the subject is diminished because of the time lost with teachers moving between sites.

Commentary

56. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE English language and literature examinations were well above average for boys and girls in 2003. There has been an improving trend in results over recent years. Most noticeably, the attainment of boys in the Year 9 tests and the proportion of boys and girls obtaining A and A* grades in the GCSE examinations have increased. Students with special educational needs have also exceeded expectations in the results they have achieved well by the end of Years 9 and 11. Attainment in the 2004 tests and examinations was also high. Similar standards were evident in the work of all pupils seen during the course of the inspection. Achievement is very good.
57. Pupils' learning is very good because of the quality of their analytical work and their ability to use the English language succinctly and flexibly in a range of contexts. This was seen in the quality of their imaginative, critical and factual writing and heard in the lively and fluent talk about the subject in lessons. Pupils read quickly and with ready understanding a range of increasingly difficult texts. Girls listen well and show respect for each other's contributions in discussion. Boys' eagerness to assert their views in lessons sometimes prevents them from hearing what others are saying and so learning from each other. Boys' and girls' attitudes to work overall, however, are very good and are powerful factors in how well they learn.
58. The quality of teaching is very good, an improvement on the previous inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge, their lesson planning, their use of thoughtful and varied teaching strategies and the nature of the working relationships they have established with the pupils, all underpin the very effective learning. There are lessons on the boys' site where the poor state of the accommodation limits the range of teaching approaches. This deprives the pupils of variety and stimulation in their learning experience. There are also a small number of occasions when the teachers' travelling between sites robs them of time and energy which should be devoted to pupils.
59. Leadership and management are very good. Well-managed teamwork has been a factor in securing the high academic standards. There is a strong sense of common purpose and morale is good. Teachers are self-critical, they monitor and review their work on a regular basis and good practice is shared. They have clear developmental priorities, including greater use of electronic aids for teaching and learning. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in developing pupils' use of computers to improve the quality of their work and in the use of clearer learning objectives in lessons. Effective procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and action is taken to acknowledge success and to address under-achievement. Recent staffing difficulties, although not yet fully resolved, have been addressed in such a way that the quality of pupils' learning has been

maintained. There is the capacity for improving further on the already very good provision because teachers are self-critical and are committed to on-going professional development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Students enter the school with above average English language and literacy skills. Their ability to use the spoken and written word fluently and flexibly in all subject areas is very highly developed by the time they leave Year 11. This gives them the confidence to talk openly and critically when interpreting and evaluating the range of increasingly difficult texts they meet as they move through the school.
61. The co-ordinating and monitoring of a whole school approach to raising standards of literacy for boys and girls have not been priorities until recent months. A co-ordinator has now been appointed who has formed a literacy action group to identify areas for improvement and secure improvements. The focus for this academic year is to improve the structure of pupils' non-fiction writing and to teach them how to organise their extended writing to give it greater textual cohesion. This will be done by encouraging members of staff in all subject areas to teach these skills in an explicit way. The school is at the beginning of developing a co-ordinated approach, but does not have the benefit of having a senior member of staff working with the literacy co-ordinator.

Modern foreign languages

In modern foreign languages the focus of the inspection was on French. Work in Modern Hebrew was also sampled.

Modern Hebrew

All pupils study Modern Hebrew from Year 7. Standards in lessons are well above average. In 2003, GCSE results were well above average, with no difference between boys and girls. Further improvement was achieved in 2004 examinations. Teaching is consistently very good. Teachers use the target language effectively to provide good models. A particular strength is the way that teachers match work to ability to ensure the progress of all pupils. There has been considerable improvement in staffing and resources since the previous inspection in a department which is now very well led.

French

The provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2004 were very high for both boys and girls.
- Achievement is excellent in Years 10 and 11 because teachers' expectations are so high.
- Pupils at all levels are challenged to do their best by very good teaching.
- Pupils learn very well because they have very positive attitudes.
- Leadership and management are excellent, underpinning the coherent approach of a committed team of teachers.

Commentary

62. Teachers' assessments show that standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average, with no significant difference between boys and girls. There is an improving trend of standards in Years 7 to 9. GCSE results at A*-C were very high in 2003 for both boys and girls. Girls achieved a remarkable proportion of A* and A grades and did better than in almost all other subjects. In 2004 there was further improvement, especially by boys, so that the difference between boys and girls was minimal. In both years, the high levels of success indicate very good achievement by lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs.

63. Inspection evidence confirms well above average standards and very good achievement by the end of Year 9. Higher and average attainers have good knowledge of tenses. They speak confidently and write at good length, for example about recent visits or environmental issues. Boys are not as accurate in their oral work, but try hard. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, cover the same ground less successfully, but reach average standards. This represents very good achievement for them. There is further tangible improvement in Years 10 and 11. Many pupils reach high levels during Year 10. They have such a command of vocabulary and grammar that their reading and listening skills are very well developed and they communicate fluently, orally and in writing. Consequently, the focus in Year 11 is on polishing skills and expanding the creative elements of expression. By the end of Year 11, standards are very high and achievement is excellent.
64. Teaching and learning are good or better in all lessons and very good overall, with excellent features. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and almost invariably conduct lessons entirely in French. This sets a pattern of high expectations and challenging work which permeates all lessons, so that pupils learn at an unrelenting pace, even in lower sets. Lessons are well planned to include a range of tasks, including a strong emphasis on grammatical acquisition. Resources, including ICT, are well integrated to have impact on learning. This is especially evident from the improvement in boys' performance since the previous inspection due to strategies to improve their interest. Pupils themselves are prepared to work hard. They have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well, although some boys are somewhat flippant at times. Teachers mark work effectively, adding comments designed to improve future work. Homework is set regularly and challenges pupils, providing opportunities for independent work in open-ended tasks.
65. The head of department has been in post for one year and has had an impact in drawing together a skilled team of teachers with excellent leadership and management. There is excellent collaboration of staff on both sites, which has contributed to the raising of standards. Documentation and planning are very effective in supporting learning. Procedures for tracking pupils' performance are excellent, although the available data are not yet used to set targets or to ensure more accurate teachers' assessments. Arrangements for monitoring through classroom observation and feedback are very thorough. The success of an innovative home-stay visit to Strasbourg reflects the enthusiasm which irradiates the department. Pupils' work is celebrated in very good displays inside and outside classrooms. Accommodation for girls is now very good, but cramped conditions affect learning for boys. Very good improvement has been made in dealing with issues raised at the previous inspection, especially inconsistent teaching, monitoring and the quality of resources for learning.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils are very highly motivated learners.
- Pupils' relationships with their teachers are excellent.
- There is a lack of progress in curriculum development in Years 9 to 11.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent.
- There is too little use of ICT by pupils and teachers.

Commentary

66. The results of the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were well above average. Performance in GCSE in the same year was very high. Standards seen in the school and evident from the provisional 2004 results confirm that these very high standards are being maintained. This represents very good achievement in Years 7 to 9. The progress that pupils make from Years 9 to 11 is excellent. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection and indicate good improvement. There is very little difference in this

excellent progress between any groups of pupils, although a higher proportion of boys than girls obtain the highest levels by the end of Year 9.

67. Overall, teaching is good and learning is very good because the pupils are highly self motivated learners. All but a very small proportion of teaching is good and some very good and excellent teaching was seen particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teaching strategies used were similar within the department but are too narrow and at times restrict pupils' learning. There is little opportunity for teachers to work as a team to discuss and develop their teaching. The department has not availed itself of the significant curriculum development opportunities provided by the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Pupils are very highly motivated and exceptionally eager to learn. Teachers relate very well to the pupils and in nearly all lessons seen there were excellent examples of pupils and teachers engaging in a dialogue about mathematics which either clarified understanding or developed mathematical thinking. Pupils also relate extremely well to each other and are prepared to help each other when there is a difficulty. They are usually fully engaged in their work and clearly really enjoy mathematics. Teachers work hard and make themselves readily available to support pupils who need extra help outside of the lessons. They have an excellent command of the subject and target their teaching to ensure that pupils make very good progress. Homework is set which consolidates pupils' understanding. There is good tracking of pupils' progress and oral feedback to pupils in lessons is good. However, marking is inconsistent and often not helpful in supporting pupils' learning.
68. Management of the department is good and leadership is satisfactory. There are good procedures in place to ensure that the department functions well. New teachers to the school are very well supported. Tracking of pupil achievement is effective. The departmental handbook gives good guidance on departmental policies and roles and responsibilities. The new scheme of work has the potential to be an excellent working document and thus ensure continuity of curriculum coverage across the school. Leadership is firm, competent and committed and reacts positively to pressures to change. There is, though, no clear vision and sense of direction in the department to galvanise it into a more closely working team to fulfil future developments. The use of ICT is very underdeveloped in the department.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils demonstrate a high degree of competence in applying their mathematical ability in all subjects where mathematics was seen used. They do particularly well with representing and interpreting data in geography, programming spreadsheets in ICT and comparing degrees of accuracy in science experiments. The numeracy co-ordinator has conducted an audit of the use of mathematics in other subject areas and provided training to the whole school. This has resulted in the production of a very helpful help sheet to enable teachers in other departments to check on approaches to calculation and graphical presentation promoted by the mathematics department. Plans are in place to make this available on the school intranet so that it can also be accessed by pupils.

SCIENCE

The overall quality of provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and pupils achieve very well in science courses.
- Pupils have high expectations for their own achievement and are very motivated to succeed.
- Self-evaluation in the department does not ensure consistent standards of teaching.
- Scientific inquiry is not taught systematically throughout all the courses.
- Work is not always well matched to the ability of the pupils.
- Accommodation on both sites is excellent and supports learning very well.

Commentary

70. In the 2003 tests taken at the end of Year 9, standards were well above the national average. There was little difference between standards achieved by boys and girls. However, standards are higher in mathematics and in English than they are in science. The provisional science results for 2004 indicate that standards have risen further. The achievement of pupils by the end of Year 9 is very good. The most able pupils make more progress in Year 7 than other pupils because they come with stronger study skills and receive more helpful feedback about their work. They can therefore cope better with the demands of the course, as it better matches their needs and abilities. The work set is not so well matched for the average and lower ability pupils. By Year 9 the rate of progress has become very good for all pupils.
71. By the end of Year 11 the percentage of pupils obtaining a grade A*-C in triple science is very high compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. The trend has been steadily rising over the past two years. Results for 2004 indicate that the standards are being maintained in triple science, but have fallen slightly in the double award science and significantly in single award science with regard to the higher grades. Attainment in science, however, is still very good overall. The achievement of students in Years 10 and 11 is very high within triple science. Achievement of pupils on the double award science course is well above the national average, but not as high as for pupils on the triple science course. Students on double award and single award courses achieve higher in most other subjects in school than in science. In general, progress in the GCSE courses is very high.
72. The quality of teaching is good and learning is very good. The apparent inconsistency between the judgements is because when teaching lacks clarity and does not fully engage pupils, they use peer support and their own drive to succeed, to clarify teacher expectations and explore deeper learning. Consequently, in several lessons when teaching was not high quality the pupils still continued to learn well because of their positive attitudes and determination to succeed. When teaching is very good, pupils are actively involved in developing their own knowledge. Virtually all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress.
73. Leadership by the head of department is satisfactory. He has developed a caring ethos in the department and built a committed, hard-working team. However, there is not a shared or clear vision of what constitutes effective teaching and learning that would develop consistency in, and improve the quality of, teaching across the department. There is insufficient priority being given to developing scientific enquiry and using the principles of the National Strategy for science. Schemes of work do not sufficiently include teaching strategies to support teachers in planning work to match the various abilities of the pupils or the teaching of science skills, rather than just containing content coverage information. Management by the head of department is good. Communication across the two sites is effective. Monitoring and evaluation systems lack rigour and do not promote consistency in the quality of lessons and application of departmental policies such as marking. Since the previous inspection improvement has been good. Staff are increasingly involved in using technology such as interactive whiteboards and the use of information technology by pupils is beginning to take place.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE courses.
- Pupils' achievement in taught courses is very good.
- There is limited provision for pupils who do not follow a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge is used to design relevant and interesting activities and resources which engage pupils.
- Excellent relationships support pupils' development as highly confident, independent yet co-operative learners.

- Standards in measuring and controlling are under-developed.

Commentary

74. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above average. They were very high for boys and above average for girls. Results in 2004 were even better, though the disparity between girls' and boys' results remained.
75. Standards of work seen are well above average in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' standards on entry to school are above average and they achieve very well. In Years 10 and 11, standards for pupils following a GCSE course are very high for boys and their achievement is very good. Girls' standards are above average and they make good progress. More than two-thirds of pupils do not follow a taught course in Years 10 and 11 and their standards, while remaining above average, represent satisfactory achievement. Across the school, standards in measuring and control are underdeveloped because there is less reinforcement of these skills across the curriculum. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and are a significant factor in their high levels of achievement.
76. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. A strong feature is the design of very good projects and resources. The projects provide an excellent structure, which maintains pace and engages pupils. Relationships are excellent and support the development of highly confident, co-operative and independent learners. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work, behaviour and commitment and pupils respond well. They have computers in school and at home and follow up work from their lessons. Where there is less structure or demand, pupils learn less well. For example, in a lesson with Year 11 girls, the whole lesson was spent making preliminary notes about "the Project" and momentum lapsed.
77. Leadership is very good. The ICT co-ordinator is an excellent, knowledgeable and enthusiastic role model with a clear vision. Management is good overall. It is very good for taught courses, with very clear systems and procedures, very good monitoring arrangements and planned professional development to address identified weaknesses. Management of cross-curricular ICT is satisfactory but still not sufficiently co-ordinated.
78. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Greatly improved leadership and management have secured substantial resources, higher quality teaching and hence significantly improved standards, attitudes and achievement. Although girls' results remain less good than boys', this has been recognised and is being addressed. There is still limited cross-curricular provision, which remains an area of relative weakness.

Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum

79. The school has completed an audit of how each subject contributes to the National Curriculum in ICT and has undertaken substantial professional development. There are examples of good practice. In history, pupils use websites for research and word processors for producing high quality essays, posters and newspapers. In business studies, pupils use spreadsheets to manipulate data and present information in charts and graphs. Observation during the inspection shows that practice does not always match the audit. There is insufficient monitoring of provision across the curriculum. In subjects such as mathematics, science, art and design technology, pupils have had little routine access to computers and have not consolidated or further developed their skills. This has a particular effect during Years 10 and 11 and on standards in measuring and control.

HUMANITIES

The inspection focus was on history and geography. Religious education was inspected as part of Section 23 of the Education Act and will be published as a separate report.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in history throughout the school.
- GCSE examination results are well above average.
- Very good teaching and assessment promote very effective learning.
- Very good leadership and management are improving the subject's popularity.

Commentary

80. Standards in history are very high. Year 9 test results are above national averages with pupils attaining well above average standards. GCSE results are consistently well above average with both boys and girls achieving very well and a high proportion achieving A* and A grades. The department's success and popularity are further seen with the very high take up for A - levels in history and politics. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and achieve very well.
81. Pupils enjoy history and see its value in terms of acquiring knowledge and developing important skills such as the use of sources to draw conclusions. Teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and skilfully use a range of strategies to engage and motivate the pupils. Pupils respond positively and actively participate in lessons. Teachers develop literacy skills well with essay writing techniques using key words and writing frames in many lessons. The use of probing questioning is a good feature of the teaching. Pupils are especially keen to learn and they show a good grasp of historical issues. Pupils are encouraged to use collaborative skills both in pairs and in groups and pupils work very well together. Relationships are very good. Good examples of research skills were seen, including the use of ICT.
82. The department is very well led and managed with good systems for managing across the two sites. Improvements in staffing since the last inspection mean that history is taught by six full time historians, several of whom teach on both sites. It ensures that good practice is spread across both the sites, but it does mean some teaching time is lost through travelling and some lessons start late. Marking is conscientiously carried out and comments are used to good effect. Pupils' target-setting in Years 10 and 11 is very effective. Homework is set regularly to promote pupils' learning and build on the learning in lessons. The department has a clear plan to support future developments and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are high and pupils achieve very well, particularly girls.
- Teaching is good and creates a very good 'ethos for learning'. However, some teaching is not well organised and planned.
- Cramped accommodation on the boys' site reduces the effectiveness of teaching.
- Leadership is good and has led to the maintenance of high standards. However, there is still not enough co-ordination across the two sites.
- Geography contributes very well to the development of ICT skills.

Commentary

83. Standards by the end of Year 9 are average. However, they are better in Years 7 and 8, indicating the beneficial impact brought about by the school's recent focus to improve teaching. In Years 10 and 11, standards are high, with overall results that are consistently well above national averages. Girls excel and perform significantly better than boys, with the gap increasing between 2003 and 2004. However, both boys and girls are very successful in gaining grades A*/A. Achievement in geography is therefore very good and frequently excellent in the case of girls.
84. Pupils' grasp of key geographical concepts and skills, again, particularly in the case of girls, is very good. Boys, in contrast, tend to have better developed oral skills. Their use of argument and their ability to weave difficult ideas into class discussion are frequently better than their written work, indicating a need for greater support for boys' literacy, particularly the skill of developing and structuring written arguments at length. There is very good use of ICT and standards here are good, a key area in which the department has improved markedly since the last inspection. Pupils have good skills in analysis and investigation and the general standard of course work is high. Fieldwork opportunities for GCSE are well-planned and indicate sustained strengths in pupils' ability to work independently. There are, however, no equivalent fieldwork opportunities available in Years 7 to 9, though the department has long had it as an improvement priority.
85. Overall, teaching is good and much is very good, but, as in the last inspection, it is better in Years 10 and 11. In most lessons, teaching ensures an excellent ethos for learning. Pupils are managed well and are consequently attentive, keen to improve, courteous and ready to ask questions. Attitudes to learning are very good. Boys, in particular, are ready to challenge the 'easy answer'; girls, in contrast, are sometimes a little too passive, but work very well when asked to complete independent research or work collaboratively. Teaching has clearly established high expectations. Homework is used sensibly and offers pupils good guidance on how they are performing and how they might improve. Assessment and marking are good. In a few lessons, however, teaching lacks proper organisation and proceeds at too great a pace. The purpose of activities is not always clearly established and when setting extended writing tasks, teachers do not sufficiently structure pupils' work to develop literacy skills.
86. Leadership and management are good. Teachers make efforts to improve and to develop new ideas and approaches. Individual pupil tracking and target-setting systems have been established and are being used successfully to sustain or to raise standards. The acting head of department oversees the day-to-day work of the department very well and has successfully maintained its commitment to high standards, as evidenced by its continued success at GCSE. There remains, however, insufficient monitoring of the implementation of department policies across the two sites. Accommodation on the girls' site is excellent. On the boys' site, however, cramped accommodation and insufficient use of a range of audio-visual and other teaching aids, such as overhead projectors, constrain learning.

TECHNOLOGY

The provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve very well in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment is not accurate and lacks rigour in Years 7 to 9
- Teaching is inconsistent across the two sites and within the different courses in design and technology.

Commentary

87. GCSE results are well above the national average and most pupils achieve very well. Results have consistently improved since the last inspection. Standards are particularly high in textiles and food technology, where a very high proportion of pupils attain the highest possible grades. In particular, pupils' coursework is of a very high standard. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning and the presentation of their work. Pupils work hard and effectively with research and planning. They continually evaluate what they are doing in order to improve it. They take advantage of the high quality guidance offered by teachers. Consequently, they are continually improving their work and examination grades.
88. Teachers' assessments of standards at the age of 14 in 2003 were well above the national average. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection does not support these results. Pupils' designing and making skills are similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally by the age of 14, although they are better in some aspects of the subject than others. They are familiar with the design process, but they are not always given the opportunity to use it. They acquire a broad range of skills using the full range of materials required in the National Curriculum. However, limited time in Year 7 and a lack of continuity in the subjects studied each year restricts attainment. There is too much unfinished practical work, which causes some pupils to lose interest in the subject. This adversely affects behaviour and attitudes, particularly at the boy's site. Computers are now used to support learning, but not as frequently as usual in other schools. Pupils with special educational needs receive support in lessons, either from the teacher or teaching assistants. Consequently, they achieve well for their ability.
89. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, although it is significantly better than this in Years 10 and 11, where it is very good. Teaching varied considerably during the inspection and ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Most teachers are well organised and have a secure understanding of the subject. Demonstrations and explanations of new skills and techniques are competent. Teachers generally have a very good knowledge of the examination requirements. However, teachers do not always take account of the needs of the relatively lower attaining pupils in their classes. They provide oral help, but rarely adapt activities so that pupils can tackle them independently. Teachers are not always clear about the learning objectives in their lessons. This leads to a lack of pace, clarity and challenge. In GCSE courses marking is frequent and detailed. Teachers provide very effective guidance which results in improvements. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of marking is far more variable. Not all teachers have a secure understanding of the National Curriculum. Consequently, their marking is often too generous and pupils have an inflated view of the quality of their work.
90. Since the last inspection, leadership and management of the department have improved and they are now satisfactory. There is a new development plan, which correctly identifies the need to improve assessment and increase opportunities to use ICT. The new head of department is aware of the need to ensure consistency across the variety of design and technology courses and sites. The curriculum has improved in Years 7 to 9, but weaknesses remain. Accommodation has greatly improved on the girls' site, but on the boys' site, maintenance of the technology rooms is poor and they provide a negative image of the subject.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and music were the focus of the inspection.

Art

The quality of provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge supports very high standards in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils have positive attitudes that help them learn and achieve very well in Years 10 and 11.
- Boys' skills in painting and drawing are well developed.
- Leadership and co-ordination of the teaching and assessment of the National Curriculum is not effective enough.
- The narrow range and content of what is taught in Years 7 to 9 adversely affect standards and achievement.

Commentary

91. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below those expected nationally. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are above average when they join the school in Year 7 but many have a very limited experience of art. Although pupils make satisfactorily progress within a narrow range of art, they do not achieve well enough across the full range of two- and three-dimensional work expected by the end of Year 9. Standards at GCSE are well above the national average for boys and girls with a very high proportion of pupils gaining the highest A* and A grades. A smaller proportion of Year 11 pupils, particularly boys, study the subject than is the case nationally. All pupils achieve very well, but overall boys attain higher standards than the girls. In the most recent examinations all 16 boys who entered gained A* or A grades.
92. Teaching is good overall. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are variable. The less effective teaching results in some unsatisfactory behaviour by boys in particular. In some lessons time is lost when one teacher has to move between the two sites. Standards seen, although above average in drawing work, are below average overall for boys and girls. Teachers heavily direct the work and subject matter is not challenging enough for many pupils. It leaves insufficient scope for pupils to exercise choices and develop independent analysis and interpretation skills. Pupils do not use sketchbooks or ICT in lessons. Knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped with an adverse effect upon pupils' standards and achievement. Assessment of pupils' work is not accurate, nor is assessment used regularly to plan future work and build on earlier learning.
93. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is very effective and focused on the demands of the GCSE examination. In work seen standards are well above average. Teachers give very good individual support that helps all pupils perform well in the examinations. Learning is very effective as a result and boys in particular develop their interpretive drawing and illustration skills to very high standards. Work by girls shows a greater willingness to experiment with media. Pupils' very positive attitudes support their learning, but significantly more girls than boys study art. Girls follow a broader course than the boys.
94. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The high standards at GCSE have been sustained and teachers on both sites manage their areas effectively. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Displays of work are used well to support learning on the girls' site. However, leadership and management of the detail of what is to be taught in Years 7 to 9 to ensure all pupils receive similar entitlement take too little account of the range and expectations of the National Curriculum. There is insufficient collaborative planning and sharing of good practice between staff on the two sites.

Music

The overall quality of provision in music is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is an outstanding department, a real strength of the school, and a focus for pupils' creative work and aspirations.
- Inspirational leadership and charismatic music teaching promote excellent learning.
- Resources, especially the availability of and access to instrumental tuition, are good.
- The provision and use of computer technology for music are at present underdeveloped.

Commentary

95. At the end of Year 9, standards for all pupils are well above national averages. This represents very good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment. At the end of Year 11, GCSE results have been consistently very high and in 2004 a very high proportion of pupils entered for music achieved A*-A grades. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good. High-achieving soloists indicate the strength of many pupils' musicianship, including a boy who gained an A* in the 2004 GCSE examination, performing his own expressive song with guitar, and a girl bassoonist who has progressed to the National Youth Orchestra.
96. Teaching and learning are consistently excellent in all year groups, with team-teaching a notable feature. Teaching is charismatic and well-prepared. It focuses on the development of musical skills, resulting in progression for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers introduce pupils to Jewish and world music cultures, contributing much to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The music department has fully adopted the Key Stage 3 Strategy, becoming a model of good practice in assessment for learning for the local authority. Instrumental teaching is very good with 28 per cent of pupils in Years 7 to 11, well above the national average, receiving tuition in a range of instruments. The music department organises an extensive programme of extra-curricular music activities including the Arts Festivals, which have incorporated workshops in gamelan, African Drumming, song-writing, poetry and dance. In two Year 8 girls' lessons some excellent teaching of a well-planned task, involving call and response based on different pitches, encouraged pupils to experiment with their own ideas, producing balanced improvisations of a very good standard which add much to their understanding of musical structure.
97. Leadership and management are excellent and all teachers contribute to the forward-looking nature of the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The department's handbook and schemes of work are thorough, focusing on the development of pupils' musical skills, and time for music now meets requirements. Resourcing for music is mostly good, apart from a lack of computer technology and constraints on accommodation at the boys' site for practical music. Music is highly valued by the school and community for its contribution to the development of pupils' creativity and self-expression as well as for the high quality of its music-making.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION²

Boys and girls are taught separately on different sites. Physical education was inspected by two inspectors. Separate reports have been produced for girls' and boys' physical education.

Girls' physical education

The provision for girls' physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in all year groups are good.
- The girls achieve well and make good progress throughout the school.
- Leadership and management are good and the head of department is a very good role model for other staff and pupils.
- Data analysis is not used to inform assessment or target setting.

Commentary

98. Pupils join the school with standards that are in line with the national average. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above the national average and pupils make very good progress, achieving well. During Years 7 to 9 pupils develop their skills and specific techniques and learn to analyse and evaluate their own and other's work. By the end of Year 11, standards in core physical education followed by all pupils are average and pupils make good progress. Pupils learn how to develop their own exercise programmes and understand the importance of exercise to their health. The GCSE results in 2003 were above average and pupils made good progress.
99. The quality of teaching and learning in all years is good overall and there is evidence of some excellent teaching. Lessons are well planned and different teaching methods are used effectively. Lesson content is well matched to the particular abilities and backgrounds of pupils. In a Year 10 core physical education lesson, pupils learned to develop and monitor their own fitness programme. Significantly, they were shown how to adapt their programmes for use outside school, to enable them to continue to exercise in ways that are acceptable to the tenets of their orthodox Jewish faith.
100. The Year 11 GCSE group worked effectively on the practical component of their course and learnt to apply concepts and develop more advanced tactics in basketball. In a very good lesson seen, the teacher's high expectations challenged pupils to make their own decisions in a competitive situation. The teacher's questioning was probing and encouraged them to analyse the more complex skills independently, which resulted in very good progress. In an excellent Year 11 GCSE lesson seen, pupils' understanding of course concepts was developed to a very high level through the teacher's skilful use of different teaching styles that incorporated evaluation, collaboration and oral and written tasks. The level of participation in all lessons is very high and this, combined with teachers' excellent relationships with pupils, undoubtedly contributes to the consistently good achievement. Assessment is satisfactory, but information does not inform targets to be set for all pupils to improve. Curriculum opportunities are good in Years 7 to 9 and there is a good extra-curriculum programme which is well supported by the girls.
101. Leadership is good and the head of department has strengths and skills that are improving the provision for physical education. There is a clear vision that is sensitive to the cultural background of pupils. This is also reflected in the leadership of the curriculum, which surmounts the potential barrier to learning presented by the shortfall in time allocated to lessons for Year 11. Staff provide excellent role models for pupils. Management is good and staff development is well matched to their professional needs. Performance management and

² All students are required to follow the national curriculum programme for physical education, often referred to as the 'core programme'. The emphasis of the inspection report on physical education is to evaluate the provision for this compulsory aspect of physical education. In addition, students may opt to follow a GCSE examination course in Years 10 and 11. Another feature of physical education provision is the range and quality of extra-curricular activities.

review procedures are embedded and teaching is regularly monitored. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Boys' physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers set high expectations in teaching, behaviour and participation.
- Leadership and management of the department are good and all staff show commitment to raising the status and standards of the subject.
- The requirements of the National Curriculum are not being fully met.
- The indoor facilities for the subject are now good, but the outdoor accommodation continues to be poor.

Commentary

102. In recent years the number of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grades in the GCSE examinations have been well above the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that the present group of pupils taking this examination course will again achieve a pass rate that is at least in line with that achieved in previous years.

103. Pupils arrive from a large number of primary schools, bringing with them a range of physical education experiences and standards, with some well below that expected. During Years 7 to 9 pupils make good progress and by the time they reach the end of Year 9 most are attaining levels of performance that are in line with national expectations. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils understand the principles of invasion games and are able to apply a set of simple rules with small-sided games. They have a good knowledge of the rules and conventions of a number of games and are developing the skills that will enable them to compete successfully. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well.

104. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are also in line with national expectations with a few pupils doing even better. Pupils have a good understanding of tactics and strategies and are able to apply the skills that they have been practising when playing competitive games. Boys understand the effects of exercise on the body and prepare themselves properly for their activities. Pupils taking the GCSE exam in physical education are improving their understanding and expertise in both the practical and theoretical aspects of the subject. These pupils are keen, enthusiastic and work hard and are producing work of a good standard. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

105. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, are given much support by teachers and other pupils and reach levels of attainment that are commendable for them. There is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum on offer.

106. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection there has been a complete change of staff teaching boys' physical education and at the time of the inspection one member of staff had only been in post for just a few days. Nevertheless, all lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, with a significant number judged to be good. Lessons are well planned and objectives shared with pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and pass on their enthusiasm to their pupils. Pupils respond very positively. They are well motivated, behave well and work hard.

107. Leadership and management of boys' physical education are good. The boys' and girls' sections are now led by one recently appointed head of department. The head of department is now in the process of reviewing the overall provision for the subject. She is aware that the requirements of the National Curriculum are not fully met in Years 7 to -9. Hard working teachers work well together, support each other and show a very strong commitment to their

pupils and to the improvement of the department. There has been a good improvement in all aspects of the department's work since the previous inspection. The indoor accommodation for the boys' physical education has been significantly improved which has resulted in both the profile of the subject being raised and an improvement in the overall standards of attainment. The outdoor facilities for the subject are poor.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The focus of the inspection was on business studies.

Business studies

The provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Business studies is a popular subject in Years 10 and 11 and results in GCSE examinations are well above average, with pupils achieving well.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to their work promote very good learning.
- All teachers are very enthusiastic about their subject, which they communicate to their pupils.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.

Commentary

108. More than half of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 take business education courses, which have been expanded to include a vocational provision and designed to meet the needs of the whole ability range. GCSE results since the last inspection have been consistently above national standards and although they showed some decline in 2004, a high proportion of pupils still gained A and A* grades and overall achievement is good. Although both boys and girls do better than in most other schools, girls achieve consistently better results than boys. Overall achievement is good. Some pupils with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they could as work is not well planned to meet their needs.
109. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The team of newly appointed teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and teaching. They have quickly established a good rapport with the pupils and communicate their high expectations very effectively. They are inexperienced and tend to rely on a limited range of teaching strategies. Although these are effective they focus on coverage of the course content rather than developing key skills and pupils' deeper understanding of business concepts. Teachers' knowledge of the individual learning needs of their pupils is understandably limited. Currently, planning is not well enough developed and detailed to meet all pupils' needs. Staff recognise these shortcomings and are very keen to improve.
110. Pupils' quality of learning is very good as they are extremely determined to succeed and show a creditable curiosity about business concepts and their application. They all show a very good understanding of how one set of business decisions can affect other aspects of business performance. Pupils of all abilities are willing to contribute examples from their experiences outside school. Behaviour is generally good, but there are lapses at times on the boys' site.
111. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although there have been significant changes in personnel over the last two years, staffing now appears more stable. The previous head of department has left clear policies and documentation and the newly appointed subject leader has a good understanding of the challenges she faces. She leads a committed team of teachers and, as with her colleagues, is determined to succeed. She is well supported by senior managers. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and Citizenship

The provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school have very good skills of enquiry and communication, participation and responsible action. The success of their fundraising is outstanding.
- The Informal Education programme³ makes a very good contribution to the personal development of all pupils.
- There is non-compliance with statutory requirements to report annually on citizenship and provide a formal assessment at the end of Year 9.
- Direct links between citizenship and other curriculum subjects are not made explicit.

Commentary

112. By the end of Years 9 and 11 standards are well above the national average. Pupils enter the school with well-developed skills of enquiry and communication and by the end of Year 9 they can discuss issues in groups, express their own opinions and explain views that are not their own. They make good progress. By the end of Year 11 pupils can reflect on the process of participating and develop their skills of evaluation and critical awareness.
113. Citizenship and personal, social and health education are taught through the Jewish Studies programme and the Informal Education programme. Throughout all year groups the quality of teaching and learning is very good. In a very good sixth form lesson seen on the Kingdom of King David, the teacher skilfully led group discussions on a range of delicate moral and ethical issues arising from the readings. This encouraged students to consider other people's experiences and reflect on conflicting values.
114. As part of the Informal Education programme, pupils in Year 7 have organised sessions to get to know one another and make friends. "Shabbaton" residential trips are organised annually for all year groups and focus on leadership skills and team building. Drugs education is provided for all pupils through visiting speakers, both from the community and the local health trust. The sex education programme is carefully constructed to incorporate the beliefs and directives of orthodox Jewish faith. Work for charities in the wider community is an excellent student initiative. Boys and girls run their own fundraising societies and produce annual figures for the income generated. Last year this totalled over £80,000.
115. Teaching in other curriculum subjects does not consistently make explicit the links with the skills and topics from the citizenship National Curriculum. There is not always reference to citizenship in departmental handbooks or their schemes of work. In modern foreign language lessons, pupils in Years 7 to 9 have good opportunities to develop their skills of enquiry and communication when comparing customs and cultures. However, this is implicit within the subject. In a very good Year 10 mathematics lesson seen, pupils constructed and tested their own hypotheses on the theory of probability, but opportunities were missed to relate this task to the citizenship skills of justifying a point of view and critical awareness.
116. Leadership is good. The vision for citizenship is implicit and embedded in the ethos and life of the school and staff share a common purpose. Standards are very high when compared to similar schools. Management is satisfactory and the teaching of citizenship and personal, social and health education is effectively organised. There are no formal procedures for reviewing or monitoring pupils' progress or development of the subject. There is an absence of up-to-date knowledge regarding the recent updates and requirements in the curriculum.

³ A programme designed by the school to support pupils' personal development.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 9 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.⁴

Level 3 GCE AS level courses 2003

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
ART	10	100		100		116.0	
BIBLICAL HEBREW	11	100		91		109.1	
BIOLOGY	15	100		73		102.7	
BUSINESS SINGLE AVCE	14	100		64		95.7	
CHEMISTRY	10	100		70		94.0	
COMPUTING	14	100		64		92.9	
ECONOMICS	25	92		76		98.4	
ENGLISH	30	100		73		101.3	
FRENCH	4	100		50		90	
GEOGRAPHY	8	100		88		112.5	
SPANISH	1	100		100		120	
GOVT & POLITICS	24	100		88		109.2	
HISTORY	24	100		72		96.8	
MATHEMATICS	32	94		84		105	
FURTHER MATHEMATICS	5	100		100		112	
MODERN HEBREW	8	100		88		107.5	
MUSIC	1	100		100		100	
PHYSICS	12	100		58		93.3	
PSYCHOLOGY	20	100		80		98	
RELIGIOUS STUDIES	45	100		98		115.1	
TEXTILES	3	100		33		93.3	
BUSINESS DOUBLE AWARD	6	100		83		106.7	

⁴ [Figures for England are not available](#)

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades AE		% gaining grades AB		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
ART	2	100		100		120	
BIBLICAL HEBREW	20	100		80		110	
BIOLOGY	35	97		54		85.1	
BUSINESS SINGLE AVCE	15	93		33		70.7	
CHEMISTRY	27	100		44		87.4	
COMPUTER STUDIES	11	100		73		92.7	
ECONOMICS	37	92		46		80	
ENGLISH	39	100		64		97.4	
FRENCH	15	93		73		98.7	
GEOGRAPHY	14	100		93		111.4	
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS	31	97		71		96.8	
HISTORY	40	95		45		86.5	
MODERN HEBREW	14	100		43		84.3	
MUSIC	4	100		75		100	
PHYSICS	20	90		45		79.0	
PSYCHOLOGY	21	95		62		90.5	
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	48	96		75		100.8	
TEXTILES	11	100		73		100	

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature is taught as a one year AS course and as an A-level course over two years. The subject is popular with male and female students and retention rates are very high.

English

The overall quality of provision in English literature is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students' levels of achievement are very good.
- Students achieve well because of the very good teaching and their own excellent attitudes to the subject.
- Students' learning is restricted because of poor accommodation on the boys' site and the lack of dedicated sixth form teaching rooms.

Commentary

117. Students consistently attain well above average examination results at the end of Years 12 and 13. Such high standards represent very good achievement for all students. The work seen during the course of the inspection mirrors this. Students' well-developed analytical skills are evident in the quality of their extended critical writing and all make effective use of the language of literary criticism. The interpretation and evaluation of texts is done well and students have the maturity to express a personal view on the literature they read. They have a confident and independent approach to their learning which is equipping them well for the freedoms of higher education. Their attitudes to the subject are excellent and this is a powerful factor in how well they learn. The fact that some lessons on the boys' site have to be taught in rooms which are in need of substantial refurbishment does, however, diminish students' enjoyment of the subject. The school recognises the need to improve the accommodation.

118. Teaching is very good. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject and they understand the learning needs of young men and women whom they know well and respect. This, together with the excellent working relationships, engenders confidence and high aspirations in the students. Teachers have the ability to put across their own enthusiasm for the subject and to motivate students to become independent and self-reliant in their studies. Teachers are now broadening the range of their teaching approaches through the purchase and use of electronic teaching aids to improve the quality of students' learning. The evaluation of students' work is done thoroughly and constructive advice given on how to improve. Students speak highly of the support and guidance they receive on both sites.

119. There is very good leadership and management of the subject by the head of department and her senior colleague. Teachers work closely as a team and have high aspirations for the students. There is a strong sense of common purpose and a commitment to improve further the quality of provision. Effective systems are in place for evaluating the subject's performance and for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. There have been good improvements since the time of the previous inspection, particularly in terms of the proportion of students attaining at grades A and B in the A level examinations.

English language and literacy skills at post 16

120. Students use the English language with fluency and accuracy and they have an excellent command of a wide general vocabulary and of specialist terms across all subjects. They are able to structure their writing logically and use appropriate evidence from various sources to support what they say or write. They have excellent analytical skills and combine these with the ability to undertake detailed research. Discussion skills are highly developed and the students have the confidence to sustain an argument and defend it rigorously.

Modern Languages

French

The overall quality of provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results in 2004 were very high, with a substantial proportion of A grades.
- Most students achieve well, building on high standards achieved at GCSE and AS level.
- Male students are not as committed as females and make only satisfactory progress.
- Very good teaching challenges students and provides many opportunities for independent work.

Commentary

121. Standards at A-level in 2003 were above average for the four female students entered. In 2004, eight out of eleven, including six female students, gained A grades. This represents very high standards and excellent progress over Years 12 and 13. Results at AS level for students currently in Year 13 were well above average, with female students gaining better grades than male students and nearly all continuing onto the A-level course.
122. Standards in lessons and work seen in Year 13 are well above average overall. In the lesson seen on the girls' site, oral and comprehension skills were excellent. Samples of written coursework contain a good deal of complex and sophisticated language. At the start of Year 13 this represents excellent achievement. However, in the lesson seen on the boys' site, standards were average and achievement satisfactory. Male students spoke fluently enough, but lacked the accuracy to make communication secure. Frequent errors, sometimes basic, occurred in written work. Comprehension skills were adequate, although students depended heavily on prompting from the teacher. With only two students, there are limitations in terms of interaction and exchange of ideas and arguments, so that it is difficult to stimulate lively or sophisticated dialogue. Year 12 female students, in the first week of their course, displayed very good oral standards and understood most of what they heard in challenging French.
123. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers plan work effectively to teach well-organised courses. Activities interest and involve all students. The key ingredient is the exemplary use of French by teachers and their insistence that students reciprocate, creating a challenge which students enjoy. They show excellent attitudes, both in class and in the independent research which informs their contribution to classwork, especially female students. This combination of enthusiastic teaching and willingness to learn leads to excellent topic knowledge and very good application of sophisticated language. Teachers use a good range of authentic resources to make learning more interesting and relevant. However, despite having spent time in France, students' knowledge of French culture is much less developed than is often the case. Facilities for independent or private study within school are limited. Marking of work is helpful and effective and very good use is made of homework, especially to encourage independent research, including carefully selected websites.
124. Leadership and management are very good, and effective in promoting high standards. Teaching is efficiently shared between several teachers, most are native speakers, who teach well-developed schemes of work. Although there are no arrangements for individual reviews of their progress, students feel well informed through marking and verbal feedback and benefit from good induction guides and the provision of assessment criteria. Students and their parents sign a contract, which binds them to make the necessary effort and follow the course to its conclusion. The most recent A-level results indicate good improvement since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

The department offers a combination of modules to students in Year 12 and Year 13 which range from a single AS level through to two Alevels in mathematics and further mathematics. For mathematics, the full range of pure mathematics modules is offered together with first modules in mechanics and statistics. For further mathematics the full range of pure mathematics modules are offered together with further modules on mechanics.

The provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in pure mathematics are very high in Year 12 and Year 13 and students' achievement is excellent.
- Students are highly motivated learners.
- Teachers work very hard to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent.
- Use of ICT is not well developed.

Commentary

125. Results in 2003 examinations are very high when compared to national averages. Provisional results for 2004 indicate that this figure is rising with even more students gaining the higher grades A or B. This represents very good progress since the last inspection.
126. Students are accepted onto an Alevel course with a grade 'C' GCSE which is a lower qualification than for many other sixth forms. A highly intensive algebra course at the start of Year 12 together with excellent support by the teachers outside of lessons ensures that all students have the opportunity to succeed. Students value very highly their teachers' willingness and availability to help them throughout the course. This, together with the students' extraordinary self-motivation, contributes significantly to the excellent achievement of all students.
127. From the evidence seen in lessons and the standard of students' work this very high standard in pure mathematics is being maintained. Although students on the mathematics course are only offered first modules in mechanics and statistics, the standards within those modules are very high. The standards in mechanics and statistics on the further mathematics course are also very high.
128. The quality of teaching is very good and students' learning is excellent. Teachers' knowledge of the subject enables them to challenge and extend all the students. Teachers' use of questions to assess the students' understanding and provide clarification where necessary is very good. Teachers make good use of textbooks. Students are encouraged to decide how many examples they need to do in an exercise to master a particular technique which leads to the more able quickly moving on to more challenging problems. Students enjoy mathematics. The relationships between students and teachers are excellent and there is considerable mutual respect. The quality of students' learning is not sufficiently enhanced by the use of ICT, which at present is not well developed.
129. Leadership and management of mathematics in the sixth form are good. As in the main school, good procedures are in place to ensure that teachers are able to teach and support students' learning effectively. Since the last inspection, very good progress has been made in terms of examination results indicating that curriculum changes in mathematics have been well implemented.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was on biology.

Biology

The overall quality of provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistently very high as students are very well prepared for both internal and external assessments.
- Very good teaching motivates and engages pupils by using a variety of interesting activities and opportunities to develop through independent learning.
- Very positive student-teacher relationships promote learning.
- Self-evaluation in biology is stronger on the girls' site than the boys'.

Commentary

130. Standards in A-level biology have been very high in recent years for all students. At AS level, standards have been well above national standards. In 2004 results have been maintained at the level of previous years. Group sizes are small and it is difficult to compare standards with national results. However, students with good grades at GCSE generally attain standards above expectations at AS and A-level and their achievement is very good. For the past three years there has been a 100 per cent success rate at both AS and A-level.
131. Students attain standards beyond those expected for similar students nationally. This is partly helped by the small size of groups. However, it is also due to the general high level of maturity shown by students. For example, they recognise the importance of maximising their opportunities for learning. Students' progress is also supported by emphasis of the importance of self-management of their own study. This helps students to quickly become clear about how to gain success on the biology courses.
132. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very constructive relationships in the classroom with students. Students are taught as mature adults who want to learn, which re-enforces students' own motivation. This high level of expectation about attitudes to work and self-study is combined with excellent subject knowledge of all the biology teachers to lay strong foundations for progress. Progress made by students is therefore very good, because authoritative teachers plan and teach structured and challenging lessons with individual support available as required.
133. Students enjoy the subject, and readily discuss the work even when not being supervised closely by the teacher. Written work is kept to essential notes or practical write-ups, and revision tasks. Teachers know their students well due to the small group sizes, and this helps them track their progress very effectively.
134. The recently appointed head of biology has a clear vision about improving attainment and making the subject more attractive to a greater number of pupils. Numbers of students applying to study post-16 biology are increasing as a result of their confidence that this subject meets their needs and aspirations. Biology teachers on both sites are developing into a cohesive team, but there is less self-evaluation on the boys' site. The subject is well led and managed and there is a commitment to continually improve the learning for all students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The school offers AS and A2 courses. These were not inspected.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on history and psychology, but the work in geography was sampled. Two lessons **in geography** were observed in the sixth form. Teaching was high quality and had a marked impact on students' standards, which were very high in Year 13 and developing well, as a direct result of the teachers' high expectations in Year 12. Teachers ask pertinent questions to develop students' knowledge, and their understanding is consequently very good. Research skills are very good, as is the use of ICT. Students' grasp of key debates is sharp and thoughtful and attitudes to study are excellent. Leadership is very good.

History

The overall quality of provision for history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and most students achieve very well.
- Leadership of history in the sixth form, on both sites, is very good.
- Teaching is very good as it is both challenging and imaginative.
- Assessment is used well to inform students how to improve.
- Insufficient use is made of literacy techniques to structure students' essay writing.

Commentary

135. Standards are very good and most students achieve very well. Results are significantly above national averages. At A-level, all students have passed in the past two years and a majority gain grades A/B. Girls, who often perform better than boys, achieve results that are consistently excellent. Standards are also very good at AS level, with similarly high proportions gaining the highest grades. At AS level boys and girls achieve similar results. Achievement in lessons is very high, particularly in A-level classes. In one AS level class, boys showed signs of immaturity that adversely affected the quality of their work. Nonetheless, the attitudes shown by the overwhelming majority of other students are consistently very good and are a key factor in their high levels of achievement. Students respect their teachers and respond well to the discipline and intellectual demands of their subjects, relishing the challenges they are set. Students have good levels of subject knowledge and use these well in debate, a particular strength of boys, whose oral skills are often excellent. All students, but particularly girls, collaborate very well, readily celebrating each others' achievements and insights and show an impressive ability to research topics independently.
136. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and is used very well to direct and refine students' understanding. Teachers use every opportunity to stimulate students' interest and motivation, not only by means of a wide range of teaching techniques that keep students fully involved, but also through the use of perceptive questioning and the maintenance of a high level of challenge. Assessment is used well to show students how to improve. Teachers are thoughtful and reflective in the questions they pose students because it is these qualities that they expect in return; the language of exchange between teacher and taught is often impressive. The curriculum is generally well-planned but the use of ICT, though used well for research purposes, is not used sufficiently to refine students' work. Similarly, there is insufficient structure to develop students' essay-writing skills.
137. Leadership of history on both sites is very good and is responsible for the very good ethos operating across the whole department. Monitoring, both of teaching quality and of students' performance, is used well to maximise the department's impact and effectiveness, as are

opportunities for peer appraisal and professional development. Educational visits are used well to broaden the curriculum.

Psychology

Overall provision in psychology is **good**. It is very good for girls and satisfactory for boys

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment have been excellent for girls, but only moderate for boys.
- Teaching is good and together with the students' positive attitudes creates a very good climate for learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good with signs of recent improvement.
- Teachers are expert and well-qualified in the subject.
- There has been under-achievement by the male students.

Commentary

138. Girls' examination results at A level are very good indeed. Girls who have already attained very highly before joining the sixth form are challenged and stimulated to go on reaching the highest levels. Those whose attainment is more modest are also guided and supported to achieve very highly. On the other hand, boys' examination results have been much less impressive and not as good as would be expected for such able students. This relative under-achievement is now being addressed by the new subject leader, who plans to pay especial attention to the boys' full coverage of the syllabus and preparation for the examinations.
139. Teaching was good overall in the lessons observed. The teachers are well qualified and highly expert in their subject. They challenge the students to think for themselves through stimulating and effective questioning and discussion. The teachers and students show mutual respect and appreciation and there is a mature and highly conducive climate for learning. The students concentrate and apply themselves with an outstandingly high degree of motivation and eagerness to learn. They are exceptionally willing and eager to enter discussion and to raise and answer questions.
140. The quality of learning is very good. The pace and depth of learning are well suited to the attainment of the highest standards. Progress is monitored through regular assignments which are helpfully and constructively marked. Students' essays are mature in style and show very good learning. In the past, coverage of the syllabus has been thorough for girls, providing a very good preparation for the examinations, but less so for boys.
141. Although only newly in post, the subject leader has the necessary vision and commitment to drive the subject forwards. She is working closely with her colleague to develop and improve teaching and learning. There are plans whereby attainment and progress will be more effectively monitored so that teaching strategies can be developed to ensure that all students achieve their full potential. She is keen to improve the moderate resources for the subject.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was work in **art**.

Art

The quality of provision for art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and students achieve very well.
- Teachers' specialist knowledge is used very well to guide and support students.
- Students respond very positively to teaching and are highly motivated independent learners.
- Teachers operate independently and therefore miss opportunities to share ideas and the excellent work from both sites.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.

Commentary

142. Standards at A-level are very high compared to the national average. The high proportion of students achieving the highest grades places the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. These high standards have been sustained again in 2004 with all eight of the students entered achieving an A grade. Although males and females are taught on separate sites and follow different courses both achieve high standards, but numbers taking art fluctuate from year to year.

143. Teaching and learning are very good in the sixth form. Teachers understand course requirements very well and give very good advice and support that enables students to attain the highest standards. Students are challenged to explain and develop their work making reference to artists work. Year 13 art work in progress at the girls' site demonstrates highly individual responses and imaginative and expressive painting in a studio environment. Students feel very well supported and are highly motivated. A very good selection of books is available to support their independent research. Males in Year 12 starting their course talk confidently about their past work and how they might develop it in the future. The only male student currently in Year 13 displayed an impressive range of personal drawing and painting work and gave an account of how he had developed the theme of local environment. Students' work demonstrates very good progression of ideas with imaginative use of media. References to the work of artists and artistic styles are well used and students shows initiative in attending workshops at major art galleries to broaden skills and knowledge. Male and female students make independent use of the Internet for research but departmental resources for ICT are lacking, particularly at the girls' site.

144. Management of art on each site is good, but overall leadership is fragmented and less effective. Teachers on the two sites largely operate independently as subject leaders. Whilst they both have very good subject knowledge this method of working restricts the sharing of ideas, resources and subject expertise and makes co-ordination on policy and new initiatives difficult. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

BUSINESS

The work in business studies and economics were inspected in depth.

Business studies

The overall quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students taking business courses in the sixth form are determined to succeed and have excellent attitudes to their work.
- The school has established extensive links with the business community that are used well to enrich students' learning.
- Examination results are above average and for the female students they are very good.
- Teachers are very enthusiastic, but rely on a narrow range of teaching methods.
- Teachers' planning is not sufficiently detailed to ensure all students make good progress in lessons.

Commentary

145. Business provision is well established, but the popularity of GCE and AVCE courses has fluctuated significantly since the last inspection. Advanced vocational results have been above national expectations, but girls achieve better results than boys. Reliable comparisons with national averages are difficult as some classes are very small. To date boys prefer economics to business studies and relatively few have opted for the subject. Although the numbers and ability of students taking business courses in the sixth form fluctuate yearly they tend to be the lower attaining students and, as such, their examination results are good and they achieve well.
146. Teaching is good and every effort is made to encourage and enthuse the already determined students about the wider business world. The inexperienced teachers tend to focus predominantly on the factual content of the subject. Although this is done effectively, they tend to neglect the more challenging aspects of business education, such as decision making when faced with incomplete information. Similarly, there is little evidence of group work and the use of business simulations to develop a deeper understanding of business concepts. Such vocational aspects to learning business are further limited when class sizes are very small. The very positive attitudes of the students and their determination to succeed ensure learning is very good and most students achieve well and make good progress.
147. Leadership and the effectiveness of management are satisfactory. The newly appointed manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and she leads a team of young teachers who are keen to have a positive impact on business provision. She is able to draw on excellent contacts with the local business community and is developing departmental planning to meet both short and long-term development needs.

Economics

The overall quality of provision in economics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A level results have been consistently well above national standards.
- Students are keen to be involved in debate and controversy associated with economic issues.
- Coursework is used well to develop skills necessary for independent learning.
- Students are well supported in their studies but not all staff have an adequate understanding of examination requirements.

Commentary

148. Economics is a very popular and well-established part of the sixth form curriculum that appeals strongly to male students. The examination results are very good and over the past four years a very high proportion of students have achieved A and B grades. Although many students are very able this still represents very good achievement. The subject is much less popular with girls and their results tend to be lower than their male counterparts.
149. Teaching overall is good and a major reason why so many students opt for the subject. However, continuity in teaching has been disturbed by recent staff changes. The newly appointed staff work hard to ensure that there is no disruption to students' learning. Not all staff have a secure knowledge of examination requirements and the need for students to be able to apply and use their understanding of economics in different contexts. Nonetheless, the department has been very well managed in the past and teaching continues to be organised to ensure that students further develop their already extensive capabilities for independent learning. Coursework is used to very good effect to develop research skills and to give students opportunities to develop and apply theory to issues of their choice.
150. The quality of students' learning is very good. It is difficult to exaggerate the determination of male students to involve themselves in the intellectual challenges of the subject. They are always willing to contribute in lessons and keen to debate, making it hard at times for teachers to end the session. Their hard work does much to ensure that high standards are maintained and learning is very good.
151. Leadership and management of economics have been good over time. The head of department is keen to do well and is supported by enthusiastic and hardworking staff. There is great potential for improvement by taking advantage of the dedication and commitment of the male students and ensuring that female students share the same opportunities.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

No courses in this curriculum area were inspected.

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	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
Overall standards achieved		2
Students' achievement	1	1
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	1	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		1
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	3	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and schools	3	3
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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