

INSPECTION REPORT

Heston Community School

Hounslow, Middlesex

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102537

Headteacher: Ms Angela Bennett

Lead inspector: Brian Rowe

Dates of inspection: 29th November - 3rd December 2004

Inspection number: 268825

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	1252
School address:	Heston Road Heston Hounslow Middlesex
Postcode:	TW5 0QR
Telephone number:	020 8572 1931
Fax number:	020 8570 2647
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Mike Lawton
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Heston Community School is a mixed comprehensive for pupils aged 11-18, situated in Heston, Hounslow. The school serves the local area and is over-subscribed. Since the last inspection, the school has gained specialist arts college status, Investors in People, Beacon school status, Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark awards. Many of the pupils come from families that are economically and socially disadvantaged, but some are from professional backgrounds. There are currently 1252 pupils on roll, including 300 in the sixth form, making it a much larger than average sized secondary school. There is an attached unit for 15 pupils who have a hearing impairment. Over four-fifths of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a much higher proportion than average, but only a few are at early stages of using the English language. There are over 70 refugees and a few pupils in local care at school. About 15 per cent of the pupils receive free school meals and this proportion is close to the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. About 10 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and this is below average. About 40 have a statement for special educational needs, a proportion that is above average compared to other secondary schools. Staff mobility is much higher than most schools and there has been difficulty for recruiting staff in some subjects. The school is housed on a congested site that it shares with two other schools and various community services.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1695	Brian Rowe	Lead inspector	
11418	Donya Urwin	Lay inspector	
33051	Teresa Smart	Team inspector	Mathematics
34521	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	English
30433	Chris Corp	Team inspector	Science
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
17156	Ted Graham	Team inspector	Art and design
3555	Carol Emery	Team inspector	Design and technology
4317	Ken Madrell	Team inspector	Geography Religious education
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	History Psychology
12110	Roger Bailess	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
2032	Christopher Polyblank	Team inspector	Music
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical Education
23137	Ron Fewtrell	Team inspector	Business education
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Biology post-16 Art post-16
3266	Peter Baker	Team inspector	Drama

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Heston Community School is a **good** school with many strengths and provides **good** value for money. The headteacher provides very good leadership, which includes a determination to improve the quality of education for all pupils. Overall, good leadership and management ensure the school supports all the pupils very well. The good quality of teaching and learning ensures pupils achieve **well**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school has a very positive and inclusive ethos. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, behave very well, are happy and develop into mature, confident young adults;
- Standards are above average at GCSE and pupils achieve well because of their positive attitudes to learning and good teaching;
- The extensive and very effective range of care and guidance offered to all pupils contributes positively to their education and the ethos of the school;
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good;
- A number of staffing issues have resulted in inadequate management structures within some faculties and some curriculum initiatives across the school;
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced through a very good provision of enrichment and extra-curricular activities;
- The overall quality of the learning development faculty is very good. This ensures that those pupils needing additional support achieve well and are effectively integrated into the school;
- Excellent links with the community enrich the experiences of all pupils;
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory, especially for sixth-form students;
- There is unsatisfactory provision for religious education and cross-curricular information and communication technology (ICT).

Overall, improvements since the last inspection have been good. The issues identified in the previous inspection have mostly been successfully addressed, with the exception of providing an act of daily collective worship and making greater use of ICT across the curriculum.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		All schools			Similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	B	B	A
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	C	D	D	

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

The achievement of pupils is **good** and standards overall are now **above** the national average in all years. The school has continued to improve upon the standards and achievement reported at the previous inspection. Pupils enter the school with standards that are close to those expected nationally, and improve on these effectively. Standards are now above the national average across the year groups as a result of the good learning ethos, pupils' positive attitudes and staff commitment to raising standards. In tests taken in 2003 at the end of Year 9, standards in English, mathematics and science were below the national average. In 2004, the results improved significantly, especially in English which is likely to be well above the national average. Overall,

GCSE results in 2003 were above average in comparison to those found nationally. The proportion of girls and boys gaining five or more GCSE A*-C passes was above the national figure. Provisional results for 2004 give a similar picture. A very high proportion of pupils gain some success in GCSE examinations and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Standards are particularly high in art and business studies at GCSE. Students in the sixth form achieve well with examination results that have continued to improve in recent years and are now at the national average. Standards are high in art and psychology. The school was awarded specialist Visual Arts College status in 2004 because of very high standards in art. Pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit achieve well and are fully integrated into school life. Throughout the school, pupils have above average skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, throughout the school is good. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. Behaviour and relationships around the school and in the majority of lessons are also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Arrangements for assessing students' work are good. There are examples of very good teaching to be found in most departments. Several aspects of the overall educational provision are strengths within the school. These include extra-curricular activities, the learning development faculty, care and guidance of pupils and links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is **good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Other key staff with management responsibilities provide good leadership. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The management of the school is good. The majority of heads of subject or faculty heads are providing good and sometimes very good management. Line management is well established so that the senior management team is well informed, leading to good whole-school development. However, some subjects do not have an effective head of subject and this is leading to inconsistencies in teaching and subject management. Financial management of the school by the business manager is very good. Best value principles are rigorously applied and ensure that value for money is achieved on all purchases.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents have positive views about what the school does to support the diverse and complex needs of pupils. The school's image in the local community is very positive. Pupils' views about the school are well informed, honest and thoughtful. Although a demanding group, they value the safe environment the school provides, where everyone is encouraged to respect and treat each other fairly. Organised opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions are limited and they are keen to play a greater part in the decisions that affect the life and direction of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the structure and effectiveness of middle management;
- Continue to work with the local education authority to secure better accommodation;
- Improve provision and achievement in religious education and cross-curricular ICT;

and, to meet statutory requirements by:

- Providing a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good and it is cost-effective. Standards are broadly average, but examination results, although improving, have fluctuated over the last few years and in part reflect on the ability of students staying on. The quality of teaching and learning is good, which ensures students achieve well. The increasing numbers who enter the sixth form are well advised and supported by caring staff and good leadership and management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students show very positive attitudes to their learning and to the school;
- There is a very good range of academic and vocational subjects;
- Good teaching and learning results in good achievement;
- There are excellent links with the local community;
- Poor facilities, including the library, limit opportunities to develop independent learning and for private study;
- Students are very well supported in subjects and know what they have to do to improve;
- Provision in many subjects is very good and excellent in art;
- There is little clear planning for the future development of the sixth form.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication English	Provision is good . Standards are above average in English language and average in English literature as a result of good teaching and very good student attitudes. Very good leadership and management are focused on raising standards further.
Mathematics	Provision is very good . Standards are average, but students achieve very well in relation to their GCSE results. The high achievement is due to stimulating teaching. Students' attitudes are very positive due to their constructive relationships with their teachers.
Science Chemistry Biology	Provision is good . Standards are average at the end of Year 13. Students achieve well due to the good teaching from a team of experienced staff. Teachers and students share very good relationships and work in a co-operative manner. Provision is very good . Very good teaching results in students who work hard and achieve very well. Very good leadership and management has a clear focus on raising standards further.
Information and communication technology	Provision is good . Students make good progress and achieve well as a result of good teaching. Very good assessment helps students to know how to improve and attain at a level that matches the national average.
Humanities Geography Psychology	Provision is good . Standards are above average and improving. Achievement is good because of good teaching and the very good attitudes of the students. Leadership is excellent and the management of the department is very good. Provision is very good . Standards are above average and achievement is very good. Teaching is very good or excellent in equal measure and students are very positive about their courses.

	Leadership and management are very good.
Visual, performing arts and media Art	Provision is excellent . Excellent teaching results in extremely high levels of motivation and application, which leads to very high standards. The excellent leadership and management ensures that students achieve their full potential.
Theatre studies	Provision is very good . Standards are above average as a result of very good and challenging teaching and very good student attitudes. Very good leadership and management enable high levels of achievement.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel Physical education	Provision is very good . Highly motivated and able students respond very positively to the very good teaching. Standards are better than those seen nationally.
Business Business studies	Provision is very good . Standards in vocational and A-level courses are above national averages and students benefit from excellent curriculum opportunities. Teaching, learning and student achievement are very good due to very good planning and positive relationships between students and their teachers. Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
<i>The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth-form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.</i>	

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students have reliable access to well-informed personal support and guidance from their tutors, subject teachers and sixth-form leaders. School staff know the students very well and advice is tailored very closely to specific needs to assist progress and achievement. Students' views are valued and their 'voice' is regularly sought in those decisions which affect school activities and services.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are good, but there is insufficient long-term strategic planning for future developments. The head of sixth form and other key staff ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the sixth form despite the limited accommodation and facilities. Students achieve well and their learning is helped by effective systems for monitoring their academic progress by the subject teachers and tutors.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The majority of students are positive and supportive of the school. In conversations with inspectors, whilst keen to provide open and honest opinions of the school, they refuted the negative views identified in the students' questionnaire and acknowledge that their teachers know them very well and work hard to provide whatever support they require. They are given many opportunities to accept responsibility and to work and research independently. Students would appreciate more specific careers guidance tailored particularly to the needs of sixth-form students.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils is **good** and standards overall are now **above** the national average in all years. The school has continued to improve upon the standards and achievement reported at the previous inspection. Students in the sixth form achieve well with examination results that have continued to improve in recent years and are now at the national average. Pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. Throughout the school, pupils have above average skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes that contribute significantly to the standards they achieve.
- Test results in English at the end of Year 9 are significantly higher in 2004.
- Achievement is good in the majority of subjects by the end of Year 9, but is unsatisfactory in religious education.
- Standards attained in GCSE examinations are above the national average.
- Achievement by boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 is good and is particularly high in art and business education.
- Standards are at the national average and achievement is good in the sixth form, particularly in art, mathematics, psychology and media and theatre studies.
- English language and literacy skills and competence in mathematics are good and support the pupils' achievement in many subjects.

Commentary

Years 7–9

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are close to the national average, and effectively improve on them. The school reviews and monitors performance data to identify ways of raising standards. This and an increasing focus on teaching and learning have contributed to the improvement seen despite the issues of staffing changes. The table below indicates that standards in national tests, in 2003, at the end of Year 9 were below average in English and science. These results represented unsatisfactory achievement by pupils in these subjects. Results in 2004 are significantly higher, especially in English and mathematics, and are likely to be above the national average. This represents good achievement by the pupils. Standards seen

in lessons and pupils' work during the inspection closely match the 2004 results. Overall, across other subjects, achievement by boys and girls is good. Standards are lower in science and design and technology due, in part, to the quality of teaching and associated staffing issues. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. In art and music, the standards and achievement are well above the national average and above in mathematics, ICT, geography and drama. In religious education, standards are below expectations because, due to the continuing difficulties in recruitment and retention of specialist teachers, the teaching is unsatisfactory. In 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	32.4 (34.4)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	34.7 (33.1)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.2 (32.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 207 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 above the national average. Achievement overall is good throughout Years 10 and 11. Pupils build very well on their attainment by the end of Year 9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and help them attain standards that are above the national average. In 2003, the proportion of girls and boys gaining five or more GCSE A*-C passes was above the national average. Provisional results for 2004 give a similar picture. A very high proportion of pupils gain some success in GCSE examinations and this indicates the determination of the school to provide a relevant curriculum for all the pupils. Results in art and history were especially good. Standards in physical education, modern foreign languages and religious education are below the national average. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards are above average across all subjects with the exception of religious education that remains below average. Standards in modern foreign languages have improved and are now at the national average. The 2004 examinations continue the trend of improvement and adding value to pupils' achievement even though the number gaining five A*-C grades is lower.
3. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because of the support of teachers and teacher assistants. Progress is rapid in the early years, and many improved by two grades in English during Year 7. In Year 11, pupils with special educational needs gained at least one GCSE pass in a subject in which they were supported, and all gained a grade in English. Students in Year 12 are determined to achieve, and they make very good progress with the support of the teachers. Pupils who have English as an additional language rapidly improve their competence with targeted support.

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

	School results	National results
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Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	59 (57)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	37.3 (38.4)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 190 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 the 2003 post-16 examinations were below the national average, but results have continued to improve in recent years. The 2004 results are likely to be broadly in line with the national average. There is a wide range of advanced courses on offer, including some advanced vocational courses. Students have very good attitudes to their work, extremely high expectations and are well supported by their teachers. Good subject teaching coupled with a very strong work ethic supports the students' learning. Standards of work seen during the inspection are at the national average and this reflects the recent rise in attainment. Achievement is good overall with notable strengths in art, mathematics, biology, psychology, media, theatre studies, physical education and business studies.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.6 (80.7)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	28.2 (24.0)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	196 (207)	258.2 (262.3)

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The standard of pupils' attitudes, relationships and behaviour is **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good** and improving. Aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. The school is significantly enriched by the diversity of culture and backgrounds of the pupils and there is an encouraging atmosphere of tolerance, high expectation and achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and staff are very good.
- The self-worth and well-being of pupils is a consistent consideration in all activities.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Pupils show significant personal initiative in a range of voluntary service activities.
- The high number of fixed-term exclusions is well targeted to manage behaviour.
- The cultural awareness and development of pupils is very good.

Commentary

- The school creates an environment where 'aiming for the best' is a priority and the unique and complex needs of its diverse population are served well by a very strong 'pupil-centred' ethos. Relationships are very good. There is a productive and hardworking atmosphere in the majority

of classrooms and the interactions between pupils, school staff and visitors are lively and confident. In the best lessons, particularly in art and English, pupils focus enthusiastically on their work and are keen to respond and succeed.

6. Enthusiasm for the school is high and behaviour around the school and in the majority of classrooms is very good. Pupils respect and listen to one another and the development of personal skills and self-worth is integrated into activity throughout the school with very good results. Pupils show a high level of awareness, and are not afraid to voice their opinions. Pupils actively seek opportunities to take responsibility and demonstrate personal initiative through school events, trips, visits and helping other pupils during lessons.
7. The school creates an atmosphere where moral and social values are examined and explored with lively interest and enthusiasm. Pupils have many opportunities to develop cultural appreciation and understanding.
8. Attendance is very good. There are robust procedures with rigorous follow-up by staff and attendance has improved since the last inspection, although unauthorised absence is higher than the national average due to a strict policy of term-time holidays being classified as unauthorised. Punctuality to lessons in most subjects is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.7	School data:	1.3
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.

9. Courtesy and collaboration are evident throughout the school. There was no evidence of bullying or vindictive behaviour during the inspection and pupils were keen to point out that this sort of behaviour is not a regular feature of school life. Where incidents do occur, the school has well-rehearsed response procedures and issues are resolved quickly and efficiently. Fixed-term exclusions are well targeted to manage behaviour and promote expected standards and all staff work hard to keep even the most disruptive pupils at school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White - Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
148	44	2
0		
11	1	
2	2	
3		

Mixed – White and Asian	8		
Mixed – any other mixed background	16	1	
Asian or Asian British - Indian	758	27	
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	132	9	
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	6		
Asian or Asian British – Any other	20	1	
Black or Black British - Caribbean	10	1	
Black or Black British - African	37	12	
Black or Black British – Any other	8	2	
Chinese	7		
Any other ethnic group	79	10	
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	12	1	
No ethnic group recorded	42	8	1

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

10. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language have a positive attitude to school and to learning. This shows in their good attendance. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and are appreciative of the support that they receive. Many take part in activities that take place after school. Some Year 7 and Year 8 pupils benefit from paired reading sessions before school, reflecting pupils' determination to improve.

Sixth form

11. Attitudes and values in the sixth form are very good. The students are a demanding group, driven by a strong desire to achieve. Attitudes to learning are very good in the majority of lessons and hard work is a way of life for most of the students. Showing initiative and a determination to succeed are dominant features of most learning activities. Students are keen to respond to the school's drive for results and achievement and they sustain a high level of lively interest and set themselves challenging targets.
12. Relationships are very good and there is a high level of appreciation for the school. Student views about the school are strong and they are keen to discuss their observations and describe their needs. Alongside a capacity for independence, their desire to provide support for others is very evident. Students are thoroughly involved in the life of the lower school and there are many opportunities to encourage and support younger pupils. Attendance in the sixth form is very good and students are punctual to lessons.

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 **very good**. The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities, is **very good**. The overall quality and quantity of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum are **unsatisfactory**, but accommodation for the sixth form is **poor**. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **very good**. Pupils and sixth-form students receive **very 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** and there are **excellent** community links. Links and relationships with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning in all years is **good**. Assessment of pupils' work is **good** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching promotes very positive attitudes and personal development in pupils.
- Teaching motivates pupils and supports them to achieve well throughout the school.
- Regular monitoring ensures that senior staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, but there is insufficient self-evaluation in some subjects.
- Teaching in art, drama, history, music, business studies and psychology are very good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in several subjects.

Commentary

13. Overall, teaching is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. There is now a much higher proportion of good and very good lessons. Over the last few years, important decisions have been made to raise standards and improving teaching has been an important priority for staff development. Effective management has ensured that improvement to teaching and learning has been accomplished in many subjects. The pupils are very positive about the school and the teaching they receive. They are very well behaved overall and have very positive attitudes to their work as a result of effective teaching. Teachers make a substantial contribution to the pupils' personal development. During the inspection, 149 lessons were observed. A summary of the teaching is shown in the table below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 149 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9 (6%)	46 (31%)	59 (40%)	30 (20%)	5 (3%)	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.

14. The above table indicates a high proportion of good and very good teaching. During the inspection, the most effective teaching was observed in art, drama, history, music and business education. Although teaching is good in all years, it is strongest in the sixth form. However, despite this good overall profile, there are still aspects that need to be improved. These are related to insufficient use of ICT in several subjects, and to some lessons that lacked pace and urgency and when learning was too slow. In some lessons, teachers did not use a wide enough range of teaching strategies, learning became mundane and pupils lost interest, resulting in unsatisfactory behaviour. In some subjects there is insufficient internal self-review and teaching is inconsistent throughout the department. There is especially room for improvement in religious education, Spanish and some aspects of design and technology. There are examples of very good teaching to be found in most departments. Parents were positive about teaching and their views were borne out during the inspection.
15. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is generally by support within lessons, but also through withdrawal sessions. Pupils enjoy the withdrawal lessons, where there is lively interaction between pupils and teachers, which motivates them to work hard. Tasks are usually short and focused, which holds pupils' attention so that they learn well. Support in lessons is very good, which is the result of close collaboration between the teacher and the support assistant.

16. Assessment is good overall. A good central system has been developed for disseminating information to individual subject teachers. This data includes comprehensive information to inform teachers' planning and identify targets to be set with pupils. Good use is made of ICT to customise the data for individual teachers. However, not all teachers make full use of this data in their planning. The school's policy includes useful information about how monitoring of practice will be carried out. A well-prepared annual assessment and target-setting day is held for parents and pupils which is helpful for pupils in understanding what level they are at and what they need to do to improve. Assessment has improved considerably since the last inspection, but there is inconsistency in the quality of marking by some teachers in some subjects. The school has made a good start on the introduction of assessment for learning strategies. Initial training has taken place for heads of subject and a full staff training session has been held based on the national strategy framework.

Sixth form

17. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form. During the inspection, 42 sixth-form lessons were observed. Nearly half were very good or excellent, three-quarters were good or better and all were satisfactory or better. A scrutiny of students' work and talking with students confirmed this good level of teaching and learning. Teaching was very good in mathematics, biology, psychology, theatre studies, physical education and business education, and excellent in art. The overall good quality of 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.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum for all pupils and students is **very good**. The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities is **very good**. The quality and quantity of resources and accommodation to meet the needs of pupils and sixth-form students are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very good overall and caters well for the needs of the pupils and sixth-form students.
- The quality of accommodation is unsatisfactory, especially for sixth-form students.
- Work-related learning is good and well established in certain subjects, for example business education and art.
- Cross-curricular provision for information and communication technology has no designated co-ordinator and is not embedded well enough across all subjects.
- The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

18. The wide range of courses offered to pupils represents very good curriculum provision. The curriculum matches all aspects of students' needs well. The full impact of the newly gained specialist college status has yet to be seen. However, the school has a strong reputation for arts in the local and wider community. The management of the curriculum is very good, with good support from the governors. The majority of subject areas have a governor attached and whilst this is not fully operational most take an active role in supporting the subject. Curricular planning is based on regular review processes, including a thorough analysis of performance data. Equality of access to the curriculum and equality of opportunity are very good. The school's social, personal and citizenship education programme makes a good contribution to pupils'

personal development. The programme effectively helps to emphasise the very strong links to the community and the aim of developing effective citizens.

19. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is very good. The school has fully embraced the government's Key Stage 3 strategy. There is very good provision in art, a broad range of activities in music and very good opportunities in geography. In Years 10 and 11 there are a wide range of GCSE and vocational courses on offer. The curriculum is very good in art, business education, music and geography and good in drama, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, design and technology, physical education and ICT. The school has made a good start in developing work-related learning across the school.
20. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language receive the full curriculum. Provision is made for those who would find the full range of subjects demanding to take fewer subjects in Years 10 and 11. Support is offered for these pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well prepared for the following stage of learning or employment, for example through work-related learning.
21. The school meets statutory requirements with regard to the National Curriculum and in the provision of religious education. The school does not meet requirements with regard to a daily act of collective worship. The cross-curricular provision in ICT is unsatisfactory in several subjects. There is no middle manager designated to take responsibility for the development of cross-curricular ICT and consequently monitoring of provision is weak. Leadership and management of cross-curricular ICT remains an issue, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.
22. There is very good support for learning outside the school day, including homework clubs, revision classes, mentoring sessions and a wide range of clubs. The school makes extensive use of visiting professionals in areas such as music, art, drama, business and sport. There is a very good and varied programme in place to support pupils identified as gifted and talented. Many groups across the school have been successful in local, regional and national competitions. Sporting activities cover basketball, football, netball, hockey, cricket, dance, gym, rounders, athletics, badminton, tennis, aerobics, fitness and cross-country running. Visits are organised through subjects and for cross-year groups to a large range of destinations across Europe and including the United States of America.
23. Overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory, although it is good in modern foreign languages, geography, business studies and art. Accommodation for performing arts restricts the range of curriculum provision. Much of the teaching takes place in 18 temporary huts where extreme temperatures in winter and summer adversely effect pupils' concentration. Both parents and pupils are critical about the cramped canteen facilities and the bleak toilets and the inspectors agree with their concerns. Senior staff and governors have made considerable effort to ensure that pupils' learning does not suffer. It is a credit to this effort that pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' attitude to learning is positive. They look after the accommodation well and there is very little sign of litter or graffiti. Accommodation is inadequate for teaching special educational needs and English as an additional language. There are insufficient rooms for the number of staff and pupils. As accommodation is shared, staff move teaching bases each lesson, which leads to problems with resources. The school has part access for the disabled, notably in the newer blocks.
24. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall, but in some departments, for example art, geography and business studies, they are very good. The school is well resourced with ICT and interactive whiteboards, but in the hatted accommodation these resources cannot be used to enhance teaching and learning.

Sixth form

25. The school offers a very good curriculum at sixth-form level. It is an inclusive sixth form that offers an extensive range of academic and vocational courses. Students can choose from more

than 25 A-level specifications and seven vocational courses that cover art, business, media, science and leisure. Students are prepared very well for their future because the school responds to needs and works hard to match students' choices. There is an excellent curriculum offered in art, providing for students at intermediate and advanced level. Students are able to take a fine art route or follow a vocational focus. Those students choosing to take business studies gain from the very good provision and the wide range of academic and vocational courses at three levels. There is very good provision in mathematics with further mathematics, statistics and mechanics. Numbers across most subjects are high and the majority of students remain in the school to complete their courses. All students take part in the social, personal and citizenship education (SPACE) programme, which covers a wide range of topics to equip students for the next stage of their life.

26. The curriculum is enriched in the sixth form with an extensive range of opportunities. Extension classes are available during holiday periods as well as at evenings and weekends. Visits include study trips to New York, Paris and Eastern Europe. Very good use is made of the school's proximity to the main galleries and museums, both in London and on mainland Europe. Year 12 students take part in an Enterprise Week and are also involved in the Young Enterprise programme. Students feel very well supported by all teachers who they feel are always available to listen and help.
27. Accommodation for the large number of sixth-form students is poor. There is poor provision for social areas and private study, restricting the students' development as independent learners. The library is small and students make insufficient use of its facilities. For lessons taking place in the mobile huts, there is no access to ICT equipment. Any materials and books used for reference and extended study cannot be stored in the temporary classrooms. Students work hard without complaint even in unsuitable classrooms. School management and governors are making efforts to find inventive short-term solutions to the problem. In the long term, the school is working with urgency to negotiate a Private Finance Initiative project with the local education authority to rebuild much of the school.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare of pupils and the arrangements for health and safety are **very good**. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance for pupils. Pupils' and students' views are not sufficiently canvassed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care and support is very well co-ordinated and all staff know pupils very well.
- The systems to support all pupils are very good.
- Individually customised support enhances pupils' opportunities to learn.
- There is a high level of trust between pupils and staff.
- The school does not systematically and consistently canvass the views of pupils.

Commentary

28. Pupils have very good access to well-informed support, advice and guidance as they progress through school. There are good systems of communication between all staff to maintain a 'pupil-centred' approach at all times and most staff know the individual circumstances of pupils very well. Dedicated and energetic 'learning mentors' provide individual and group support to meet the needs of all pupils whatever their requirements. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' developmental needs with both a subject-led focus and more general cross-curricular monitoring through the form tutors with pupil progress and achievement benefiting as a result. The school works very flexibly to provide a range of actions to support a demanding and diverse population. It ensures that a secure learning environment is created for all pupils whatever their needs.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in all areas of school life. Their entry into the school is very well planned. Some of these pupils spend extra time in the school

prior to Year 7, so that they feel confident when joining the school. Time is spent well in advance of Year 11, so that pupils make considered decisions on their future. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also very well supported. On arrival, the school places them in classes where there is a speaker of their home language, which they appreciate. The pupils also initially receive extensive support, which moves them on rapidly in their acquisition of English.

30. Close liaison is maintained with the relevant authorities concerned with the well-being of pupils. There is very effective, well-informed advice and support for pupils with special educational needs, including the hearing impaired pupils. All health and safety procedures are well monitored and managed. Pupils experiencing difficulties have confidential access to a school counsellor and support from external agencies. Child-protection arrangements are effective and comply with statutory requirements. Good induction arrangements are in place and the careers guidance in school, together with the support of the 'Connexions' careers service, ensures that pupils are well prepared for their move onto further education and the world of work.
31. There is a school council, but the extent to which the school seeks, values and acts upon pupils' views is not sufficiently developed. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and are not afraid to criticise what they do not like and ask for what they want. However, they are not systematically and consistently involved in the development of school activities.

Sixth form

32. Care for students in the sixth form is very good. The school has worked very hard to provide a strong sense of order and security to everyone regardless of previous experience and background. The majority of sixth formers are proud of their school and its drive for high standards of achievement. The sixth-form leadership team know the students very well and are keen to provide whatever support is required with a well-established focus on individuals and their specific needs. This is a demanding group of young adults who challenge poor standards and inconsistency and the school has worked hard to respond to their requests.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with the community is **excellent** and the school's local reputation is very strong. Links with other schools and colleges are **very good**. Links with parents are **good** and many have very positive views about what the school does to help pupils make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has excellent links with the community.
- School events are of a very high standard and well attended.
- The quality of teachers' comments included in annual reports is inconsistent.

Commentary

33. Good-quality information is provided through school publications, newsletters, consultation evenings, home visits and annual/termly reports. The school has clear expectations of the home-school partnership and makes every effort to keep parents informed about their child's progress and school life. Despite the complex backgrounds of many pupils, the school is uncompromising in its efforts to involve parents in the resolution of difficult issues with particular pupils, to good effect.
34. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are very supportive of their children, and all attend the annual reviews. They readily communicate with the school over any concern, which shows the excellent relationships that exist between the school and parents. The parents of pupils who have English as an additional language receive a translator service if required, and some documents are sent in community languages.

35. Parents make a good contribution to students' education through comments and issues highlighted in school planners and by offering practical support during school clubs and trips. School events and productions are produced to a very high standard and are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by parents. A small minority of parents are critical of several areas of the school's work, specifically behaviour and the information provided about pupils' progress. However, inspectors found pupils' attitudes and behaviour to be very good. The range of general school information and consultation events provided by the school for parents attempts to keep them reliably informed about school activities and pupil progress. Annual reports are comprehensive, although there are inconsistencies and not all subjects provide the necessary detail to adequately describe current and anticipated achievement and progress.
36. Community partnership is excellent and relationships with other schools and extended services are very good and well organised. The school has many links, and is developing more. These provide significant enrichment to school activities and curriculum opportunities, all of which are well used and appreciated by pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management throughout the school is **good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Other key staff with management responsibility provide **good** leadership. The effectiveness of management is **good** throughout the school. The school is aware of any barriers to raising achievement and has **good** strategies to overcome them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective leadership by the headteacher influences the success of the school.
- The senior management team are well informed, leading to good development based on regular monitoring of the curriculum and teaching.
- Effective performance and line management systems monitor and support departments.
- The good practice in the school is not efficiently disseminated to the whole staff.
- Some subjects do not have a head of faculty, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of management.
- The large turnover of staff has led to management problems for some departments.

Commentary

37. Leadership and management are good. The very effective leadership of the headteacher influences the success of the school. Since the previous inspection he has overseen many significant improvements despite the considerable restraints of difficult staffing issues and poor buildings. These include the gaining of specialist art college status, becoming a Beacon school, an improvement in the examination results, an increase in the number of students in the sixth form, greatly enhancing the accommodation and the gaining of both the Artsmark Gold, and the Sportsmark Awards. She has a very clear vision of what Heston Community School seeks to achieve and is putting in place the measures to ensure that the school is successful. Central to this vision is the commitment to raise standards that is based on valuing individuals and encouraging the potential of all pupils. The headteacher is a very visible presence around the school and is very approachable to staff and parents. She is very supportive of all teachers and staff and supports them fully in taking on new initiatives and developments that will provide pupils with the widest range of educational opportunities. Following comments in the previous report there is now in place a very effective scheme for monitoring the implementation of school policies that allows the senior management team to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the school and to give support where it is needed. However, while there is much good practice, it is not well disseminated across the whole school.

38. There have been significant changes to both the leadership and membership of the school's governing body since the previous inspection. Many governors have undergone training which has helped them to form a clear vision of the school, and have a good understanding of its present strengths and weaknesses. Governors have specialist knowledge and skills that they readily use to the benefit of the school. There is a good committee structure with delegated powers, and governors regularly visit the school. Decisions about curriculum development, for example the bid for arts college status, reflect their desire to get the very best for the pupils in terms of facilities and funding.
39. The overall management of the school is good. The headteacher is well supported by a dedicated, effective and hardworking senior management team. The roles of this team have been adjusted so that the overall organisation and the day-to-day management of the school have much improved. The majority of heads of department or faculty heads are providing good and sometimes very good management through effective planning, good schemes of work and the monitoring of teaching and learning. Senior managers and subject leaders make good use of self-evaluation and performance data for monitoring and planning. Performance management and line management are well established so that the senior management team are well informed. This leads to good whole-school development based on feedback from monitoring the curriculum and teaching. There is a good link between school development planning priorities and departmental issues.
40. However, some subjects do not have a head of faculty and this is leading to inconsistencies in the quality of middle management and subject provision. There are a range of issues affecting the quality of departmental management in some areas of the curriculum because of staff recruitment problems and the variation in workload for some subject leaders. This is leading to inconsistencies in co-ordination, management and the development of some subjects. In addition to this, the large turnover of staff in the past few years has led to management problems. This has had an impact on maintaining standards. The school development plan, however, already identifies the need to review the roles and responsibilities of teachers across the curriculum.
41. The area of special educational needs and English as an additional language is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has built a very high performing team who are committed to helping the pupils to achieve. The regular meetings, in particular the multi-disciplinary meetings, ensure that there is good communication between all involved. This results in the best possible support for these pupils. The organisation of teacher support is excellent. Teacher assistants have allocated non-contact time, which is used to plan with teachers. This results in extremely effective support.
42. The school has recently gained Visual Arts status and this development is planned effectively into the long-term management of the curriculum. There is a head of sixth form in place with the role of day-to-day management. The learning development faculty and the art and design department provide the school with very good examples of effective management for the sharing of good practice. The governing body fulfils all of its main statutory responsibilities.
43. The school copes very well with the large turnover of staff that is common among many London schools. Teachers are recruited from a variety of sources and arrangements for staff induction and development are very effective. Very good systems are in place for performance management and this has made a strong contribution to raising standards throughout the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	5,784,627
Total expenditure	5,819,977
Expenditure per pupil	4,608

Balance from previous year	225,929
Balance carried forward to the next	190,607

44. The financial management of the school is very good. The school has effective systems in place to regularly monitor income and expenditure. There is very close scrutiny by the business manager and the governors' finance committee to ensure that the school finances are handled efficiently. Best value principles are effectively followed and ensure that value for money is achieved on all purchases. The individual departments are provided with regular statements to monitor their spending. There is an annual audit of the financial situation of the school by the local education authority, which confirms the efficient management of all the accounting systems. The school provides good value for money and the sixth form is cost effective.

Sixth form

Leadership of the sixth form is **effective** and management is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff promote high expectations resulting in very good provision in many subjects and excellent provision in art.
- The head and assistant heads of sixth form effectively support students' personal and academic development.
- There is little clear planning for the future development of the sixth form.
- Accommodation and facilities for the sixth-form students are poor.

Commentary

45. The head of sixth form supported by the assistant heads and an effective team of tutors have a shared commitment to high expectations for students both academically and personally. Teachers know their students well and the recently introduced systems for monitoring students' work and their contributions to the life of the school are providing a more comprehensive view of students' progress and achievement. There are very good relationships between staff and students and students are positive about the levels of support they receive. The very good provision in the majority of subjects and excellent provision in art is a measure of the strong leadership and management in subject areas. The head and assistant heads of sixth form promote a very good citizenship and community programme that helps students to become mature and confident young adults.
46. The leadership of the sixth form is the collective responsibility of the senior leadership group and is effective. The management by the head of sixth form is good and is well organised on a daily basis with good review and monitoring procedures in place. However, there is little clear planning for the future development of the sixth form and this is a weakness.
47. The school attracts over 80 per cent of students from Year 11 into the sixth form. It also attracts a few students from other schools who are well integrated into the sixth-form life. Facilities are poor, but the school makes every effort to manage the situation to minimise the negative effect on students' learning. However, the lack of library resources and poor accommodation restricts the development of independent learning and private study. The number of students completing their courses is good, as is the number of students continuing on to higher education. The sixth form is cost effective and provides a good standard of education for its students.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Unit for the Hearing Impaired

The overall provision for the hearing impaired pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their examination courses.
- The school is continually improving the provision of the unit by training staff.

Commentary

48. The very well-organised unit has places for 15 pupils, although 17 pupils from Years 7 to 12 are in the unit at present. Pupils are thoroughly and regularly assessed, and from these assessments their learning needs are clearly identified. All pupils have clear targets on their individual educational plans. The overriding purpose of the unit is to integrate the pupils into the school, in which it is very successful. There is very good liaison with subject teachers in order to maximise support, so that pupils achieve well and perform well in examinations. The specialist staff are very well qualified and experienced, and any subject interests or skills are well used. Regular meetings ensure that information is shared effectively. Pupils access the full curriculum, apart from modern foreign languages. Staff teach several relevant courses, a homework and a physical education club and these ensure a wide range of opportunities for the pupils. The latter allows pupils to partake in a variety of activities, who would otherwise have difficulties because of transport problems. Pupils are fully involved in performances, assemblies and other public events by the good use of 'signing for the deaf'. The school has supported staff in training to become qualified teachers of deaf children. The unit has improved since the last inspection.

Work-related learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with the Education Business Partnership, who provide external monitoring of the curriculum.
- The school has a very good work experience programme.
- Good examples of work-related learning are identified in business education and art.
- Work-related learning is well supported by the extensive range of enrichment activities.
- Not all subjects have work-related learning planned and fully embedded into their curriculum.

Commentary

49. Provision for work-related learning is good and has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and awareness of the future opportunities for work. The school has close links with the Hounslow Education Business Partnership, who have developed a work-related learning framework document. The school has a highly regarded and well-organised work experience programme from which pupils gain a very good insight into the world of work. It is recognised that the work-related learning programme is still developing. Some areas are more advanced, for example there is an extensive programme in place within business education and very good examples are planned into the art curriculum. Although other subject areas are not at the same level of development, there are good examples across several subjects. The co-ordinator is managing the area very well and has audit data showing the broad coverage and variety of approaches that are beginning to impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the working world. The extensive enrichment programme gives another very strong dimension to the school's good provision for work-related learning.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management of the department are beginning to have an impact on raising standards.
- Teaching is well planned and structured with a wide variety of worthwhile activities.
- Results in Year 9 improved significantly at all levels in 2004.
- The very positive attitudes of pupils support their learning well.
- Opportunities to use ICT are not sufficiently built into lessons.
- Pupils in Years 7 – 9 do not receive feedback on all their work from teachers regularly enough.

Commentary

50. Pupils enter school in Year 7 with average levels of attainment. Results in the Year 9 national tests in 2003 were below average, and well below average compared with pupils of similar prior attainment at Year 6. The Year 9 results for 2004, which are not yet validated, have improved substantially and are likely to be well above the national and similar school averages. GCSE results in English language in 2003 were well above average. Results for GCSE English language in 2004 were similar. GCSE results in English literature in 2003 were well above the national average, but results in 2004 were closer to the national average.
51. Overall, pupils' achievement is now good. In 2003, Year 9 pupils made unsatisfactory progress from Year 7 when measured by results of national tests. In 2004, the progress made by Year 9 pupils in national tests was very good. Work seen during the inspection indicates standards in Year 9 are now above average. This represents good achievement from pupils who started school with standards that were average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is also good. Year 11 pupils in 2003 had entered Year 9 with above average standards and left Year 11 with standards that were well above average. The results for 2004 were similar to those of the previous year. The standard of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 was above average and represents good achievement.
52. Teaching and learning are good in all years. All teachers plan and structure lessons carefully, with a wide range of activities. In most lessons, effective questioning of pupils furthers their understanding. Teachers are particularly good at targeting their questions to cover a wide range of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils of all abilities engage confidently in discussion or in preparing and giving presentations to the rest of the group. Pupils listen carefully to each other, and responses to questions are very good when pupils have been given an opportunity to prepare a response. Teachers include good opportunities for drama activities, which extend speaking and listening skills. Opportunities for ICT are developing, and appear in the schemes of work, but are not yet systematically built in to lessons. Teachers manage the mixed-ability classes well. They are conscious of the different needs of the members of their classes, and take this into account when organising seating, when questioning and in the individual support they provide.
53. Assessment in the faculty is satisfactory in Years 7 - 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Work in pupils' assessment folders, in all years, is thoroughly marked, and provides good feedback to pupils about National Curriculum levels or examination grades, and what pupils need to do to improve. In Years 10 and 11, a very effective assessment system expects pupils to evaluate written assignments and respond to the targets set by teachers, but pupils do not always

respond to the marking in Years 7 to 9. Assessment to improve learning is starting to be integrated into the classroom in all years, and is having a positive effect where the strategies are used. In Years 7 to 9, there is little written feedback from some teachers in pupils' draft work, which affects the amount of progress that those pupils can make as a result of teacher feedback.

54. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. The variety of activities in lessons captures pupils' interest. Most pupils in all years and of all abilities are keen to answer questions and they work well in pairs or groups. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons, and there are positive working relationships between teachers and pupils.
55. Leadership of the faculty is very good. The head of faculty has a clear vision of what needs to happen to maintain the raising of standards which she has very successfully led over the last year. She has led the development of effective schemes of work, which have taken into account national initiatives, and are having a very positive effect on raising standards. Management of the faculty is very good. Monitoring of teaching and learning happens regularly and includes lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff development is prioritised and there are good opportunities for staff to share experiences. Examination data is carefully analysed, but does not yet include value added analysis for individual members of the faculty. There has been good improvement since the last inspection as the quality of teaching has improved. Pupils now make good progress in all years.

Literacy across the curriculum

56. Standards of literacy in all years are above average. All subjects make a good contribution to raising standards of literacy in the school by displaying key words and technical terminology and referring to them. Drama and history make a particularly effective contribution. Music uses the interactive board to highlight musical terminology. The literacy co-ordinator leads a literacy working group who have developed a school policy and are in the third year of implementing a school action plan to improve pupil literacy. There are good practical strategies for improvement within the plan and departments are beginning to make good use of them. Training is carried out within the literacy group and its members share it with their departments. Those pupils who enter the school with low literacy levels have 'catch-up' lessons and the progress they make is very good. A number of literacy initiatives have been successfully promoted in the school, such as a spellathon and big read. The co-ordinator has made good links with a local primary school.

Modern foreign languages

The school offers French, German and Spanish in Years 7 to 11 and these were all inspected in depth, but written as one report.

French, German and Spanish

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are carefully planned to involve all pupils actively.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Detailed marking and accurate assessment help pupils to improve their work.
- The work of the faculty is very effectively managed.
- There are examples of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Spanish.

Commentary

57. By the end of Year 9, the standard of pupils' work is in line with national averages in French and German and a little below in Spanish. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, although there are some exceptions in Spanish. Pupils taking two languages in Years 8 and 9 have less time

allocated than those just studying French. Most, nevertheless, make good progress in class, particularly in German.

58. In 2003, the GCSE results for French were in line with the national average. The attainment of both boys and girls also closely matched national figures. In Spanish, overall results were below average. Too few pupils were entered for German for valid comparisons to be made. The unconfirmed results for 2004 show a significant decline in standards in all languages, especially Spanish, when compared to the previous year. These lower GCSE pass rates are attributable to significant difficulties in staffing, past staff absences and high staff turnover, together with weaknesses in some areas of teaching. Most of these problems have now been effectively remedied. Recent improvements in leadership, teaching quality and stability in staffing mean that pupils in Years 10 and 11 now achieve well, particularly in French and German. Standards are rising at a good rate and the overall trend is now towards continued improvement.
59. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are many examples of very good teaching, particularly in French and German. In some Spanish lessons, however, teaching is unsatisfactory. Very good attitudes and behaviour result from praise and positive relationships. Pupils enjoy lessons and are motivated to achieve well by a wide range of classroom activities and attractive resources. Detailed and careful lesson planning ensures that pupils build on previous learning to progress well. There is some very good teaching in classes of pupils of lower attainment or with special educational needs. These pupils achieve well in referring to past events such as watching familiar television programmes. This results from skilled use of equipment such as interactive whiteboards and carefully prepared visual material such as word cards and pictures.
60. A particular strength of teaching is the involvement and active participation of pupils. For example, individual pupils often work at the front of the class, asking and answering questions as though they were taking the role of the teacher. This works very well in motivating pupils and focussing their attention. In some lessons, however, too much English is used, particularly at the start of lessons, and this reduces the need for pupils to listen carefully. Homework is regularly set and marked very conscientiously, providing detailed feedback and correction. This gives very good help in showing pupils how to improve their work. National initiatives to improve teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are integrated into lesson planning and make a good contribution to raising achievement. There is easy access to ICT equipment, but teachers do not regularly use computers to extend pupils' learning. There are weaknesses in teaching in some Spanish lessons when pupils' behaviour is not well managed. In these lessons, resources are not prepared with sufficient care and there are few opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and listening to Spanish.
61. Teachers work effectively as a team and benefit from good leadership. There is a clear focus and determination to raise standards and achievement and a confident understanding of what constitutes good language teaching. Resources are both skilfully chosen and efficiently organised. Good classroom displays provide attractive areas for learning languages. The work of the faculty is very well managed. Additional staff such as foreign language assistants are carefully supported and deployed. Teachers benefit from clear guidance in relation to assessment procedures, use of data, work to be covered and daily routines. This all results in a good ethos and a positive atmosphere in which pupils learn well.
62. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is evidence that the major decline in standards over the last few years has been reversed. There is also firm evidence to indicate success of the recent initiatives during the last term. Although there is good potential for securing further improvements, a great deal of further work is required to sustain the recent success and overcome the remaining weaknesses.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good command of their subject leads to stimulating learning, particularly for the high-achieving pupils.
- A visionary subject leader has created a cohesive team committed to raising achievement.
- Collaborative relationships between the teachers and pupils and good behaviour lead to effective learning.
- Good systems of monitoring and target setting are not always used effectively to ensure ongoing assessment and feedback that helps pupils improve.

Commentary

63. The attainment of pupils when they start school in Year 7 is broadly in line with the national average. The 2003 national test results for pupils in Year 9 were in line with the national average for all schools, but results were well below average compared with results for schools with pupils of similar prior attainment. The 2004 national test results have improved and are likely to be above the national average and well above average for schools with pupils of similar prior attainment. The higher-attaining pupils performed especially well and there was little difference between the results of boys and girls.
64. In 2004, the unvalidated GCSE examination results were above average and standards have improved at a rate above the national trend. In 2004, girls performed less well than boys at the higher grades (A/A*), but during the inspection there were no differences between the standards of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls or those who have special educational needs.
65. The achievement of pupils in all years is now good. Standards seen during the inspection confirm that overall pupils are making good progress because they are working at or above their expected level. Standards seen in Year 7 show pupils are building on the skills and knowledge that they gained in primary schools. In Year 9, the higher-attaining pupils show confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 show that pupils are being challenged to reach the highest level of work.
66. Teaching is good overall and leading to improvement in pupils' learning. During the inspection, a majority of the lessons were good with a few very good. Very good subject knowledge helps teachers plan well to develop the skills and understanding of all pupils. Some of the teachers have expert questioning techniques, which they use to great effect in promoting learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement, behaviour and presentation of work. This leads to pupils receiving a lot of encouragement and consequently learning effectively in most lessons. Teaching assistants are very well managed and deployed so they contribute well to learning. Weaknesses in teaching, leading to some underachievement, occur in a few cases where there is a slow pace to the lesson, work from previous lessons is reviewed as a class and pupils are required to progress together irrespective of their ability. This allows some of the faster workers to lose interest in the lesson. Teachers have good access to detailed pupil-performance data and are aware of their pupils' targets. Marking is usually up to date and positive, but it does not often give constructive comments that will help pupils to improve their work.
67. Learning is good. Pupils respond particularly well to teaching that stimulates very focused discussion where they explain their understanding and learn from each other. Pupils are conscientious and engage willingly in their lessons. They mostly take a pride in their work, including its presentation. Many teachers effectively use an interactive whiteboard so that pupils' use of correct mathematical terminology and notation is well developed. However, opportunities are missed to use the computers and other ICT resources to extend pupils' learning.
68. Management of the faculty is good and all staff use effective systems for planning work. Leadership is very effective. The subject leader has a clear vision for the faculty and has

strengthened the team's drive to raise standards. There are good role-models for teaching in the faculty, but their skills are not sufficiently shared for the benefit of the whole team. Monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and supportive and has started to ensure a consistent raising of expectations by all staff.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils have above average numeracy skills across the school. Pupils' mathematical skills are sufficient for them to have access to the whole curriculum. Mathematics across the curriculum is in the process of development. A recently appointed numeracy co-ordinator has, with help from the local education authority, drawn up a focused action plan and liaised with subject areas in order to ensure a consistently good application of number skills across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average at GCSE.
- The teaching and learning are effective overall and enable pupils to achieve well, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- The teachers and pupils share good relationships and work in a co-operative manner.
- Some teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of teaching and learning strategies, including adequate use of computers.
- Marking is too variable because faculty policies are not implemented consistently.

Commentary.

70. Pupils' attainment was below the national average at the end of Year 9 in the 2003 national tests, but improved in 2004 and is likely to be at the national average. Standards of work have risen steadily since the last inspection. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average compared to those with pupils of similar prior attainment. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was above the national figure. Again, these standards were maintained in 2004.
71. Pupils' work shows that standards are at the national expectations by the end of Year 9 and above the national expectations by the end of Year 11. The school's extensive data of pupils' attainment in tests and examinations also clearly indicates that standards throughout school have been maintained. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is at the national average. Their achievement is now satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The achievement of pupils in the GCSE examinations is good and they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and support staff and achieve well in Years 10 to 11.
72. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. In the most successful lessons, the teachers plan lessons very well and ensure that the pace is good with pupils being fully engaged and challenged. The pupils respond in a very positive manner to teachers who have high expectations and good classroom control. Pupils have good attitudes to science and are enthusiastic about the subject. Relationships between teachers and pupils in these lessons are very good, which leads to pupils learning well. In the lessons where a limited range of teaching strategies are used, the attitudes are less positive and pupils are not fully engaged. In some lessons, mostly in Years 7 to 9, the teaching was mundane and did not stimulate the pupils. This results in a number of pupils not achieving well. The availability of resources such as ICT interactive systems enables teachers to produce presentations that are engaging for the pupils. The use of computers for whole-class activities is still not widespread and this is a weakness. The marking of pupils' work is variable. Some teachers take great care in correcting work and clearly indicate what pupils need to do to

improve. However, this is not consistent across the department. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to receive further support outside lessons.

73. Leadership of the faculty is good. There is a clear understanding of the issues to address to raise standards. The faculty has coped well with a large turnover in staffing due to good support within the team. There is now a team of enthusiastic, well-qualified teachers who are well supported by an effective team of technicians. The management of the faculty is satisfactory. A large turnover of staff and difficulties in replacement have restricted the impact of faculty policies. The attainment of pupils is analysed in detail and used to review the effectiveness of the teaching. The findings from the reviews are starting to be used effectively to identify any under-achievement by pupils so further support can be given. The faculty is fully aware of all the major issues, but the agreed procedures and strategies are not always implemented fully by all staff. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained. The assessment procedures have been improved, but the marking still remains variable and the use of computers remains an important issue to be resolved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE courses and pupils' achievement is good.
- Provision for pupils who do not follow a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall.
- Cross-curricular provision in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers have a very good command of their subject, which supports the very good assessment in Years 7 to 9.
- The lack of a head of subject affects the quality of development and subject monitoring.

Commentary

74. Pupils enter the school with average levels of competence, knowledge and skills. Pupils make good gains in their skills and knowledge through the first three years because they are taught well in small groups. They become discerning users of the technology and develop an understanding of the impact of computers on society. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is above average and pupils achieve well.
75. Those taking GCSE in Years 10 and 11 represent a full range of competence. Results in 2003 were above average and well above average for boys, who made up the majority of the group. Provisional results in 2004 were well below average. However, this was the result of staffing problems and different profile of pupil. Despite below average performances, pupils attained at the predicted level. Work seen during the inspection was above average for the age and pupils taking the examination course are achieving well. Not all pupils follow an examination course in Years 10 and 11 and those who do not get varied opportunities from the subjects they follow. For many, the provision in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
76. During Years 7 to 11, pupils make good progress, increasing their knowledge of different applications and gaining a greater understanding of key elements of ICT. Achievement is good. All groups make similar progress, although girls perform better than boys in the earlier years. The subject provides well for those with special educational needs, for example the hearing impaired pupils. Achievement is equally good for those from different cultural backgrounds.
77. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. At times their keenness makes them restless, particularly if the introduction to lessons is too long. They work well with one another, being eager to help if anyone is struggling. Relationships with teachers are good

and pupils appreciate the readiness of teachers to help. Pupils are aware of the responsibility that rests with them when using the Internet and show respect for the equipment.

78. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11. All lessons were at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers have a very good command of their subject. In the majority of lessons, teachers' high expectations are shown in good planning. Across all years, lessons ensure swift engagement and encouragement to participate. Teaching assistants, who are particularly effective in supporting the hearing impaired, carry out very good support work. In the less-effective lessons, the content does not always match the stated objectives. This mismatch means that pupils work on tasks that do not provide enough challenge for all groups. On occasions, the lessons lack structure, which affects the pace or pupils are too reliant on the teacher for support, restricting independent learning. Assessment is very good. Teachers analyse and use data well to support the good learning.
79. The leadership and day-to-day management of the subject are satisfactory. However, the absence of a subject leader means that monitoring of teaching is not effective. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Attainment is now above average, achievement is good and teaching has improved. Unfortunately, the lack of a head of subject has reduced the effectiveness of leadership and management both in the specialist subject and across the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Cross-curricular provision in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Developments have been severely restricted by inadequate accommodation in some faculties and staff recruitment issues. Use of technology across the full range of subjects is infrequent. In some subjects, such as business education and art, use is very good in Years 10 and 11, and excellent in the sixth form. Although equipment levels have improved and the ratio of computers to pupils is slightly better than the national average, there is little evidence to suggest consistently good use. Most curriculum areas have computer facilities adjacent to their teaching bases and the school audit shows that planning for use is satisfactory. However, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicate that ICT use is not well embedded in practice. There is limited use in science and it is also underdeveloped in mathematics and English. In other subjects, such as history, modern foreign languages and design and technology, examples of satisfactory work were seen. Use is unsatisfactory in religious education. There is no middle manager designated to take responsibility for the development of cross-curricular ICT and consequently monitoring of provision is weak. Increases in the amount of computer equipment have ensured that pupils can have reasonable access to computers, which in turn has resulted in a good level of pupil competence. Leadership and management of cross-curricular ICT remain unsatisfactory, but strategic planning has improved. Improved staff expertise has begun to improve teaching through increasing use of interactive boards. The use of ICT across all subjects is still an area for further improvement.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on history, geography and religious education.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are above national averages.
- Teachers use subject knowledge very well to promote very good learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work.
- The department is led very well, despite the very heavy workload of the head of subject/faculty.
- There is a very strong emphasis on raising standards of literacy.
- ICT is not yet fully developed to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

81. Pupils start school with attainment in history that is below expectations. In lessons seen and work analysed during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with those expected nationally, and this represents good achievement in terms of pupils' prior attainment. Pupils develop historical skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards and they are soon at ease with the use of sources and the effects of change in society. They also become skilled in extended writing and some very good examples of historical fiction were seen from Year 7 pupils based on their study of the Roman Empire.
82. In recent GCSE examinations, results have been above national averages and, in the current Years 10 and 11, standards are also above national norms. At this stage, pupils develop their historical knowledge and understanding to considerable depth, for example, in some detailed and well-presented essays on the problems facing Black Americans in the 1950s. Throughout the curriculum, all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, and there is a significant emphasis placed on raising standards of literacy.
83. The quality of teaching is very good. The specialist teaching team use their subject knowledge very effectively to give pupils confidence to develop their historical skills. Lessons are planned thoroughly with clear aims and objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teachers also use a variety of techniques to promote very good learning and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. As a result, pupils are fully involved in lesson activities and show very positive attitudes to their work. Teachers employ a good array of assessment techniques to monitor pupils' progress and marking is very thorough. Schemes of work, however, are not fully up to date. The use of ICT has improved, but it is not yet fully developed as a teaching and learning tool.
84. The leadership of the subject is very good and there is a strong and dedicated teaching team in place. Management is good, despite the very heavy workload of the head of department as leader of the large humanities faculty. Examination results are fully analysed and there are very clear plans for future development in the subject. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection. This is a very effective department with the undoubted capacity to build on its current success.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership of the department is improving teaching and learning.
- The team of teachers are all subject specialists who use their knowledge well to make learning interesting.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- The curriculum is very good and is enhanced well by fieldwork.
- The pupils make insufficient use of maps to develop their understanding of places.

Commentary

85. Pupils arrive at school with attainment that is just below expectations. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average and are improving. Pupils have developed a good knowledge and understanding across all aspects of physical and human geography. Although map and research skills are well developed, maps are not used enough to develop their understanding of places. Pupils demonstrate good skills with the analysis and interpretation of photographs and data. Pupils in Year 9 are able to produce good-quality extended writing on topics such as economic development.
86. In 2003, GCSE results were average, but show an improving trend over recent years. Provisional results for 2004 show a further improvement. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average and are improving. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of key facts and concepts through case studies. Written work is well supported by good diagrams and the accurate use of geographical language. Pupils have good skills in the use and application of information and communication technology, as seen in their studies on volcanoes and coastlines.
87. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 and those who opt for the subject in Years 10 and 11 is good. This is because of excellent subject leadership and improvements in teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also good. Pupils of all abilities and of all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Overall, the performance of girls has been better than boys, but recent changes to the syllabus and the adoption of more practical investigations are improving the performance of boys.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good and improving. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, they are enthusiastic and committed, and use a range of effective approaches in the classroom. Resources are used very effectively to make lessons interesting and help pupils consolidate what they have learnt. All members of the department establish high expectations for learning and behaviour and lessons are well structured. Good features in lessons are the imaginative starter activities, good-quality explanations and the use of challenging questions. Assessment procedures are very good, pupils' work is marked accurately and there is good guidance on what they need to do to improve. Relationships in the classroom are good and pupils display positive attitudes to their work.
89. The leadership of geography is now excellent and management is very good. Detailed planning and high-quality documentation are providing excellent direction for the subject. In the classroom, the head of department is an excellent role-model for pupils and staff. Strong departmental teamwork is helping to improve teaching and learning. There are very good procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the department. Very good analysis of performance data is used to track pupil progress and to review strategies used in the classroom. Teaching staff are well qualified and accommodation and learning resources are of very good quality and meet the needs of the curriculum well. Fieldwork is very good and each year group is involved with investigations on the school site. Pupils in Years 8 and 10 are involved with visits out of school. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils now achieve better because of improvements in teaching and learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is adversely affected by a lack of subject-specialist staff.
- Staff absence and turnover have inhibited the implementation of new developments.
- There is too much focus on the acquisition of subject knowledge rather than developing understanding and skills.
- Assessment practices and the use of data are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

90. In 2004, teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 showed standards below those of the locally agreed syllabus. The current standards of work in Year 9 are below average. Pupils have an unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of the major religions studied and their skills of research and evaluation are underdeveloped.
91. In 2003, a small number of pupils were entered for a full-course GCSE. Results were well below average, and show a downward trend in recent years. Provisional results for 2004 show a further decline. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils now follow a short course, which will be examined for the first time in 2005. In Year 11, standards are below average for pupils on the short course and for those following the full GCSE course.
92. Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly average. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also unsatisfactory. Boys and girls of all capabilities and of all ethnic backgrounds fail to achieve as well as they should. Persisting difficulties with the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers of religious education is a major barrier to pupils' progress.
93. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Most teaching is delivered by non-specialist members of the school staff and supply staff who are covering vacancies and absences. The lack of subject expertise prevents pupils from acquiring the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills prescribed in the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching styles are limited and there is too much teacher-directed learning and an over-reliance on the use of textbooks. The use of other resources such as artefacts, video and computers is more limited. Pupils have few opportunities to discuss and explore their own ideas. In Years 7 to 9, most pupils behave well and display satisfactory attitudes to learning. In Years 10 and 11, attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory and poor behaviour is occasionally a barrier to learning. Across Years 7 to 11, pupils' learning in religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is inconsistent and pupils have insufficient guidance on how to improve. Pupils have no information about how well they are performing against local and national standards.
94. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory, but with significant weaknesses. Staff induction and retention within the department have been unsatisfactory. The head of subject has provided satisfactory direction for the subject through written guidance for Years 7 to 11. However, whilst the guidance provides detailed information on subject content, it is less effective about how to develop pupils' understanding and skills. Planning and reviewing the work of the department have been adversely affected by staff absence and changes of personnel. There is insufficient use of data to monitor the performance of pupils. Staffing fails to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and there is no central stockroom. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have fallen and pupils' achievement is now unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement in textiles and food are good because of well-planned provision.
- Overall, achievement at the end of Year 9 is restricted because of insufficient joint planning between the various elements of the design programme.
- Pupils gain good practical skills, but insufficient depth of knowledge restricts opportunities for pupils to achieve higher standards.
- Relationships and attitudes to learning are very good, creating a positive learning environment.

Commentary

95. Pupils enter Year 7 with variable experiences in design and technology. In Years 7 to 9 they have good opportunities to use a variety of tools, equipment and materials and develop a range of practical skills. However, the lack of joint planning between the various design subjects, linked to underdeveloped assessment arrangements, means pupils do not build on learning from one module to another. This results in a lack of the depth of knowledge of materials and the design processes. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average for practical skills, but below average in designing. In 2004, teacher assessments indicate standards significantly above average by the end of Year 9, but these standards are not reflected in lessons and teachers' skills in assessing pupils' work are underdeveloped. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.
96. In 2003, standards at GCSE were below average. There were variations between the different material areas with standards in textiles above average, but below average in food, electronics and resistant materials and well below average in graphics. In 2004, overall standards were again below average. Textiles maintained good standards with improvements in food and graphics, but standards dipped in resistant materials. Staffing difficulties have contributed to variations in standards and achievement.
97. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is satisfactory with pupils extending their understanding of the design and making processes and applying them well to develop their chosen projects. This is seen particularly in food and textiles where achievement is good and often very good. Achievement is satisfactory in other material areas. ICT skills are satisfactory with some good examples in Years 10 and 11 graphics coursework. Opportunities to use ICT in design and technology have improved since the previous inspection.
98. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but range from very good to unsatisfactory. Lessons are well prepared with a good range of tasks, but there are inconsistencies across the department in the identification and sharing of skills and knowledge pupils are required to develop in the lesson. When teaching is good, activities are well structured with good pace and teachers test pupils' understanding through effective use of probing questions. Marking in food and textiles is good with comments that help pupils to improve their work. However, marking for improvement is not consistently completed across the department. Relationships and very good attitudes create a productive and safe working atmosphere. Good individual support from teachers and technical staff enables all pupils, particularly lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory and in some cases good progress in lessons.
99. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been unable to appoint a head of faculty. Responsibilities are shared between the head of food and textiles and the head of graphics and resistant materials, who have handled the situation well to maintain adequate provision for pupils. They have developed a good team approach, but the strategies for improving overall provision and eliminating inconsistencies are not clearly identified. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory, but has been hampered by staffing difficulties.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The main focus of the inspection was on art, drama and music, but work in GCSE expressive arts (dance, drama and music) was also sampled.

GCSE Expressive Arts

100. The 2004 GCSE results were in line with pupils' expectations based on their prior attainment and their achievement was at least satisfactory. During the inspection, two lessons were observed and pupils made good progress. Pupils were fully engaged in their learning and made good links between the three art forms that contribute to the course. Teaching and learning are good because of positive relationships, teachers' good support and the pupils' high level of commitment to their work.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent leadership and management of the faculty.
- Pupils achieve consistently high standards at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- The department is involved in an extensive number of community and outreach activities.
- The quality of display is very high within the department and around the school.
- The space available for accommodation does not meet the teaching needs of the department.
- ICT is not effectively developed as another form of graphical presentation.

Commentary

101. The attainment of pupils when they start school is average. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average. In lessons seen in Years 7 to 9, standards are above average and achievement is very good. Pupils develop a very good range of artistic skill and knowledge by the end of Year 9. They are encouraged to explore and use a wide range of media creatively. Good use is made of sketchbooks to record work and as a resource for project development.
102. GCSE results in 2003 for art and design were well above the national averages. In lessons for Years 10 and 11, standards are well above average and achievement is very good. Expectations are high for pupils to explore ideas and use a variety of media to develop creative outcomes. Very good use is made of sketchbooks as a resource for coursework.
103. There is a very good team of specialist teachers and the overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons is very good and sometimes excellent. Where lessons are very good or better, the planning is thorough, the work is challenging, expectations are high and very good use is made of resources to extend thinking. Teachers have a very good working relationship with pupils and this contributes to their good motivation and very good progress in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a hearing impairment, are supported very well in lessons and make very good progress.
104. The leadership of the faculty is excellent being very pro-active in leading curriculum development, in promoting links with the local community and supporting the development of art in other schools. Management is also excellent and involves not only the organisation of the department, but also management of a wide range of work through community projects and outreach educational work. The gaining of Visual Arts status by the school is improving the provision for art and further extending the work of the department beyond the school through the outreach and community links. Teaching is very effectively monitored by the head of faculty and key issues have been identified leading to a well-structured development plan. Literacy is promoted well by using key words and correct technical terminology. Apart from research, there is little use of computers as another form of graphical expression. An assessment system in

Years 7 to 9 is used very effectively to track progress. In Years 10 and 11, assessment is detailed and provides constructive information to pupils, including actions for improvement.

105. The accommodation for art and design is good, but with the ongoing developments in the subject additional rooms are required. Teaching rooms for art are well maintained and well organised, providing a stimulating and creative working and learning environment for pupils. The resources for teaching and learning are very good for the wide range of activities covered, including photography and computing. Display is of a very high quality within the faculty and around the school. Very effective use is made of work produced by pupils as a resource to show expectations of quality, content and presentation. Two well-qualified technicians provide very good support for the faculty.
106. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. The high standards have been maintained and extended in teaching and achievement. Literacy concerns have been addressed and there is increased use of ICT, particularly for research and photography. The school has gained the Artsmark Gold award in recognition of the excellent provision in art.

Drama

Provision for drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the department are very good and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Very good relationships between teachers and pupils establish a productive working environment.
- 2003 GCSE results were above the national average.
- Pupils learn well because of very good teaching.
- Accommodation limits opportunities in drama.

Commentary

107. In Years 7-9, standards of work are above average and pupils' achievement is good. In 2003, GCSE drama results were above the national average for both boys and girls. In 2004, the results declined and are likely to be below the national average. In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils confidently use a wide range of drama skills and techniques they have learnt. Their written work confirms that achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good.
108. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils enable teachers to establish a very positive working environment. Lessons are very well planned and purposeful with a variety of well-structured activities, which enable pupils to make good progress. The objectives of the lesson are shared and revisited to check pupils' understanding. Teachers monitor pupils' acquisition of drama skills and use effective questioning and expert interventions to help pupils develop their ideas.
109. Pupils are enthusiastic, committed and, above all, enjoy drama. Pupils respond very confidently in lessons and concentrate well on their work. They achieve well both independently and in groups, particularly in improvisations. They show good understanding of drama skills and practices and make constructive evaluations of their own and each other's work. Year 11 pupils confirmed that they like practical and group work and that they gain in confidence, social skills and teamwork as a result of good drama teaching. During an interview, one pupil said 'drama makes you happy and uplifted'. All pupils, including the gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and the hearing impaired, are productively and effectively engaged in lessons.
110. The leadership and management of the drama department are very good. The head of subject has worked extremely hard to put in place comprehensive schemes of work, lesson plans and a

framework for assessment to support her staff. This has a positive impact on the achievement of pupils. The drama teachers are now a stable, effective, knowledgeable team. Accommodation is just satisfactory, but limits the opportunities for technical work in drama. The department has limited access to information and communication technology. The drama department offers pupils a range of drama clubs, enrichment activities and extra-curricular theatre trips. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The department has vigorously addressed the main issue for improvement in the last inspection to ensure work is matched to the range of pupils' needs. Good standards have been maintained and all pupils are now challenged to maximise their potential.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good composing skills using technology are a result of the very effective teaching.
- Very positive relationships between staff and pupils promote good progress in lessons.
- Pupils sing together in Year 7 and this strengthens the inclusive ethos in school.
- Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory and a constraint on pupils' progress and standards.

Commentary

111. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, but by the end of Year 9, standards are average and represent good achievement.
112. By the end of Year 11, GCSE results are below national averages, but standards seen during the inspection indicate an improving picture with good achievement overall. Groups are larger than average in Year 11 with over 40 pupils taking the examination course, illustrating pupils' high regard for music as a subject. On the basis of work seen, standards in composing in Year 11 are good and there is a thorough understanding of theoretical principles. Many pupils are fluent at using software and performers show a good degree of instrumental and vocal competence. In Years 7-11, boys and girls, including those with English as an additional language, achieve equally well in music, and there is no variation in the attainment of pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment. Gifted and talented pupils do well as a result of the appropriate challenges and extension activities built into lessons.
113. Teaching is consistently very good throughout the school. Teachers' very good knowledge of the pupils informs their practice so that planning is well matched to pupils' requirements. The combined Year 7 festival rehearsal is a particularly good example of excellent team teaching. Music teachers provide interesting improvised musical accompaniments on keyboards and flute, there is signing for the hearing impaired, and the headteacher conducts the rehearsal well. This joint effort promotes excellent singing from the pupils. Where teaching in lessons is excellent it is characterised by outstanding use of the interactive whiteboard, incorporating musical illustrations. This is a model of good practice, which helps pupils to focus on their own composing efforts and to make good progress in Years 7-9. Pupils show great enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to explore the possibilities of the music software, improving their musical skills in composing as a result. In Years 10-11, learning is good. Pupils in Year 10 have a strong understanding of basic music theory and practice and their use of music vocabulary is good. It was not possible to observe teaching in Year 11 during the inspection, but on the evidence of work seen, pupils are making good progress in composing and performing. Compositions frequently feature ethnic elements that lend an unusual and intriguing inflection to pupils' creative work. Instrumental teaching and the direction of performing groups are good.
114. As a result of music's excellent, clear-sighted leadership and very good management, pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular instrumental and vocal activities, and those studying for GCSE examinations receive additional support in lessons freely given by music staff after school. The range of instruments that can be studied is extensive and includes ethnic

instruments. The school helps those who have difficulty meeting the tuition costs. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained and GCSE courses are now properly established. Resources are good, although more computers are needed to reinforce the present very good practice, but accommodation is unsatisfactory and the few instrumental and group teaching spaces are poorly soundproofed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are well supported by enthusiastic groups of pupils.
- GCSE results are below average.

Commentary

115. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national average. This represents good achievement by pupils who frequently bring with them from primary schools limited experience and physical skills. In games activities, pupils demonstrate good ball control and are aware of simple attack and defence strategies. Many execute basic isolated skills to a satisfactory level, although their ability to apply these skills within the concept of a game is less well developed.
116. Results in the 2003 GCSE physical education examination were well below the national average. However, the unvalidated results from the 2004 examination were a significant improvement with the number of pupils gaining the higher grades being just below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that this good improvement will continue as the current groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are producing work of a good standard. Pupils make good progress in a wide range of physical activities and overall achieve well in Years 10 and 11. Higher-attaining pupils are producing written work that is well structured, grammatically correct and well analysed.
117. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 11, the overall standard of attainment in the non-examination physical education programme is at least in line with that seen nationally with a significant number doing even better. The pupils with special educational needs, including the hearing impaired pupils, are well integrated, given much sensitive and skilful support, and reach levels of attainment that are as good as their peers. Many enthusiastic pupils take part in extra-curricular activities and frequent inter-school games and competitions and gain much success. A number have represented Hounslow in a range of sporting activities.
118. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with some lessons judged to be very good. Lessons are well organised and conducted at a brisk and demanding pace and include a range of activities that offers all pupils the opportunity to gain success. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and teach lessons that are well structured with a choice of tasks that promote a high level of interest and effort, and enable pupils to make progress. In response to good-quality teaching, challenging activities and the high expectation of teachers, pupils respond very positively. They work hard, behave well, and their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.
119. Very good leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the department. High-quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work and aids the teaching of the subject. Comprehensive records of pupils' achievement are kept, and are used to influence curricular planning. In 2003, the department gained the Sportsmark Award, which is national recognition of high-quality provision in physical education. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. There has been a significant improvement in examination results and an increase in the range of extra-curricular activities.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

Provision in business education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are very good.
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive.
- There is a very good range of curricular opportunities.
- Links with business are insufficiently developed.

Commentary

120. Attainment in GCSE courses in business studies and business and communication systems were above national expectations in 2003. Results in the 2004 GCSE courses were equally impressive. Standards in work seen in lessons and in pupils' folders were also above national expectations. These results represent very good achievement, with boys, girls and those with special educational needs doing equally well.
121. Teaching and learning are very good with some examples of excellent practice. Lessons are very well planned and teachers have very good subject knowledge. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The very good relationship between teachers and pupils ensures an effective working environment. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils and the pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning. As a result, pupils' achievement is very good. The subject is very well resourced, including very good access to ICT, and these resources are used effectively throughout the curriculum. In most lessons, teachers make good use of GCSE grades when assessing their pupils' work and this has a positive effect on pupil understanding, motivation and learning. However, for some pupils, assessment procedures are not as effective and this reduces their achievement. Whilst business links are being developed for Year 10 pupils, there are insufficient links for all pupils. This restricts the pupils' understanding of the business world and aspects of their learning.
122. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of faculty is committed and enthusiastic and has a clear vision for the further development of business education. Very good support is given to all teachers in the faculty and they respond positively to the very good opportunities provided for professional development. Self-evaluation is used constructively in order to improve the overall provision of the subject and this includes taking account of pupils' views. Teachers give willingly of their time outside the classroom and pupils benefit from a very good range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Since the last inspection there have been very good improvements in the range of courses, attainment at GCSE, accommodation and resources and the number of pupils choosing business education courses.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-planned programme of activities.
- There is good leadership and management of the citizenship programme.
- The subject is taught well and standards are above expectations.
- There are good arrangements for assessment.
- Topics being taught are not always supported with the resources required.

Commentary

123. In the lessons seen, the overall standards in citizenship are good. There are no national comparisons to measure the standards against, but they are above what would be expected in most schools by the end of Years 9 and 11. Learning is good, and the pupils talk in an informed way about their studies, discuss issues and share their experiences. In class discussions, they show a good understanding of topical issues. Progress in lessons is good and pupils are encouraged to extend their thinking through a range of interesting topics.
124. Overall, the teaching of the citizenship programme is good. A well-planned programme of activities is supported by a good range of resource material and information. In some instances, however, teachers require more direction or support when dealing with discussion topics. The programme is comprehensive and covers the National Curriculum programme of study with a particular focus on a knowledge and understanding of becoming citizens, developing their skills of enquiry through discussing topical issues, considering the views of others and the ability to make informed judgements.
125. Leadership and management of this subject are good and staff work very well as a team to ensure consistency and continuity between different classes. Citizenship is planned very well into a weekly lesson for all pupils and is linked to the programme for personal, social and health education. The programme for citizenship has been developed and refined over a number of years. Topics relating to sex education and drugs are taught by specialist teachers, but all the other aspects are covered effectively by form tutors. Additional aspects of citizenship are also taught by the majority of subjects as a normal part of the curriculum they have to cover. For example, role-play in drama and considering rights and responsibilities in history. A good range of very relevant topics are covered for post-16 students.
126. There is a well-planned system for assessment in place, including pupils assessing their own progress at various stages of the programme. Pupils consider their progress and what they need to do to improve. There is also a well-planned award programme requiring pupils to undertake an independent study. The topics pupils select from cover the family, the environment, a healthy lifestyle and what makes a good citizen. At the time of the previous inspection there was no requirement to teach this subject and therefore it was not reported on.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 11 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses 2003

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	17	94.11	80.1	47.06	23.7	41.18	29.9
Graphics	21	95.23		28.57		40.48	
Photography	12	66.66		33.33		28.33	
Art Textiles	5	100		80		50	
Business	20	95	76	30	16	39	26.2
Biology	31	90.32	65.2	25.81	11.1	33.87	20.6
Chemistry	30	80	72.7	13.33	13.9	26.67	24.1
Drama	4	100	86.5	0	19.6	37.50	30.6
Economics	19	84.21	74	42.11	20	33.68	26.4
English Literature	16	100	85.9	56.25	19.1	47.5	30.2
English Language/Literature	18	94.44	82.9	16.67	17.5	32.22	28.7
French	3	100	78.2	33.33	18.9	36.67	27.6
Geography	18	88.88	74.3	33.33	19.8	33.89	26.5
German	1	100	81.5	100	19.3	60	28.9
History	22	90.9	80.7	45.45	19.5	39.55	28.6
Information Technology	13	84.61	67	23.08	10.9	32.31	21.4
Law	13	76.92		30.77		33.08	
Mathematics	72	79.16	61.9	33.33	17.1	33.61	22.1
Physics	12	91.66	68.6	33.33	14.4	35.83	22.7
Psychology	35	77.14	82.5	34.29	30.3	32.57	
Religious Studies	4	100	80.2	50	22.6	42.5	30.1
Sociology	37	89.18	71.8	35.14	18.4	34.59	25.9
Spanish	1	100	79	0	18	30	27.3
Sports Studies	3	100	73.2	33.33	11.4	43.33	23.1
Textiles - Technology	5	80		40		32	

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses 2003

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business AVCE	17	100		5.9		68.2	
Media AVCE	3	100		33.3		80	
Science AVCE	18	88.9		11.1		48.9	
Travel & Tourism AVCE	6	100		0		50	
Art and design	43	90.7	98.6	37.2	50.2	77.2	87.5
Business	13	100	60.1	0	14.6	73.8	60.1
Biology	15	86.7	96.4	20	39.2	61.3	78.6
Chemistry	5	80	97.6	20	49	60	84.9
Drama	9	100	99.5	44.44	40.1	88.89	83.6
Economics	17	94.1	99	41.18	52	80	88.3
English literature	16	100	99.5	31.3	46.5	80	86.5
English language/literature	5	100	99.4	40	36.3	92	80.9
French	1	100	98.8	100	51.5	120	87.6
Design and technology	12	100	97.8	25	35	73.3	77.9
Geography	16	93.8	98.7	25	44.5	68.75	84
History	20	90	99	30	44.6	73	84.6
Information technology	13	92.3	95.6	7.69	24.6	63.08	69.5
Mathematics	17	94.1	96.7	29.41	55.6	72.94	88.8
Music	4	100	99	0	39	50	81.1
Physics	5	100	96.7	40	44.6	64	81.7
Other social studies	21	100	97.4	42.9	42.7	85.7	81.8
Religious studies	4	100		50		85	
Sociology	28	100	96.6	35.71	43.2	82.14	
Sports studies	3	100	98	0	30.9	53.33	75.2

Level 2 vocational qualifications 2003

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business GNVQ Int	13	100		38			
Media GNVQ	14	71.5		29		21	

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and prepare students well for examinations.
- Students are well supported by teachers throughout the course.
- Students display very positive attitudes to their studies.
- Sixth-form students do not make use of library facilities to support their studies.
- Leadership and management are very good and the department is improving.

Commentary

127. Results in the 2003 A-level examination in English language were well above average. In 2004, unvalidated results were above average. Results in the 2003 A-level examination in English literature were average, but results in 2004 are likely to be below average. Results in the 2004 AS level English literature examination included a significant increase in the number of higher grades gained by students and results were above average overall. Achievement in Years 12 and 13 has been good for the last two years in English language and literature when compared with the prior attainment of these students at GCSE.
128. Overall, teaching and learning in Years 12 and 13 are good. In the best lessons, teaching is characterised by good knowledge of the subject, good provision of background materials and in-depth knowledge of the requirements of the examination system. Students find this very supportive and helpful to their learning. Teachers plan lessons carefully and build in many opportunities for students to discuss their work together, and share findings with the rest of the group. Students enjoy sharing their views and find it helpful in furthering their understanding. A good range of activities is planned in which students engage in detailed analysis of their texts. Very good use of ICT was seen in a lesson where it prompted very good interaction between students in analysing sections of literary text. Where teaching is just satisfactory, students are not sufficiently challenged by probing questions to extend their learning of the subject material. Assessment in the sixth form is good. Work is well marked and students receive good feedback on their assignments. Students find self-assessment and peer assessment particularly helpful in developing their own learning.
129. Students in the sixth form have very positive attitudes to their studies and enjoy studying English. They settle well in to their new courses and are appreciative of the induction they receive. A number of Year 13 students are stimulated by the book club run by staff from the department and are inspired to read beyond the set texts. The links between the school library and the teaching of the sixth form are not sufficiently developed, so students have few opportunities for independent study.
130. Leadership and management are very good. The sixth form is included fully in the department's planning and monitoring schedules. There have been good improvements since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

131. Good standards of literacy in the sixth form enable students to meet the literacy demands of their courses. Teachers give good emphasis to subject-specific vocabulary. In biology, drama, history and psychology, teachers pay particular attention to the development of literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and enthusiasm for mathematics.
- Leadership and management are very good and staff work together as a cohesive team.
- Students are making very good progress because they have very positive attitudes and have set themselves challenging targets.

Commentary

132. Standards in the sixth form are above average. The 2003 examination results for students in Year 13 were below the national average for all schools. In 2004, however, results improved particularly at grades A/B and are likely to be above the national average. This represents very good achievement. All students who gained a grade A at GCSE gained a grade A at A-level. In 2004, both boys and girls performed very well and many gained the higher grades. Standards at AS level at the end of Year 12 were average, but achievement was good compared with the students' results at GCSE.
133. Inspection evidence indicates achievement in the sixth form is very good overall. All students are working at and above the expected level for their course. They are making very good progress in both the A-level and AS level courses. Students in Year 13 have very high aspirations, setting their sights on grade A, and are working hard to improve their performance at AS level in Year 12. Students in the first year of their A-level course are successfully bridging the gap between GCSE and A-level.
134. Both teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers have high expectations for student progress and are committed to them becoming independent learners. One teacher's expert questioning encouraged students to discuss their work, review their past knowledge and to develop reasons for answers. Students are highly motivated to succeed. They talk positively about their learning and interest in mathematics and recognise its value. In an AS level statistics class, students worked collaboratively in groups and prepared model answers to examination questions to present to the class. This enhanced the learning of the whole group.
135. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for a model of teaching in the sixth form and teaching staff work cohesively as a team to achieve this vision. Careful decisions concerning deployment of teachers ensure that students get the very best teaching of the different examination modules. There are sufficient teaching resources for students to choose modules from pure, mechanics, statistics and further mathematics. Opportunities for students to extend their knowledge and skills in mathematics through the use of ICT are very limited. Progress since the previous inspection is good and there is evidence of students being successfully challenged to achieve well above average.

Mathematics across the curriculum

136. Standards of students' mathematics are sufficient for them to have full access to their chosen sixth-form courses. Students studying physics demonstrated confidence when working with high-level mathematical concepts of logarithmic and exponential growth. Students re-taking GCSE mathematics are provided with workshop support as required.

SCIENCE

The focus in post-16 science was on chemistry and biology, but physics was also sampled. In the Year 13 physics lesson observed, the teaching and learning were good. As a result, the students made good progress in their understanding of fibre optics and showed a very good attitude to the subject. Teachers and students share very good relationships and work in a very co-operative manner.

Chemistry.

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers have good subject knowledge and are fully aware of examination requirements.
- The teaching and learning are good, especially in Year 13.
- Teachers give a good level of support needed by some lower-attaining students in the large groups.
- The relationships between students and teachers are good.
- The higher-attaining students achieve very well.
- There is little opportunity for students to use computers in lessons.

Commentary.

137. In 2003, the standards achieved in AS level chemistry were close to the national average. There was little change in 2004. In 2003, the A-level results were from a very small cohort of students. Most of these students did not reach their predicted grades and achievement was unsatisfactory. In 2004, the number of students taking A-level chemistry was much higher and standards were close to the expected national average. Many students reached their predicted grades and achievement was good.
138. In the lessons observed, Year 13 students' work was close to the national average and represents good achievement. They discuss complex chemistry with confidence and accuracy. The students in the larger AS level groups enter the sixth form with attainment below the national average and their achievement is also good.
139. Teaching and learning are good overall. The teachers are enthusiastic, well qualified and have very good subject knowledge and experience. The students' attitudes to chemistry are good overall and show a strong determination to succeed. The range of teaching and learning styles is good with many opportunities for the students to perform practical work and investigations. However, there is little opportunity for students to use computers in lessons in order to enhance their learning with suitable software. Students perform practical tasks with great care and work in a co-operative and mature manner. The teaching in Year 12 is less effective as the larger groups of students have a wide range of prior experience and require a significant amount of further support and guidance. The achievement of students with lower prior attainment is good due to the supportive nature of the teachers and the students' good attitudes. The teachers know the students well, are aware of any underachievement and will provide further support when needed. Students appreciate the support they receive from their teachers and the way they are guided on how to improve.
140. The leadership of chemistry is good. The teachers work in a very co-operative manner and are well supported by the technicians. The course is well planned and co-ordinated and covers the syllabus requirements well. The management of chemistry is satisfactory. The department has recognised the previous issue of underachievement by some students and has started to address this by closer monitoring of students' progress. This has had some effect, as standards are now higher.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in students who work hard and achieve very well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Fieldwork considerably enhances students' understanding of the subject.
- Students do not always read widely around the subject.

Commentary

141. Results in the 2003 A-level examinations were below the national average. They improved in 2004 and students achieved very well in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE. Standards of work seen during the inspection meet national expectations, representing very good achievement for the students. Their coursework shows a good understanding of the requirements of thorough investigations. In the very good investigations, hypotheses are clear, and data produced is well presented to support the final conclusions. In lessons, students conduct experiments with confidence, and relate findings to scientific facts, such as the physiology of exercise. Retention to the course is very good, and many students continue into some aspect of the subject in higher education.
142. Teaching is very good. Lessons are lively and conducted at a cracking pace, which reflects the enthusiasm of the teachers. Much work is covered and students are involved actively in their learning. Relationships are good, which gives students the confidence to work hard and learn effectively. Questioning is probing, and issues are explored so that students consolidate their learning. At the end of lessons, what has been learnt is reinforced, often using students to explain their learning. Students are positive about the course, and particularly about the fieldwork undertaken. Some coursework undertaken during the fieldwork is imaginative, for example investigating the percentage cover of lichen on an oak tree.
143. Leadership and management are very good. Assessment is thorough, and students know how to improve. The course is constantly examined to maximise learning opportunities for students. Fieldwork is organised so that students work very hard while enjoying the experience. Although students are encouraged to read around the subject, and they are provided with many references, there is insufficient pressure on them to do this. This restricts their learning, and narrows their understanding of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good gains in their knowledge and achievement is above average.
- Teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- Assessment is very good because teachers have a very good understanding of the exam specification.
- The lack of a head of department reduces the overall quality of leadership and management.

Commentary

144. Attainment on entry to the A-level course is below average. During the course, students make good progress, developing their understanding of applications and how they relate to the wider world. Results for 2003 were below the national average for higher grade passes. AS level entries were too small to make reliable comparison. Although the number of higher grades achieved was below the national figures, students performed better than expected and achieved well.

145. The standard of work seen was broadly average, which for the majority of students represents good achievement. Students realise the need to involve the user when seeking solutions to ICT problems. Students speak confidently about their projects, most making effective use of technical language. Students working on individual projects make good use of the local business community. Female students from all ethnic backgrounds tend to show a greater application to task, but reliable comparison of performance between genders is not possible given the small numbers taking the course.
146. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form. Teachers have a good knowledge of their students, which they use to pitch the work at the right level. They have a very good command of their subject. Lessons are planned effectively with the best examples fully involving the students in presenting information to their peers. There is significant emphasis on high achievement with teachers continually encouraging students to aim high. In lessons, students receive very good oral assessment, which helps them to know what level they are at and how to improve their work. Less-effective lessons do not use a wide enough range of methods to stimulate all groups. On occasions, teachers do not take enough time to review learning and test students' understanding. Overall, students demonstrate positive attitudes. Apart from a small number of male students, all show a desire to achieve as well as possible. In lessons they are attentive, co-operate well with one another and appreciate the help provided by teachers. Students are prepared to make presentations to others and carry out the tasks with a good degree of maturity. Even when they are not given a high degree of responsibility for their learning, students are attentive and responsive.
147. Day-to-day leadership and management of ICT in Years 12 and 13 are satisfactory. Teachers ensure that students receive sufficient guidance to successfully complete the course. Despite efforts by the school to recruit staff, the absence of a head of department impacts on the level and effectiveness of monitoring within the subject. Overall, good improvement has been made since the previous inspection because resources have significantly improved, teaching is better and standards are higher.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on geography and psychology. Work in religious education was sampled. The small number of students who study **religious education** to A-level perform well in examinations. In 2003, results were above average and all students secured a pass grade with half securing passes at the top grades A and B. In 2004, provisional results are similar. The results are better than expected from their GCSE results. Students achieve well because of good subject-specialist teaching and their own enthusiasm for the subject.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership is leading to improving standards.
- Students display very good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge.
- There are weaknesses in students' use of geographical language.

Commentary

148. The subject is growing in popularity and an increasing number of students study geography in the sixth form. AS and A-level results were average in 2003. Provisional results for 2004 show a good improvement and these results represent good achievement for the students concerned. Standards for students in the current Years 12 and 13 are above average. They have a good knowledge and understanding of human geography and of case studies. However, many

students have difficulty understanding the physical processes or using geographical language accurately. They have good skills with the analysis and interpretation of data and use computers effectively to support their work.

149. The achievement of students who study geography in Years 12 and 13 is good. This is because of good teaching and their very good attitudes to learning. Male and female students of all abilities and of all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. They are attentive and work effectively, both independently and collaboratively. Students have a mature approach to their work both in lessons and with independent study.
150. Teaching and learning are good and are improving. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They are enthusiastic and committed and use a range of effective approaches in the classroom. They make very good use of computers and other resources to support students' learning. However, there is insufficient use made of maps to support the students' understanding of place and location. Good-quality explanations and challenging questions extend the students' understanding of the subject matter, but technical language requires more reinforcement. The marking of students' work is very good and they have good guidance on how to improve. Students are very well prepared for examinations by the use of past questions and guidance with techniques.
151. The leadership of geography is now excellent and management is very good. The head of subject has an excellent understanding of the subject and uses this to provide clear direction for her colleagues. Teamwork is a very good feature in planning and teaching the AS and A-level courses. This is improving students' learning. Leadership of the curriculum and teaching is excellent and members of the department provide very good role-models for the students. Procedures for reviewing the work of the department are very good. There is very good analysis of performance data to track student progress and to review strategies used in the classroom. The curriculum is very good and is enhanced by a week of residential fieldwork in Devon. This helps the students develop their skills and develop a better understanding of different environments. Teachers' expertise meets the needs of the curriculum very well, as does the very good quality of accommodation and resources. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Students' performance in A-level examinations has improved, as has the quality of teaching and resources.

Psychology.

Provision in psychology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 12 and 13 are above average.
- The subject is a highly popular area of sixth-form study.
- There is an ethos of academic rigour and high expectations in classrooms.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Accommodation is unsuitable for advanced level study.
- The school arranges for visiting speakers to enhance the course.

Commentary

152. Recent examination results at both AS and A-level have been above national averages and, in the most recent A-level examination, all students gained a pass and nearly half of those entered gained the highest grades. Standards seen during the current inspection are also above average in both years and students achieve very well in terms of their prior attainment at GCSE.
153. Students enter the AS course with no prior experience of the subject, but they soon develop a very clear knowledge and understanding of the key approaches and major theories. The quality of oral and written work is very good and students organise their folders well. Retention rates into Year 13 are high and students build very well on the progress they have made in Year 12.

Students also demonstrate a heartening ability to extend their independent learning and research skills through their coursework.

154. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and much is excellent. Lessons are challenging and teacher expectations are very high, with the result that there is an ethos of academic rigour in the classroom. Teachers also use their subject knowledge very well to plan lessons thoroughly in order to meet the varying needs of students. Questioning techniques, in particular, are used very effectively to probe students' knowledge and understanding to considerable depth. There is a very strong rapport between students and teachers and students show a commendable commitment to their studies. They are keen to debate issues and are very appreciative of the advice and support they are given.
155. The department is led and managed very well with a very strong teaching team and clear plans for future development. Teachers are fully aware of new developments in the subject. Marking is very thorough and gives students a clear idea on how to improve their work. There is a good range of books and other resources within the department, but the school library has few resources to support students in their independent research. ICT and the Internet play an increasing role in the work of the department. Most lessons are conducted in temporary accommodation, an unsuitable teaching and learning environment for advanced level study. Overall, psychology is a highly popular and increasingly successful area of sixth-form provision. It is a considerable strength to the school.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

No subjects were inspected in this curriculum area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was on art and theatre studies, but work in AVCE Media: Communication and Production was sampled.

AVCE Media: Communication and Production.

156. The 2004 AVCE results in media were very good with 70 per cent of students attaining A-B grades. Students' achievement was very good. The portfolios and videos produced by the more able students are of a very high standard. One lesson was seen during the inspection in which teaching and learning were good because of the teacher's expert knowledge, the very good relationships between the students and teacher, and students' ability to apply their knowledge of media terms and genres. All the course materials are on the school intranet and are available from outside the school on a password-protected website and this supports the students to work independently.

Art

The main focus of the inspection was on A-level art. However, the work in art graphics design and AVCE art and design were also sampled. The standards seen in graphics design are very high, and in AVCE art and design they are high. Teaching is very good in both subjects. There are very high expectations that all students will succeed, with the consequence that all students are highly motivated.

Provision in art is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high because excellent teaching highly motivates the students who achieve very well.
- Leadership and management are excellent, and staff teamwork is strong.
- The curriculum is excellent, and students have access to a very wide range of courses.

Commentary

157. Results in the 2003 A-level examinations were in line with national averages, and they dramatically improved in 2004 because the school recognised the changed emphasis in the examination. Standards seen during the inspection were very high, and represent very good achievement for all students, including those with special educational needs. Students' sketchbooks show a remarkably mature approach to the development of themes and techniques. The final developments are enlarged to create large dramatic artforms, which show a very high degree of creativity. The standards of students' drawing are exceptionally high, as demonstrated in sensitive plant drawings. Students are equally competent in their use of other media, and also in experimentation. This was seen when bleach was used on photographic paper. Effective use is made of ICT to manipulate images. Retention rates for completing the course are excellent, and students are extremely positive about the subject. Many students continue with the subject in some form in higher education.
158. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. It is based on secure subject knowledge and a passion for the subject. Teachers have very good relationships with the students, which results in them being confident to experiment. Teachers inspire students to be artists in their own right, which results in their total involvement. Skills are very well taught, and this shows in students' drawing and painting skills, which are developed to an extremely high standard early in Year 12. Much use is made of group assessment, when all are involved in providing constructive comments. Teachers question students perceptively, which makes students think around the question, and therefore learn.
159. Leadership and management are excellent. The curriculum covers a very wide range of art experiences, so that students have the opportunity to develop their art in any form, in sculpture and textiles for example. Continuous assessment moves students on rapidly in their learning and understanding of the topic, so that all know how to improve. Visits to the major London galleries and exhibitions including an overseas visit to New York, widen students' experiences of all forms of art. Students' experiences are also considerably enriched by life-drawing classes. Teachers give freely of their time, which results in these students spending as much of their time as possible in the department. The faculty is very well supported by highly qualified technicians. The accommodation is very good, and students benefit from their own study area. There are very wide connections with the local community, which benefit all students. The faculty has made good improvement since the last inspection and has a very clear vision for future developments.

Theatre studies

Provision in theatre studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are well above average as a result of very good teaching.
- Very positive relationships between teachers and students promote very good learning.
- Very effective leadership and management supports students' success in their examinations.
- Accommodation is barely adequate for effectively teaching the technical skills.

Commentary

160. Theatre studies A-level results in 2003 were above the national average. In 2004, the numbers taking the examination were too small to make national comparisons, but all students passed with high grades and standards are well above average. Very good teaching enables students to reach high standards. Achievement is high as a result of the very good teaching and the positive working relationships between teachers and students. The students are extremely committed to their work and confidently develop drama skills in new contexts.
161. Teaching is very good and teachers consistently challenge students to achieve high standards. Teachers have a high degree of expertise. Lessons are very well planned, resourced and managed to allow students the maximum opportunity to develop their drama skills and techniques. Students understand what they have to achieve as the objectives of lessons are very clearly stated and reviewed. Teachers use imaginative and creative ways to help students develop drama skills, which students find particularly helpful. Teachers expertly build on students' evaluations of their work to extend their ideas and consolidate learning.
162. Learning is very good. Students are animated, enthusiastic and focused on their tasks. They work very productively in pairs and effectively support each other. The proficient improvisation skills they have built up over time enable them to undertake new tasks with confidence. This was particularly evident in the very good work they did on physical theatre and the plays of Steven Berkoff. Their evaluations of their own work and the work of others are sensitive, constructive and well-informed. They readily participate in discussion. Their written critical analyses of drama texts show very good understanding of dramatic devices and language.
163. The leadership and management of theatre studies are very good. Comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans are being established to support students' examination work and enable high levels of achievement. The department successfully targets any underachievement by students and provides revision classes for written work and practical classes in holidays. The barely adequate accommodation does not have an adverse impact on standards and achievement. However, the lack of a fully equipped drama studio with lights and sound limits the opportunities for technical work and the development of a technical module that might appeal to boys. There is limited access to ICT in the department. Students are given many opportunities to go to theatres and to meet actors and directors. Theatre studies has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was in its first year.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus of the inspection was on physical education.

Physical education

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well at A-level because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Very good relationships between students and their teachers lead to high expectations and good progress.
- Students are very committed and hardworking.

Commentary

164. In 2001, the school began offering its sixth-form students the opportunity to take A-level examinations in physical education. Subsequently, in 2003 a small group of students completed the course and all gained pass grades that were in line with those achieved nationally. Also, in 2003 a bigger group of students completed the AS level course and gained pass grades that were above the national average. Overall, students achieve very well in relation to their GCSE results.
165. Inspection evidence indicates that the standard of work by the small group of current Year 13 students is above average and an improvement on their AS level results. Teachers adopt a challenging and positive approach to the work that enables students to use their skills of analysis to draw out ideas and to make distinctions between opinions, beliefs and facts. Students write at length on a variety of topics including drug abuse in sport, the effects of sponsorship and the influence of the English public school system in the development of sport in England. Students were observed giving presentations on the psychological and physiological factors that optimise sporting performances. They put forward, and defend, their views vigorously and with conviction.
166. Students in Year 12 have made very good progress since they started the AS course in September 2004. They work conscientiously, are attentive and concentrate well. They show real rapport with their teachers, and their relationships when working in groups are good. In discussions, all students make effective use of a wide range of relevant vocabulary. Students understand the aims of the lessons clearly so that they know what they are to learn.
167. The teaching and learning of A-level courses are very good. The teachers are aware of the different ways in which students learn, and they work hard to use methods and provide tasks that meet their needs. Teachers pass on their considerable expertise and challenge students to think intellectually. Teachers know them well, are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and are skilled at asking the right questions in order to help them learn. Students readily use the Internet to broaden their knowledge and to research individual topics. Students have very positive views of the course and the teaching they receive. The courses have lived up to their expectations and they are enjoying the subject.
168. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers involved in the teaching of the A-level courses work well together, sharing views on successful ways of teaching, and show a very strong commitment to their students. At the time of the previous inspection, the school did not offer A-level courses in physical education so it is not possible to judge the level of improvement.

BUSINESS

Business education

The provision in business education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and students' achievement are very good.
- There is an excellent range of curricular opportunities.
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students.
- Student attitudes towards their learning are very positive.

Commentary

169. Attainment in vocational and advanced level courses in 2003 were above national expectations. Results in 2004 were equally impressive, especially in advanced level economics. Standards seen in lessons were also above national expectations, both at advanced level and in vocational courses. These standards represent very good achievement based on the students' prior attainment levels at GCSE. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
170. This very good achievement by students results from very good teaching and student motivation. Teachers have very high expectations of their students, who demonstrate a mature approach to their learning. Lessons are very well planned and teachers have very good subject knowledge. This results in effective learning. Students benefit from an excellent range of vocational and advanced level courses. As a result, students' motivation and achievement are enhanced, as each student is able to study a course, which meets their needs. The effective use of time and very good relationships that exist between teachers and their students also have a positive impact on learning. Students also benefit from access to very good resources, including ICT, and very good business links. Students therefore have a good understanding of the business world and benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities.
171. The head of faculty provides very good, committed leadership of the subject. He has a clear vision for the development of the subject and gives very good support to an enthusiastic team of teachers. The faculty's evaluation of its own work is well established and teachers readily share good practice in order to raise students' achievement. Assessment procedures are effective in informing the students of their current standard and their understanding of how they can improve. There are very good opportunities for professional development within the faculty and from attending courses. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in the overall provision, especially with regard to the range of courses offered, standards, retention rates and the number of students going on to related courses in higher education.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No subjects were inspected in this curriculum area.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

No subjects were inspected in this curriculum area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	3	3
How inclusive the school is		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		3
Pupils' achievement	3	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	6	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	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 colleges	1	1
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2

The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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