

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTHOLT HIGH SCHOOL**

Northolt, Middlesex

LEA area: Ealing

Unique reference number: 101943

Headteacher: Mr C Modi

Lead inspector: Mr T Feast

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 268867

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,355
School address:	Eastcote Lane Northolt Middlesex
Postcode:	UB5 4HP
Telephone number:	(020) 8864 8544
Fax number:	(020) 8426 9207
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Hall
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Northolt High School is a large foundation comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. The school is a popular choice with parents and has continued to grow since the last inspection. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 varies considerably. In 2004 in the current Year 7 it was well below average, and in the previous two years it was below average. Overall, it is well below average. Overall, girls' attainment on entry in Year 7 is above that of the boys'. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above that found nationally. The school serves parts of Ealing with significant concentrations of social deprivation. Pupils come from a wide variety of home circumstances but overall the circumstances are more disadvantaged than advantaged. The number of pupils whose home language is not believed to be English is higher than in most schools, but the number eligible for additional support is very small. The percentage of pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs is above the national average; the range of needs includes emotional and behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties. By far the greatest number of pupils identified as having special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. The school has not identified any pupils as coming from a Traveller background. The number of pupils identified as refugees and/or asylum seekers is very small. The number of pupils who are in public care is very small. The number of pupils transferring to and from the school other than at the normal time of admission in September is relatively small. The school is a Specialist Technology College. It works in partnership with other local primary and secondary schools in an Education Action Zone.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3650	Mr T Feast	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
31747	Mrs R Boardman	Lay inspector	
17453	Mr C Edney	Team inspector	Mathematics
12003	Mr A Marfleet	Team inspector	English
32878	Mr S Goldsmith	Team inspector	Science
7084	Mr J Haslam	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
21825	Mrs E Kelly	Team inspector	Design and technology
33368	Mrs V Greatrex	Team inspector	Art and design
31863	Mr A Cornelius	Team inspector	Geography
14633	Mrs J Bannister	Team inspector	History
11751	Mr D Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Citizenship
11676	Mr G Thomas	Team inspector	Music
15312	Mrs K Lord	Team inspector	Physical education
1578	Mrs M Sinclair	Team inspector	Religious education
17530	Mrs M Cureton	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Northolt High School is an effective school, providing satisfactory value for money.** Standards overall are in line with the national averages and teaching and learning are good. The curriculum offered to the pupils is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.
- The inconsistent planning for the differing needs of pupils in lessons is unsatisfactory.
- The inconsistent guidance given to pupils on what to do to improve is unsatisfactory.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across subjects does not meet requirements in all subjects.

The school was last inspected in November 1998. Since then the improvement has been satisfactory. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good and there is satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 and standards have risen. Progress has been good in improving the quality of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and the capabilities of staff to use it. Progress has been satisfactory in the use of ICT across the curriculum. Punctuality has not improved sufficiently. The curriculum has improved satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. The health and safety issues have been overcome in food technology but there are health and safety concerns in physical education.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils with average points scores.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** By the end of Year 11, standards are in line with those nationally and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have improved at a faster rate than found nationally in the period 1999-2003. The percentage of pupils who gained five or more passes at grades A\*-C rose from 38 per cent in 2000 to 53 per cent in 2003 but fell significantly in 2004 to 35 per cent. The school's target of 50 per cent in 2004 was not met. The GCSE examination results in 2003 showed a satisfactory improvement in relation to pupils' performance in the national tests at the age of 14. Current standards vary across departments. Standards are in line with national expectations in English, science, ICT, history, music, citizenship and physical education, and below national expectations in mathematics, German, religious education, design and technology and art and design. It is above national expectations in geography. The improvement seen during the inspection compared with the GCSE examination results in 2004 is linked to improved stability in staffing in key areas.

By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with the national expectations and have improved at a faster rate than the national trend between 1999-2003. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. The percentage of pupils in 2004 who attained Level 5 or higher in the national tests at the age of 14 rose significantly in English, improved in science and fell in mathematics. The school's targets for 2004 were exceeded in English but not in mathematics, science and ICT. Current standards are in line with national expectations in English, science, mathematics, ICT, geography, history, art and design, design and technology, music and citizenship. They are below national expectations in German, physical education and religious education.

Standards in the sixth form are in line with national expectations and are consistent with standards in the A-level examinations in the last two years.

Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils at an early stage of acquiring English language skills make good progress in acquiring them. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is in line with that made by pupils overall. Girls attain higher standards than boys overall. Pupils in public care make satisfactory progress overall.

**The quality of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall.** Attitudes are good. Behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory. The attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils are unsatisfactory. Pupils' punctuality is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good overall. Teaching and learning across Years 7 to 13 are good.** Much of the teaching is good and sometimes better than this, reflecting particularly the positive impact of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. This results in pupils learning well in Years 7 to 9. There are inconsistencies in planning to meet the differing needs of all pupils, especially for the gifted and talented. There are inconsistencies in the assessment of pupils' work and the guidance given to pupils on how to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, although some statutory requirements are not met. Some subjects do not use ICT sufficiently to support teaching and learning. The curriculum does not reflect sufficiently that this is a Specialist Technology College. Guidance for pupils is good. The school's links with the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory. There is a positive ethos in the school, especially in valuing all pupils.

The school does not meet fully statutory requirements in respect of religious education in Years 7 to 9 and the sixth form and in providing a daily act of collective worship.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Most parents are satisfied with many aspects of the school's provision but have some concerns about bullying and the standard of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are positive about the school especially in relation to the school's expectations of them. They raised concerns

particularly about pupils' behaviour, bullying and staff not treating all pupils fairly. The inspection team agrees with parents and pupils that the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is poor and does affect pupils' progress detrimentally. The pupils indicate that there are signs of improvement and the inspection team agrees. There is general agreement that where there is bullying, it is dealt with effectively by the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- plan consistently to meet the differing needs of pupils in lessons;
- give guidance to pupils on how to improve consistently across departments;
- extend the strategic role of the governing body and its monitoring and evaluation of the school's work;

**and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- provide a daily act of collective worship for all, religious education in Years 7 to 9 and the sixth form; and
- ensure the use of ICT meets requirements in all subjects, including mathematics and music.

## **THE SIXTH FORM AT NORTHOLT HIGH SCHOOL**

There are 201 students in the sixth form, making it a similar size to the average sixth form nationally. Most students join from within the school but a significant proportion of between a fifth and a quarter of the students come from elsewhere. These include a growing number of students who have recently come to this country. The majority of students study a range of academic courses to AS levels, with a smaller number progressing to A-level. A small number of vocational courses are offered. There is a very small number of students with special educational needs in the sixth form and there is an increasing number of students in the sixth form whose first language at home is not English.

## **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students and provides satisfactory value for money.** Standards on entry are in line with those typically found. The majority of students in Year 13 go on to higher education but about half the students in Year 12 leave at the end of the year to go into employment. Students play a satisfactory part in the life of the school overall. Teaching and learning are good. The achievement of students overall, including those from minority ethnic groups, is satisfactory. Leadership at departmental level is often good but the sixth form management has been slow to convert the school's vision into a curriculum that matches the needs of the school and this is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership of the sixth form is not sufficiently strategic.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently developed or tailored to meet the diverse needs of students.
- The monitoring of students' attendance and that of visitors to the sixth form is unsatisfactory.



- Students have good attitudes to their studies.
- Students' competence in using ICT is good.
- There is no provision for a daily act of collective worship or access to religious education.

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is <b>good</b> . Standards are in line with the national average, but students achieve well because of good teaching. Provision in German is <b>good</b> . Attainment is above average and teaching and learning are very good, resulting in good achievement.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is <b>good</b> . Teaching and learning are good overall, leading to standards that are above average. Students' achievement is good.
Science	Provision in physics is <b>good</b> . Students' achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. Students' opportunities for independent study are limited, as is the use of ICT to support students' learning.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is <b>good</b> . Standards are above the national average and students' achievement is good as a result of the good teaching.
Humanities	Provision in history is <b>good</b> . Standards at A-level are in line with the national average but are now higher at AS level. Teaching and learning are good. Provision in geography is <b>satisfactory</b> . Standards are below the national average. Achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in the performing arts is <b>good</b> . Standards are above average. Students achieve well.
Business	Provision in business studies is <b>satisfactory</b> . Attainment is in line with course expectations and students' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory.

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

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Overall students are satisfied with the personal support and guidance provided. The inspection confirms that this support and guidance is satisfactory. Guidance in relation to higher education is a strength. There is insufficient monitoring of students' attendance during the school day so that in an emergency the actual attendance of sixth form students is known. In addition, visitors to the sixth form are not monitored consistently and the school's procedures to identify them are not followed.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

**Leadership is unsatisfactory, although management of the sixth form is satisfactory.** Leadership lacks sufficient strategic direction or focus. The vision of the headteacher has not been translated into a curriculum which meets the needs of the

school's students. Recruitment into the sixth form is below 50 per cent. There has been insufficient expansion of vocational courses either on site or through a partnership with local colleges and schools to provide shared or linked provision. As at the time of the last inspection, there is no act of daily collective worship for students, nor do they have access to religious education as required by the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this is unsatisfactory. The sixth form runs smoothly and tutors know their students well. Whilst there is appropriate departmental analysis of performance data, there is insufficient strategic monitoring of performance and the quality of provision. This limits the provision of quality information to help determine school's priorities for development.

### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students are positive about some aspects of the sixth form. They enjoy being a student at Northolt High School. Students think teaching is challenging and demanding and that staff are experts in their subjects. They consider teachers accessible and helpful. They were less complimentary about the advice they receive on what they should study, but the inspection team judges they receive good advice. Many do not think that the school seeks or responds to their views sufficiently. However they have now returned to being members of the school council. Inspectors judge that there are too few opportunities for sixth formers to contribute to the development of the school community. Many students do not think the school offers courses which suit their ability or their career plans and inspectors agree that the sixth form curriculum has not been broadened sufficiently.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

By the end of Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13, standards are broadly in line with the national expectations. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but is good in Years 7 to 9. Girls' attainment is higher than the boys' overall.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is good in Years 7 to 9.
- The improvement in standards of English in the national tests in 2004 is good.
- The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE examination grades A\*-C fell considerably from 53 per cent in 2003 to 35 per cent in 2004.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 showed some return to those attained in the period 2000-2003.
- Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English language skills make good gains in acquiring competence in the English language.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.1 (32.7)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	35.5 (35.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.3 (34.2)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 208 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	52 (47)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.3 (33.3)	34.7 (34.8)

*There were 213 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	86.2 (87.1)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	25.6 (26.4)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	239.2 (229.2)	258.2 (263.3)

*There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in 2004 is well below average, lower than in the previous two years when it was below average. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and their results in the national tests at the age of 14 have been in line with the national averages in 2001-2003 and above or well above the results of pupils in similar schools since 2002. The improvement in the school's overall performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in the period 1999-2003 has been above the national trend. In 2004, the results in English rose significantly (from 67 per cent in 2003 to 83 per cent). They rose in science but dropped in mathematics. The school's targets for 2004 were exceeded in English but not met in mathematics, science and ICT. Girls have attained much higher results than boys in English in the period between 2001- 2003 but in mathematics and science the results are much closer, with boys in the same period attaining higher results than the girls in mathematics and science. Overall, these results represent good achievement by the pupils in Years 7 to 9 when compared to pupils' attainment on entry to the school. One of the reasons for this achievement has been the school's commitment to and implementation of the National Key Stage 3 National Strategy, which has resulted in improved teaching and learning. The school's strategies for improving literacy have also had a positive impact on raising standards.
2. GCSE examination results improved on those reported at the last inspection up to and including the 2003 results. Between 2000 and 2003, the percentage of pupils who gained five or more grades A\*-C rose from 38 per cent to 52 per cent, the latter figure was in line with the national average. It was below similar schools, calculated by using pupils' prior performance in the national tests in 2001. The improvement in the average point score of pupils was above the national trend in the period 1999-2003. The results in 2004 fell considerably to 35 per cent of students gaining five or more grades A\*-C. One of the main reasons for this fall was pupils' performance in their ICT examinations. The school's results in respect of the percentage of pupils who gained at least one GCSE grade A\*-G remained very high in the period 2001-2003 and the very high figure was maintained in 2004. The school did not meet all its targets in the 2004 GCSE results. The average point score in relation to similar schools was well below average in 2003. Part of the reason for this is the lack of passes at the highest grades of A\* and A. In 2003, the school's results were 8.1 per cent of passes at A\*/A against a national average of 14.1 per cent. This can partly be explained by the lack of consistent planning for the gifted and talented pupils in many lessons. The performance of the girls is generally higher than that of the boys at GCSE. The performance of pupils from ethnic minority groups varies but overall is in line with those of the school. The small number of pupils in several differing ethnic groups makes statistically valid comparisons impossible. The achievement of the pupils overall in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of acquiring English language skills continues to be good where they continue to receive specific support. Elsewhere there achievement is in line with that of their fellow pupils.
3. Current standards show an improvement on the GCSE examination results reported in 2004 and more in line with those in the period 2000-2003. Standards are in line with national expectations overall and this represents satisfactory achievement. This is partly a reflection of the improved staffing situation in some curricular areas. By Year 11, attainment is in line with the national expectation in English, science, ICT, history, music, physical education and citizenship. It is below national expectations in

mathematics, German, religious education, design and technology and art and design. It is above national expectations in geography. Given their starting points in the subjects, this represents satisfactory achievement. By Year 9, attainment is in line with national expectations in nearly all the subjects other than German, religious education and physical education where it was below expectations. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good overall.

4. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Additional, well targeted material in science, for pupils with a statement of special educational need enables them to make good progress. In ICT, pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as the rest of the pupils because the teachers know their targets and give them extra support. There is not enough support for pupils with special educational needs to make more than satisfactory progress in English in Years 10 and 11. There is no support at all in design and technology. Lack of support in a Year 9 lesson in modern foreign languages led to bad behaviour. There is insufficient support for pupils with special educational needs in business studies in Years 10 and 11. In music, these pupils' achievement is good and a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs go on to study a GCSE course in music.
5. The progress made by pupils at an early stage of acquiring English language skills is good. This has a positive impact on their achievement in other subjects. The support teacher identifies the needs of these pupils at an early stage and plans appropriate support. The achievement and attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups are in line overall with their fellow pupils and this reflects the school's commitment to an ethos which values all pupils. Standards attained by the different ethnic groups in 2004 varied but in most cases the numbers were too small to make comparisons statistically valid. The achievement of pupils in public care varies by individuals but overall is in line with their fellow pupils.

### **Sixth form**

6. The examination results in 2003 were in line with the national average and were similar to the results attained in 2002. The results in 2004 were similar to those in the previous two years and most students achieved their predicted grades. Female students outperformed male students in 2003 but not by as much as girls do nationally. Current standards overall are in line with those expected nationally in the courses. They are above course expectations in A-level German, mathematics, physics, ICT and performing arts. They are in line with course expectations in English, history and business studies. They are below them in geography. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other students and this reflects the school's commitment to an ethos where all students are valued.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Their attitudes to work and towards others are good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between the pupils and between pupils and staff are very good.
- There is a good behaviour for learning policy and consistent discipline procedures known to staff and to the pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
- The unsatisfactory and sometimes poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils has an adverse effect on both their own progress and sometimes the progress of others in lessons.
- Strategies to maintain and improve attendance levels are good.

## Commentary

7. Staff care about each and every pupil. Positive relationships are developed and result in very good relationships between the pupils and between pupils and the staff. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory and in lessons it is often good. A minority of pupils fail, on occasions, to achieve the standards outlined in the school's very good Behaviour for Learning policy. These pupils have unsatisfactory and sometimes poor attitudes, both to their work and to teachers and other adults. As a result they do not make the progress they should and disturb the learning of others. Outside classrooms, most pupils are attentive in assemblies, eat their lunches in a calm atmosphere and move around the large school site in an orderly manner. However, at times a few pupils become rowdy and exhibit over-boisterous behaviour.
8. As in any school of this size, bullying occurs and the fact is recognised openly by all concerned. However, most parents and pupils feel that any incidents brought to the attention of staff are treated seriously and appropriate action is promptly taken. The topic is discussed openly in assemblies, through surveys and the suggestion box, and as part of the personal, health and social education programme. Records show that instances of other types of oppressive behaviour, such as racial or sexual harassment are rare and are dealt with appropriately. The school has a small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour, which helps to explain why it has a very high number of exclusions, mainly fixed-term. The school's policy on exclusion results in few pupils ever being excluded more than once. In 2003-2004, the rate of exclusions among pupils with a background from the Caribbean was higher than the school's overall rate but figures for the current year show a more even rate of exclusions across different ethnic groups. The inspection team judged that the rate of exclusions is appropriate. It sends a clear message to the pupils, the majority of whom conform and agree with the focus on raising standards of behaviour.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
674	128	4
5	0	0
42	5	0

Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	58	25	0
Mixed – White and Black African	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	29	8	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	93	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	33	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	2	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	37	7	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	88	29	2
Black or Black British – African	79	11	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	72	15	1
No ethnic group recorded	120	2	0

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

9. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Their social development is good and this aids their learning in many lessons where they collaborate and work well together. Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds relate very well to one another. Pupils in Year 11 act as mentors to those in Year 7, giving the former experience of responsibility and aiding the younger pupils to cope with life in a big secondary school. The work of the school council is effective in extending pupils' responsibilities. Pupils feel there is limited time at lunchtime for pupils to relax and socialise but there are opportunities for example through school drama and music productions and through other extra-curricular activities for pupils' social skills to be developed. There is a strong emphasis on morality and pupils are often reminded of what is right and what is wrong, both in terms of moral precepts and as appropriate behaviour in a social context. Pupils generally respond well to this emphasis.
10. Pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Most assemblies are used effectively to help pupils learn respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Although there is some reference to spirituality, assemblies do not always meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop a spiritual awareness across their other subjects. During the inspection there were few references to the Thought for the Day in tutorial time and little time devoted to any acts of collective worship. A spiritual dimension is planned consistently into the Thought for the Day but it is not a regular feature of all tutorials and this is unsatisfactory.
11. Pupils have a good understanding of their own and others' cultural traditions as these are raised in many subjects, for example in art and design, design and technology and in English. In English, for example, there are good opportunities to study authors and poets from a wide cultural background.
12. There are good opportunities for the social development of pupils with special educational needs. Social integration is a target for some pupils with very low levels of

attainment and the school successfully tackles this. Special needs staff are good role models for pupils. They deal with distressed pupils very well and enable the pupils to face the routines of school with equanimity. The staff aim to tackle the disaffection of some White boys and to help girls to be more assertive and have many successes. A recently introduced course in Year 10 improves pupils' personal development as they are encouraged to respond to a series of challenges and make individual and corporate decisions about how best to succeed.

13. Attendance overall is satisfactory. In 2001/02 and in 2002/03 it was above the national average; unauthorised absence was below the national average. Levels have climbed slowly but consistently. Some very good strategies are in place to ensure pupils come to school regularly and on time. This is very effectively managed by a dedicated team that works closely with pupils, parents, the learning support managers and with outside agencies involved in the care and welfare of pupils.
14. The system for recording attendance in Years 7 to 11 is computerised and registers are diligently completed at the beginning of morning and end of the afternoon sessions. There is regular detailed analysis of absence figures. Attendance in Year 11 sometimes dips below 90 per cent, as a result of illness and some disaffection but the school attendance team uses a variety of strategies to encourage these pupils to come to school more regularly.
15. The headteacher personally authorises holidays in term time and permission is not readily given to those whose attendance rates are unsatisfactory and who have already had excessive time away from school. Some pupils however miss valuable learning as they take holidays in term time.
16. Strict detention penalties are imposed on those pupils who arrive late but the level of unpunctuality still continues to be a problem. The school works with the pupil and with the family in an effort to improve the punctuality of those who are consistently late.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.4
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.*

**Sixth form**

17. In the sixth form, students' behaviour is good and occasionally very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory and there are issues concerning the tracking of the attendance of students in Year 12 and Year 13.
18. Students behave very well in almost all lessons and, occasionally, in an exemplary fashion. Generally, students' attitudes to school are good and they contribute well to their achievement. There are several opportunities for them to take responsibility in the school as a whole and they do this with maturity, but overall, these opportunities are too few.



19. Attendance is recorded at the start and end of the school day but there is no routine method for recording students' absence when they leave the site at other times. There is, therefore, no accurate record of how many students are in school at any one time, constituting a risk to students' health and safety. During the inspection, in a number of lessons there were a significant number of students absent. Students are generally punctual to lessons.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good overall. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The use of assessment in providing guidance to pupils on how to improve is unsatisfactory. The curriculum provided for the pupils is satisfactory and extra-curricular opportunities are good. The support and guidance given to pupils is good. The school has good links with the community. The school has satisfactory links with the parents and with other schools and colleges.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good, as is the quality of pupils' learning. Assessment is unsatisfactory in providing guidance to pupils on how to improve.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The impact of the National Key Stage 3 National Strategy has had a good impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Planning across all departments is not yet consistent in meeting the needs of all pupils, including the gifted and talented.
- The teaching and the learning of pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose competence in the English language is at an early stage of development are good and sometimes very good.
- There is a lack of consistency across the departments in providing guidance to pupils on the steps they need to take to improve the standard of their work.
- There is a lack of consistency in the use of ICT across departments as a means of continuing to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 142 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (1.4%)	18 (12.7%)	78 (54.9%)	35 (24.7%)	7 (4.9%)	2 (1.4%)	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.*

20. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is similar across Years 7 to 11. The examples of good and very good teaching are spread equally across the year groups but more unsatisfactory or poor teaching occurs in lessons in Year 9, which is linked in the main to ineffective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. This good teaching leads to pupils learning well in lessons and attaining standards which are often above those of similar schools. The improvement in the quality of teaching and

learning reflects the impact of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and the improved stability of staffing in key areas where previously there had been staffing difficulties. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in over 93 per cent of lessons and it is good or better in just under 70 per cent. This represents a good improvement on that seen at the time of the last inspection.

21. The school is very clear in its expectations about the quality of teaching. It has made very good use of the recommendations about teaching and learning from the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. These recommendations were evident in much of the teachers' planning, in the nature of activities adopted by teachers to engage pupils and in the best lessons, evidence of assessment, which was used to support pupils' learning. In the very good and excellent lessons the teaching is innovative, catches the pupils' imagination and enables them to learn very well. Where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor it was usually linked to teachers being unsuccessful in managing the behaviour of the pupils and this led to pupils not making sufficient progress. In most lessons pupils work productively and persevere with the challenges presented to them but they are less successful in some lessons in developing their capacity to learn independently. The school aims to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils and this is reflected in much of the planning to meet the differing needs of pupils in lessons, resulting in good learning by all pupils in many lessons. This is not yet consistent across all staff and the needs of some pupils, including pupils identified as gifted and talented, are not effectively met. This inconsistency is unsatisfactory. There is some good and, on occasions, very good teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. Where such specific support is not available in lessons, the class teachers' planning does not always identify how these needs are to be met and their progress slows. Teaching and learning in the small groups, where pupils are withdrawn from lessons to improve their literacy, are consistently good which results in pupils achieving well. Methods are appropriate. Pupils engage readily with the tasks that help them to improve. The excellent relationships between the teacher and pupils in these groups make for successful and confident learning.
22. Team teaching of a new course for pupils with special educational needs in Year 10 is very good. Pupils make good gains in learning about how to present themselves at work and in everyday life. In this course, real tasks motivate the pupils. They learn very well, work well collaboratively, prove themselves capable of good levels of concentration and make their own decisions in class. The strategies used to teach pupils whose competence in English language skills is at an early stage of development, which include one-to-one sessions, small group work and support in classes, are effective in helping these pupils develop their literacy skills.
23. The quality of teachers' assessment has improved since the last inspection but there is still a lack of consistency across departments in providing clear guidance to pupils on what steps they need to take to improve their standards of performance. This is unsatisfactory. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection in the ways that teachers use assessment information to help their planning of lessons. There is also an inconsistency between departments in the use teachers make of the ICT facilities to improve the quality of their teaching and in some subjects such as mathematics this means they are not contributing sufficiently to developing pupils' learning and their ability to deploy their ICT skills across the curriculum.

24. There are variations in the quality of teaching and learning seen across departments. They are particularly strong in English, science, ICT, history, art and design and mathematics in Years 7 to 9. They are satisfactory in mathematics in Years 10 and 11, in religious education, design and technology, music, geography and physical education. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in German in Years 7 to 9.

### **Sixth form**

25. The quality of the teaching in the sixth form is good, resulting in students' learning well in lessons. Students enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and the quality of these relationships results in students having confidence in the staff and responding positively to teachers' strategies. Students have positive attitudes and work hard. There is inconsistent planning across all subjects to support the development of students' capabilities to work independently, despite the provision of good facilities. This does have a negative impact on the number of students who attain the highest grades in some subjects. Where it is encouraged, students achieve well and attain high grades, for example, in English. Where teaching is good or better, staff have a clear understanding of the course requirements and encourage students to find innovative and effective ways in which to demonstrate their learning. Students respond positively to these opportunities when they are presented. Assessment is satisfactory overall, providing appropriate guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their grades.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The range of enrichment activities is good. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for religious education does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- The range of extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils is good.
- The current arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education have an adverse impact on those subjects whose time allocation is already short.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory for physical education, music and special educational needs.

### **Commentary**

26. The curriculum offers a satisfactory range of subjects in Years 7 to 11 to cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of the pupils, and ensure progression in learning. The amount of teaching time per week meets the recommendations of the Department for Education and Skills. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in religious education in Years 7 to 9, because insufficient time is allocated to the subject. In Years 10 and 11 pupils study a short course GCSE in religious education which is satisfactory, but there is very limited time allocated to it. In ICT, there is insufficient time given to the subject in Years 7 and 8 and the use of

ICT in some subjects such as music and mathematics does not meet requirements. In Years 10 and 11, pupils for whom the GCSE-based curriculum is not appropriate in all subjects, are able to study some vocational courses for one day a week at the local college and an ASDAN course has been successfully introduced, which concentrates on life and employability skills. These vocational courses include construction and hair and beauty. In science, the advantages in setting in Years 8 to 11 cannot be exploited effectively due to the timetabling arrangements which lead to a wider range of ability in each set than would otherwise normally be the case. A scheme called "Aim Higher" has been introduced for several target groups to encourage them to consider further education through participation in Summer Schools, Masterclasses and Road shows. This is seen as being successful, with increased numbers of students returning to the sixth form and applying for university and other colleges.

27. The provision of support for pupils outside the school day is good, offering activities that complement the curriculum. After-school facilities are available in most subjects for pupils to have extra tuition or to use the workshops and art rooms to catch up on homework or coursework. The physical education department has an extensive range of open-access clubs before and after school and encourages the links with local sports teams for pupils who are more able or motivated. Pupils from Year 9 upwards are challenged by the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The arts are well represented by a drama club, an orchestra, a rock band and regular shows put on by pupils. Visits by the English National Opera and the Ballet Rambert were welcomed with excitement and enthusiasm by pupils. These wide interests are expanded by a Christian Union group, a Magistrates Crown Court Competition and the School Council Club, all of which are valued by pupils.
28. The school teaches personal, social and health education (PHSE) through a fortnightly lesson, which takes the place of other timetabled lessons on a rolling basis. This can have an adverse impact on those subjects which already have insufficient time allocated to them. The planning for these lessons helps to ensure that they satisfactorily cover all the required elements, including sex and drugs education, careers, citizenship and work related learning. The quality of the careers education and guidance in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. The school operates a very successful smoking cessation club, which pupils find a tremendous support.
29. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. In Years 7 and 8, pupils with low levels of reading are withdrawn from lessons and given well-focused specific help which includes structured reading and phonics. Paired reading with older pupils is a strength. Additional help is given to pupils before and after school. There is a lively programme of trips, visits and out of school activities for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum offered to pupils with special educational needs meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and the Individual Education Plans of the pupils. There are no pupils for whom the National Curriculum has been disapplied.
30. The school has enough specialist staff to teach the curriculum. Accommodation overall is satisfactory but in some areas the provision hinders learning, especially in physical education where facilities are unsatisfactory, including provision of adequate space for practice, particularly in bad weather, changing facilities for boys and girls and action taken to improve health and safety. Accommodation in music is currently

unsatisfactory as there is a lack of space allocated for group work and a dedicated performance area. Support staff is adequate in most areas apart from art and design where the lack of technician help hinders provision of ceramics and screen-printing to be provided. The amount of specialist support for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

31. Accommodation for special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The rooms available are cramped and unsuitable. The school has begun to tackle the accommodation issues to provide increasing access for the disabled. There are no wheelchair users at present, but a pupil with impaired mobility is due to enter the school next academic year. Existing problems are not easy to solve. Many classrooms are too small to accommodate wheelchairs. Some subjects are based on the middle and top floors of buildings and there are no lifts. There are no toilets for the disabled. The site is very large, so that non-ambulant pupils may have difficulty in negotiating their journey between buildings. Some pathways around the school are unsafe for wheelchair users.
32. Staffing for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. It has failed to keep pace with the increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the school. The department makes excellent use of a well-qualified special needs teacher and the equivalent of little more than one full-time learning support assistant. The provision is very low. There are currently no unmet training needs in the school. The school deploys a range of teachers from other departments to give support in lessons, but these cost more than learning support assistants with the result that there is too little available in lessons.
33. Resources overall are satisfactory with interactive whiteboards being installed in all core subject classrooms and an increasing number of other subjects. ICT provision is good across the school. There are adequate learning resources for pupils with special educational needs, including interactive computer programs designed to improve standards of literacy. Resources for pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactory. Although pupils do have access to computer facilities, some of the specialist software programs are not yet available on the network.

## **Sixth form**

34. Students who wish to continue in education after the age of 16 are offered a satisfactory range of A-level, AS and vocational courses. There is a good take-up of modern foreign languages, a recently introduced design and technology course is proving successful and a wide choice of ICT courses is available to suit all levels of ability. There is good support for students in the sixth form who need help to acquire and to extend their competency in the English language. Where students with special educational needs still require support, appropriate provision is made. Overall, the sixth form curriculum is satisfactory.
35. Sixth form students take part in the extra-curricular sporting activities offered and they also participate in the drama and music activities. The science and mathematics departments offer after-school sessions for students to have extra help and to catch up where needed. Sixth formers take part in the Young Enterprise scheme and Duke

of Edinburgh Award scheme where they have won 10 gold awards in the last academic year. There is appropriate careers guidance for sixth formers and appropriate provision for personal, social and health education. Sixth formers do not have access to religious education and the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are not met. The sixth formers do not have access to timetabled physical education lessons.

36. The accommodation for the sixth form is inadequate. The common room is an inappropriate size for the current size of the sixth form. The catering facilities available to students in the common room are unsatisfactory although students do have access to the good cafeteria facilities in the school. The current sixth form facilities are not an aid to sixth form recruitment in the school. Curriculum resources overall are satisfactory for the courses offered.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Health and safety are satisfactory. In the sixth form, students' care, welfare health and safety are satisfactory. Pupils and students are listened to and their views are appropriately sought.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff are very dedicated and committed to caring for, guiding and supporting pupils, both academically and pastorally.
- The new consistent practices and policies to improve and monitor behaviour are good; the behaviour management team operates effectively.
- There are health and safety issues in relation to the facilities for physical education.
- Care, guidance and support given to pupils with special educational needs and whose competence in English is at an early stage are very good.
- Pupils are helped to settle into school in Year 7 and good advice and counselling are provided to all pupils to help them make the right choices at key stages of their academic careers.
- Although good advice is available to students in the sixth form, limited use is made by them of the Connexions service or of the counselling and welfare facilities.

### **Commentary**

37. Tutors get to know their pupils well and give them good pastoral and academic support. Those pupils who find it difficult to cope with the demands of school life are very well supported by heads of department, behaviour learning managers and by the very effective behaviour support manager. They spend a great deal of time and effort ensuring that all pupils get the most out of their time in school. Several pupils with poor behavioural and/or attendance records are beginning to flourish in the school, and meticulous care is taken to ensure that needy pupils are always supported discreetly. Pupils speak highly of the drop-in centre where they are able to seek independent advice.
38. The school has improved since the last inspection its systems for tracking pupils' academic and personal progress. Staff set targets for the pupils, and these are shared

with the pupils and their parents. These systems have contributed effectively to the raising of the standards pupils attain.

39. In most respects, the senior management and the governing body take great care to ensure that the pupils work and play in a safe environment. Detailed health and safety audits are carried out regularly. Despite all this, however, the inspection team found areas of concern in the physical education department, which have been brought to the attention of the school. Child protection procedures are in place, which follow the LEA guidelines, and members of staff are well aware and trained to undertake their responsibilities in this area.
40. Care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs are consistently very good. The services of key workers are available to pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school works successfully to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs have someone to turn to when in difficulty. Support in lessons, although insufficient, is well focused, suitable and accessible to all pupils. Support teachers and staff make a real difference to pupils' learning in classrooms. Overall, the school's focus on valuing all pupils has a good impact, both on pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. The department advises teachers on how to prepare learning materials to meet the needs of pupils with specific difficulties successfully, but lack of specialist staff hinders the further development of this valuable service. There is good support available for pupils with special educational needs outside the school day.
41. Care, guidance and support given to pupils whose competence in English language skills is at an early stage of development are very good, where they are provided, but the level of support is hindered by the lack of sufficient specialist staff.
42. The school makes sure that new pupils settle into the school very well. There is good liaison, both pastoral and academic, with the feeder primary schools and the school gets to know their individual requirements. Primary school pupils visit the school and follow a well-planned programme. At the end of Year 9, pupils are given good guidance and counselling to help them select appropriate option choices for Years 10 and 11. Parents are also fully involved in this. At the end of Year 11, pupils are given full information to help them and their parents decide on the best route for their particular academic, sporting or vocational talents, and the school works closely with the Connexions Service, which provides a very good service.
43. The school parliament is an effective means of identifying pupils' views. The council considers issues raised by its members, who reflect the views expressed by pupils in their particular year group, although not all members are elected by closed ballot. Pupils feel that their views are listened to and that they can get things changed; for example, the toilets have recently been redecorated. At present many pupils feel that the length of dinner time is too short and they express concerns about the state of the changing rooms. Pupils report that they are involved in setting and reviewing their own academic targets and generally know what they have to do to improve their work.

## **Sixth form**

44. Advice, guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Students benefit from good guidance before they enrol in the sixth form. There is good academic support and students know how to improve their work. Students who are new to the school and whose competence in English language is at an early stage of development get some very good support. Students receive good, well-informed advice as they prepare for further stages of their education or for employment, although the Connexions Service is not sufficiently involved in this process. Students' personal welfare is provided for satisfactorily, although the focus of the personal, social and health education sessions is mainly on academic issues. Many students do not use the very good counselling and welfare facilities provided by the welfare officer and the drop-in centre.
45. Students speak highly of the school and of their teachers. They particularly appreciate the additional time that teachers give to help them improve their work. They feel they are treated as young adults and like the mutual respect between them and other adults in the school. Many feel that they would like physical education timetabled.
46. Most students value the good and trusting relationships they have with the head of sixth form, their teachers and tutors. They appreciate their common room but feel that it is too available to other young people, for example ex-students and current students' friends. Although there is a well documented system for them to sign in and obtain badges, most visitors to the common room do not do this. This practice is a serious safety risk. The students are now members of the school council and the school takes their views into account satisfactorily.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has developed a satisfactory partnership with its pupils' parents and carers. Its links with the community are good. Liaison with other schools and colleges is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with good quality information about the school and about the standards attained and progress made by their children.
- The school has developed a range of effective links with the local community.
- Few parents answer the school's questionnaires and other requests for them to play more active part in the life and work of the school.
- There are good links with the area's primary schools but links with other secondary schools, other than sporting links, are less well developed.
- The links between other schools and colleges with the sixth form are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

47. The school's written communications with parents are very informative. The newsletters are well presented and contain details of future events, reports on past ones and reports from different departments. Parents say these are really useful and they would like them more frequently. The pupils' progress reports, known as Broadsheets, follow a simple format giving parents a clear view of their child's progress and areas for improvement. The annual written report to parents is very comprehensive and covers both pastoral and academic matters. Formal parents' evenings keep parents up to date and these are often very well attended. Links with



parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good, and they are regarded as central to the successful support provided. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational need continue to attend annual reviews. The school successfully links with specialist training providers for advice on teaching dyslexic pupils and those with specific learning difficulties and this has a positive impact on the achievement of these pupils.

48. The school has extensive links with local sporting clubs across a wide range of sports. Through several departments there are good links with, for example, museums and theatres. Some very valuable relationships have been developed with local businesses, sometimes through the school's very close relationship with the local Educational Business Partnership. These links provide good work experience for pupils in Year 10, good practical support for subject areas and valuable assistance for the Young Enterprise scheme. Overall, the school's links with the community do much to support the learning of pupils.
49. The school has a satisfactory relationship with its parents and carers, and makes effective efforts to communicate with parents who are difficult to reach. The school formally seeks their views through questionnaires, personally overseen by the headteacher, but few respond. The majority of those who replied to the parents' questionnaire before the inspection are comfortable about approaching school and about two thirds of parents who responded think that the school does seek their views.
50. Links with the feeder primaries have improved and are now good. These are proactive and positive, and some common approaches to teaching and learning are being developed. Particularly strong are the school's links with the local Education Action Zone, which has also led to improved primary school links. For example, pupils in Year 6 now spend a day in Northolt High School prior to transition and the pupils have the opportunity to write about themselves. This work is distributed to the Year 7 tutors who are able, right from the start, to get to know pupils well and help to allay their fears. The Community Learning Centre (CLC) provides a range of courses to support pupils, students and staff. This is a highly productive link which is very well used by the community as well. There are fewer established links with other secondary schools and local colleges to assist in expanding the curriculum on offer to the pupils, especially in relation to the school's Specialist Technology College status.

### **Sixth form**

51. Parents of students in Year 12 and Year 13 have opportunities to discuss students' progress and this combination of meetings, interim and annual reports enables parents to understand clearly how well students are progressing. Students benefit from many of the links with the community that involve the main school. In addition they take the lead in the numerous events held to raise money, for example, poppy day and Genes for Jeans. They do this enthusiastically. There is little collaboration, however, with other schools with a sixth form to develop joint provision.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory. The school does not comply with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. It does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors are not sufficiently proactive in determining and sharing the vision of the school and in the strategic planning necessary to achieve that vision.
- The leadership of the headteacher is firm, competent and committed.
- The role of middle managers in embracing the school's vision regarding improvement is still evolving and is not yet consistent across all areas of the school's provision.
- The provision of training and professional development for all staff is good.
- The impact of the school's Specialist Technology College status has not yet had a sufficiently positive effect on the whole school.
- The leadership of the sixth form is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

52. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The governing body is enthusiastic in its role and is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their role is evolving under the guidance of the headteacher. However, they rely too heavily on the headteacher. As a result, they are not sufficiently proactive in determining and sharing the vision of the school, nor involved sufficiently in the strategic planning to turn that vision into reality, including for example, the impact of Specialist Technology College status in transforming the curriculum offered to the pupils. There are areas of non-compliance in statutory provision including the daily act of collective worship and religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. Not all subjects are contributing sufficiently to ICT across the curriculum, especially in music and mathematics. There are outstanding issues with the school buildings in respect of health and safety and in not meeting the needs of the Disability Act regarding access, although the governing body has published an accessibility plan. The current arrangements of the governing body's sub-committees are not effective in enabling the board to meet all its statutory obligations. This has a negative impact on the governing body's overall effectiveness.
53. Leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. Leadership is firm, competent and committed, as exhibited by his commitment to embed leadership across the school at all levels, together with his clear vision for the school's future. However, the acceptance of the emphasis on cohesive strategic planning is not transparent across the whole staff and this has resulted in differences in improvement in standards between departments. Given the perceived priorities of the school, a disproportionate amount of time and energy is deployed in day-to-day management activities, rather than in tackling the school's vision for the future through strategic planning. Senior staff support the headteacher well and have actively embraced the principle of distributing leadership across the school: they have the capacity to effect change. The role of middle managers is not yet consistent in leading their teams towards achieving the school's vision, for example, in relation to Specialist Technology College status or on a relentless focus on the quality of provision which leads to higher standards, for example in Years 10 and 11. There are examples of effective teamwork among staff, within and across stages; here the changing role of the year learning managers is developing well. The school day runs smoothly, with clear procedures laid down that are generally followed by both staff and pupils. The school's management has had a good impact on developing a culture in which all pupils are valued, and as a result there are harmonious relationships between the various ethnic groups and the

achievement of pupils who have a minority ethnic background is in line with the other pupils in the school.

54. Leadership of special educational needs is highly effective and devoted to obtaining the best possible standards from very limited resources. The special educational needs co-ordinator is highly respected within the school. The impact of his work extends to every department and as a result supports the school's development of an ethos in which all pupils are valued. There is clear strategic planning for improvement but translation into practice depends on additional resources being made available. The department provides successfully for pupils who do not respond well to school and effectively solves problems for those who have difficulties in learning. Management is good. The co-ordinator is temporarily a member of the senior management team and is able to promote the welfare of the pupils with special educational needs at the highest level. Statutory requirements are fully met. Support staff and teachers are very well managed. Their work is well targeted and properly monitored but the school recognises that despite best efforts some pupils do not get the support they need. The department makes good use of additional support for dyslexia and dyspraxia and employs the services of a part-time play specialist. Lack of clerical support means that the co-ordinator must spend a high proportion of his time in routine administration. This is not cost effective and further reduces the specialist support available to pupils. All staff have ready access to guidance, support and relevant training.
55. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils whose competence in English language skills is at an early stage are good, although the current co-ordinator is leaving the school at the end of the Autumn Term 2004 and has not yet been replaced. The impact of the co-ordinator is that the limited resources are well targeted and pupils make good progress in the acquisition of English language skills as a result. This support function operates smoothly and contributes well to the school's ethos of valuing all pupils.
56. The school's performance management policy is now a consistent feature of the school's management. It is based on classroom observation, targets for staff, review and statement, and has resulted in the production of comprehensive teacher portfolio records. However, this well-structured process is not yet evident in monitoring and evaluation strategies across the whole curriculum, for example in the impact of the Specialist Technology College status or in ICT across the curriculum. In some areas, the school has failed to take the appropriate action to secure improvements in outcomes. The role of middle managers in embracing the school's vision regarding improvement is still evolving and is not yet consistently effective across all areas of the school's provision. The provision of training and professional development for all staff and, in particular the extensive scheduling of appropriate induction programmes for staff new to the school is very good. Staff training events are well planned, tackling the relevant needs of individuals and the whole staff; these include child protection issues, "learning to learn" initiatives, and many subject and curriculum development courses.
57. Finances are managed efficiently and effectively by the finance manager and her staff, with structured and monitored procedures for the deployment of resources firmly in place.

58. The liaison between members of the finance committee is good, ensuring that control is well exercised at all levels. The principles of best value are well applied, with all spending above £1,500 and building projects, subject to special procedures regarding quotations and approvals. The accounts have been subjected to audit, with the latest report recognising a basically sound system of control, with some weaknesses relating to control mechanisms identified, and some minor issues relating to the recording of decisions in minutes of governing body and returns to the LEA. The budget allocation per pupil is above the average in schools in England, and just below the London median. The financial information suggests that the school spends more on its special educational needs provision than it receives in specific funding, although there are issues over the degree of spending on staff support in this area. The large balance carried forward in this financial year relates to the funding for the new sports hall and the school's contribution to the rebuilding of the indoor physical education facilities on the Eliots site. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	7,933,409	Balance from previous year	n/a
Total expenditure	6,286,393	Balance carried forward to the next year	1,446,436
Expenditure per pupil	3,489		

## Sixth form

59. The overall leadership is unsatisfactory. Management of the sixth form is satisfactory. Leadership lacks sufficient strategic direction or focus. The vision of the headteacher has not been translated into a curriculum that meets the needs of the school's students. Recruitment into the sixth form from Year 11 is below 50 per cent and this is low. There has been insufficient expansion of vocational courses, either on site or through a partnership with local colleges and schools to provide shared or linked provision. As at the time of the last inspection, there is no act of daily collective worship for sixth formers, nor do the sixth formers have access to religious education as required by the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this is unsatisfactory.
60. The sixth form runs smoothly and tutors know their students well. Whilst there is appropriate departmental analysis of performance data, there is insufficient strategic monitoring of performance and the quality of provision and the linkage of this to the school's priorities for development.
61. Financial information indicates that the sixth form is not subsidised by funding from the rest of the school's budget.

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

## What is the effectiveness of work-related learning?

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils have well-planned and supervised work placements.
- Youth Award lessons are well managed and pupils are set realistic targets to improve their work.
- Policies and schemes of work are well documented.
- Work-related elements are not included in the schemes of work of all subjects.
- The school has very strong links with number of business organisations.

### Commentary

62. The quality of work-related learning is satisfactory overall and pupils achieve well in vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11. Work-related learning is currently being delivered through a combination of personal, social and health education and subject areas. The contribution of work-related elements to pupils' achievement in some curriculum subjects is insufficient, but is most developed in Year 11, in the sixth form, in GNVQ and AVCE courses and through Young Enterprise.
63. The recently introduced ASDAN programme is proving successful and is expected to guide and support pupils through their participation in work experience week next year. Pupils who find class learning difficult are well taught in Year 10 in the ASDAN lessons. Standards in lessons that included some element of work-related learning met with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop good attitudes to their work. In most lessons, such as those in design and technology, geography, English and music, pupils develop good teamwork, role play and problem-solving skills and acquire a basic knowledge of industry. Teaching and learning are good in those lessons which contain a specific work-related focus. The school is currently staging a competition for designing a flyer about work-related learning and enterprise with the aim of raising awareness amongst pupils' parents and the community.
64. The school's management provides a good strategic overview of work-related education and is implementing the new statutory requirements well. They have produced comprehensive documentation to support the implementation. An audit has identified the strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum. The majority of subject areas currently include work-related aspects in their schemes of work. The other subjects are being encouraged to identify how they can contribute. The school is well supported by the Ealing Business Partnership and by local industry, using links provided by the Connexions Service and through its own bank of employers.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Test and examination results were below the national averages in 2003 overall, but improved in 2004.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are in line with national expectations because of the emphasis on improving standards of literacy.
- Teaching and learning are good, reflecting good strategies for managing behaviour and the successful implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- Leadership and management are good, reflected in the very thorough monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the department's provision.
- New technology is used well to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

##### **Commentary**

65. The results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 14 in 2003 were close to the national average, and higher than those in similar schools. This has been the pattern for several years. Provisional results for 2004 indicate that a significantly higher proportion of pupils reached the expected Level 5 or above than in 2003. The GCSE examination results in English and English literature were below the national average in 2003 for pupils at grades A\*-C, although they improved on the 2002 results, particularly in English. Provisional results for 2004 show a further improvement in the results in English, although the percentage gaining grades A\*-C declined in English literature. However, in both subjects, a large number of pupils attained grade D.
66. Current standards, across the year groups, are in line with national expectations. A higher proportion of pupils than usual join the school with relatively low standards of English, but they achieve well by Year 9. Pupils' writing improves well and their ability to read more demanding texts is enhanced. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of literature develops well. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 with pupils' attainment staying in line with national expectations. The main reasons why achievement in Years 10 and 11 is not as good as in Years 7 to 9 are a reduction in the amount of teaching time and an increase in class sizes. Lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are taught in larger groups than is desirable. The department believes this affects their motivation. There is also evidence that absence from school during Year 11 has affected standards in previous years.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and some teaching was seen which was very good and occasionally excellent. A strong team of specialist teachers know their subject well and plan lessons very

thoroughly, including planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those pupils whose competence in English language skills is at an early stage of development. The methods employed are often drawn from recent national initiatives, with a strong emphasis on clear learning objectives and activities with a literacy focus at the start of each lesson. Pupils work well in pairs and groups; for example, a Year 11 class successfully explored themes in *Lord of the Flies* by preparing and presenting key points in the novel in dramatic form. Teachers use learning resources very effectively. These include the recently acquired interactive whiteboards, which give greater flexibility to board work. Pupils are involved in moving words on the screen, for instance, in sorting synonyms quickly. However, the strength of the teaching is the high standard of behaviour that most teachers expect and get from pupils. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, which also contributes positively to the pupils' achievement. There is only limited additional support for pupils with special educational needs: the support provided is good, but there is not enough of it, which is linked to the school's lack of provision overall. Pupils whose competence in the English language is at an early stage get good support where it is provided. In specific support sessions for pupils with special educational needs and whose English language skills are at an early stage of development, their progress in acquiring English language skills is good, helping them to achieve as well as their fellow pupils overall.

68. Written work is marked thoroughly, and pupils are given every encouragement to improve on their work. They have clear targets, and are very aware of the level they are working at and the grade they have attained. They use ICT to redraft written work, such as GCSE coursework, and have good access to computers both near the English rooms and in the City Learning Centre.
69. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced head of department, who has deployed her strong team of teachers to very good effect. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very thorough and the organisation of pupils' assessment is good. Changes in syllabus, approaches to literacy, and the arrival of new technology have all been embraced with confidence, with a safe rather than innovative approach to the curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. All the issues raised then have been tackled; teaching and learning have improved, as have learning resources, and standards have risen.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

70. Standards of literacy by Year 9 are in line with expectations overall. This represents good achievement, because pupils join the school with literacy standards generally below average. Pupils with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and whose English language competence is at an early stage of development, receive some good specific literacy support, which enables them to make similar progress to their fellow pupils. Standards by Year 11 are in line with expectations, reflecting satisfactory progress. The improvement in the pupils' standards of literacy supports well their learning in the other subjects. It helps the pupils in understanding questions posed by teachers and in raising the pupils' confidence in answering them. In subjects such as history, literacy strategies support the pupils' writing by giving them appropriate structures to work with and their improved reading skills help the pupils to understand historical sources. There is a good emphasis across all departments on encouraging pupils to understand and use specialist vocabulary.

71. The better achievement in Years 7 to 9 is largely due to the emphasis given in the school to the literacy strategy and the subject-specific training for heads of departments. A co-ordinator has been in post since just before the last inspection. Clear literacy policies are expected to form part of the planning in all schemes of work; a three-part lesson structure has been widely adopted, often including a literacy-based 'starter', and there is an emphasis on literacy in classroom displays, including key words, across departments. Improvement in language and literacy across the curriculum has been good since the last inspection.

## **Modern foreign languages**

The main focus of the inspection was German, but three French lessons were also sampled. The GCSE examination results in French in 2004 were extremely low. Boys did less well than the girls. Standards of work in Years 8 and 10 are in line with national expectations. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year 8 and in Year 10 and this is reflected in pupils' satisfactory levels of achievement.

### **German**

Provision in German is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is insufficient use of German in lessons in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not provide sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve.

### **Commentary**

72. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were well below the national average, with the boys' results far lower than those of the girls. This is a decline in standards since the last inspection in 1998. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 improved considerably with all the pupils attaining grades A\*-C, reflecting that for these pupils German was a second modern foreign language being studied. Currently pupils' attainment in Year 11 is below national expectations. For those pupils in Year 10 who are studying two languages, their attainment is in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils are able to write fluently and accurately, while those in Year 10 have very good listening skills. Most lower attaining pupils in Year 11 are able to use simple phrases correctly, both in writing and speaking.
73. In Year 9, the pupils' attainment is below national expectations, and well below average in the bottom set, with speaking skills very low. There were no specific figures provided for teachers' assessments of pupils aged 14 in 2004 in German to make comparisons of improvement. Standards of writing currently in Year 9 are below average; the writing of higher attaining pupils is accurate and fluent, but there are no examples of extensive or imaginative writing. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, given that they have not studied German before they enter the school in Year 7.



74. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Teaching was good in one lesson observed and poor in two other lessons. In the good lesson, German was used extensively throughout the lesson and the teacher used a wide range of strategies to enable the pupils to learn well. In the poor lesson in Year 7, the teacher used too much English as a means of instruction, and this limited pupils' achievement in German. In the Year 9 class, teaching and learning were poor because of the poor behaviour of many in the class; in addition, the learning of pupils with special educational needs was held back by the lack of in-class support. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good, with many positive features such as the good use of German in lessons and a good focus on raising standards. Teachers have appropriately high expectations but pupils do not always respond appropriately to the challenge of using their knowledge of German and their learning is only satisfactory. The learning of pupils from minority ethnic groups is in line with that of their fellow pupils. Although the use of English, in Years 7 to 9 in particular, is aimed at helping all pupils make progress, thus reflecting the school's commitment to valuing all, its effect is to limit the progress made in German by most pupils. Standards of teachers' marking vary from very good to non-existent depending on the teacher and assessment overall is unsatisfactory as pupils are given insufficient guidance on what they have to do to improve.
75. Leadership in German is unsatisfactory, as there is a lack of consistency in the use of German in lessons by various members of staff and there is insufficient evidence that ICT is regularly used. The department has not planned to show its contribution to the development of the curriculum to reflect the school's Specialist Technology College status or benefited from the school's improved provision. Management, on the other hand, is satisfactory, with evidence that both performance management arrangements and the tracking of pupils' attainment are in place. These are carried out satisfactorily. The supply teacher was well supported in her lesson planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because of the decline in standards and the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because of good teaching and the successful implementation of the National Strategy for mathematics.
- In Years 10 and 11, standards are below the national expectations and pupil achievement falls.
- Statutory requirements for the use of ICT are not currently met.

### **Commentary**

76. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 in 2003 were in line with the national average when compared with all maintained schools nationally. In comparison with schools with pupils of similar performance in their primary schools in Year 6, standards are well above average. The results for 2004 are broadly similar to those of 2003. The school's performance in these tests has improved at a faster rate than found nationally. This is due to good teaching

and the successful implementation of the National Strategy for teaching mathematics. Standards of pupils by Year 9 reflect these latest test results and are in line with expectations.

77. In GCSE examinations in 2003, standards were below average when compared with all schools and well below average for schools with similar prior attainment of pupils at the age of 14. In 2004, the results showed a small improvement across all grades with a higher proportion of girls attaining a grade C grade or higher. Standards of work by Year 11 reflect the latest results and are below the level expected nationally.
78. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good when compared with the pupils' earlier attainment and in these years there is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls. In Years 10 and 11 achievement is satisfactory overall but the achievement of middle attaining pupils is unsatisfactory. Girls' achievement is higher than boys' who become disaffected in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose competence in English language skills are at an early stage of development, achieve as well as their fellow pupils overall.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In all lessons, behaviour is well managed by teachers who have good relationships with pupils. All teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance the presentation of work. This is, however, at an early stage of development and the full potential of this technology to include greater involvement by pupils, has yet to be fully realised. Strengths of teaching in Years 7 to 9 include structured lesson planning based on the National Strategy, effective activities to introduce lessons and higher expectations of what pupils might achieve. Work is closely matched to pupils' needs early in Year 7 to prevent a dip in achievement when transferring to secondary school. As a result, pupils in Years 7 to 9 generally respond well in lessons, show an interest in their work and make good progress. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are less successful, particularly with middle attaining pupils. This stems partly from the scheme of work which gives insufficient guidance to teachers. Consequently, inconsistencies in the approach to teaching arise with regard to the order the syllabus is covered and the levels to which topics are taught to pupils of similar capability.
80. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and progress is monitored against National Curriculum levels and target GCSE grades. The target grades for the current pupils in Years 10 and 11 following the GCSE Intermediate course are too low and do not take full account of their earlier attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9. Consequently, expectations are low for a significant number of pupils following this course. These expectations, combined with the lack of a suitable scheme of work, leads to pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, failing to make adequate progress and as a result, they underachieve. The marking of pupils' work in all years is supportive but insufficient advice is given to pupils on how to improve their mathematical skills and understanding.
81. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the department. Current plans however, to improve standards in Years 10 and 11 with the implementation of a new scheme of work, lack urgency. Good procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation and book checks. The department is not fulfilling statutory requirements in the use of ICT to support teaching in mathematics. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory in that there has been an improvement in Years 7 to 9 in teaching, learning and the standards pupils attain.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

82. Pupils' proficiency in mathematics is sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope well with learning in other subjects. They are able to transfer mathematical skills learnt in mathematics lessons effectively to other areas of the curriculum. Good

examples of this occur in science, design and technology and geography, with competent use of numerical calculations and data handling techniques.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- Well structured teaching brings about good learning.
- The present timetable arrangements prevent the advantages of setting in Years 8 to 11 to be used effectively.
- Use of ICT to support pupils' learning is not developed sufficiently.
- Not all teachers give pupils sufficient information to help them understand what they need to do to improve their work.

### Commentary

83. The national test results at the end of 14 in 2003 were in line with the national average. Since 2000 there has been a sustained improvement in the test results, at a faster rate than the improvement nationally. Science results have been well above the average for similar schools since 2002. As pupils' attainment in science on entry to the school was below the national average, their achievement during Years 7 to 9 is good. This is confirmed by the standards of work seen during the inspection, which are in line with national expectations. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as the rest of the pupils.
84. The GCSE examination results have risen since 2001 but were still below the national average in 2003. The achievement of these pupils during Years 10 and 11 was unsatisfactory because their attainment at the end of Year 9 was in line with the national average. However, pupils' performance in double award science was significantly better than their performance in most of their other GCSE subjects. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 show that improvement is continuing and are in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups, achieve as well as their fellow pupils.
85. Teaching is good overall. It ranges from unsatisfactory to very good but nearly two-thirds is at least good. It is well matched to the needs of the pupils, offering realistic challenges, which explore and develop their understanding of scientific ideas. Pupils' learning is good. Lessons are well structured and contain activities that make the subject interesting for groups of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs. However, the present timetabling arrangements prevent the department from exploiting the advantages of setting the pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11. This leads to teaching sets in Years 8 to 11 composed of pupils with a wide range of attainment. This results in a wide range of test outcomes in each of the three top sets in Year 9 and a wide range of GCSE examination outcomes in each of the two top sets in Year 11.
86. Although the department has the advantage of very good ICT facilities, they are not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning. Some pupils make use of websites and

word process their homework tasks. Some teachers use software simulations and display teaching materials on an interactive whiteboard but teachers do not use them routinely in their work and exploit their particular advantages to support pupils' learning in science fully. The department has a clear and explicit policy on the assessment of pupils' work. A few teachers use learning targets and self-assessment sheets and others write comments in pupils' books, which are supportive and encouraging. However, the practice of assessing pupils' work is inconsistent. Although all teachers mark pupils' work regularly, most of them focus on its accuracy and presentation rather than providing the pupils with information about their present level of attainment or what they should be doing to improve their knowledge and understanding of science.

87. The leadership of the department is good. There is a clear drive for improvement with responsibilities delegated widely across the team of teachers. The head of department gathers a wide range of information in order to monitor the quality of teaching and provides suitable support to both newly-qualified and inexperienced teachers. The management of the department is good. Accommodation and the resources for teaching, including the provision of ICT, are very good. The staff handbook provides comprehensive support for newly-qualified teachers, inexperienced and teachers new to the school. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. All aspects of the provision in science remain as they were judged in 1998 with the exception of attainment at the end of Year 9, which has improved. The head of department has established a stable staff team and coherent organisational framework from which the department has the capacity to improve.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a sound grasp of concepts, apply them well in class work and in answering routine questions, and are achieving well.
- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities which effectively help students to build up their knowledge and understanding.
- The tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not used sufficiently effectively to inform teachers' planning.
- The lack of curriculum time in Years 7 and Year 8 has an adverse effect on the standards reached by younger pupils.

### **Commentary**

88. Teacher assessments at the age of 14 in 2003 showed that pupils' attainment was in line with the standards expected nationally. In 2004, the teacher assessments showed a similar picture. In 2003, the GCSE examinations results were below the national average overall. The 2004 GCSE results show a considerable improvement. However the GNVQ results were disappointing and contributed substantially to the school's overall fall in the percentage of pupils attaining five or more grades at A\*-C.

89. By the end of Year 9 pupils make good progress and standards are in line with national expectations. Good use is made of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy when planning projects. In lessons, pupils demonstrate satisfactory skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. They are familiar with spreadsheets to organise information and the simple use of formulae to make calculations and this knowledge and understanding is in line with expectations. They use desktop publishing and power point to a good level of competence. Pupils have access to the Internet and use this to down load images and data. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose acquisition of English language skills is at an early stage make similar progress and are capable of demonstrating similar skills and knowledge as their fellow pupils.
90. By Year 11, pupils' attainment in the practical elements of ICT is in line with the expected standard and their achievement is satisfactory. In the GNVQ classes, pupils are sufficiently confident to work independently, using a range of software including desk-top publishing, web page design using HTML, use of data bases and using spreadsheets to simulate business practice. Good use is made of computers to promote individual learning. Pupils discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are adequate for the needs of the courses being offered. Pupils develop and apply their literacy skills further through activities such as extended writing for coursework projects.
91. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The competent teaching contributes to pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills well. Lessons are planned to a high standard and have suitable challenge. The management of classes is good. Clear targets are set for pupils of similar levels of attainment. This careful matching of work motivates pupils and maintains their interest. Relationships are good and the skilled support given to pupils in their work quickly builds their confidence. The quality of teaching supports the school's commitment to the valuing of all pupils and enabling them to make similar progress. Use of the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has helped to improve planning and teaching. A particular strength is the way that teachers use questioning, explanation and demonstration to reinforce key points, ensuring that pupils have a good understanding. Pupils respond well and teachers acknowledge their answers with praise and encouragement. The good teaching is well supported by the good support provided by the technicians. The department is beginning to implement an assessment system. The tracking and assessment of pupil attainment and progress is not yet used effectively to inform teachers' planning consistently and this is unsatisfactory.
92. The head of department provides good subject leadership. The management of the department is good. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which is reflected in the work of the department. There is good delegation to ensure the effective contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities. The lack of curriculum time in Year 7 and Year 8 hinders the progress that the pupils can make. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the level of provision of ICT resources and the staff's capabilities to use it. There has been an improvement in the use of ICT across the different subjects since the last inspection, although not all subjects contribute effectively to this. The management and co-ordination of ICT

across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is very little tracking of the contribution made by other subjects to the use of ICT or the monitoring of the quality of this provision. A specific policy for ICT across the curriculum has not been established. As a result, there is a lack of clarity of the contribution that is expected from each department. This area is not consistently re-inforcing the focus of the school's Specialist Technology College status.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

93. Pupils' standards are in line with expectations in the subjects where these skills are used. There is evidence of good quality work produced in history, physical education and English, for example, in English in the use of power point presentations as a means of communicating individual and group ideas. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and develop confidence in the use of computers in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9.
- All staff are expert and enthusiastic, and use a range of strategies to support pupils' learning.
- Good, and some very good teaching, encourages pupils to understand and use historical terms in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is not as good as in Years 7 to 9, and pupils do not always achieve as well as they might in GCSE examinations.
- Curriculum time is limited in Years 7 and 8, although the time allowed in Year 9 compensates for this.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively in targeting individual pupil needs.

### **Commentary**

94. Pupils enter Year 7 with below average levels of knowledge and understanding in history. Teacher assessments at the age of 14 in 2004 indicate that standards are in line with the national average and this is an improvement on the standards attained in 2003. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were significantly below the national average and results in 2004 were similar. Current standards in Year 9 and Year 11 are in line with national expectation, reflecting the quality of the teaching and learning in lessons. There are variations between the modes of working: boys do better in source questions, girls in coursework. Achievement is good for pupils by the end of Year 9. In previous years, the achievement of pupils by Year 11 has been unsatisfactory; however the achievement currently in Year 11 is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is good throughout Years 7 to 11, and those with

special educational needs make similar progress to their fellow pupils. The good curriculum available in Year 9 makes up for the limited coverage of British History in Year 8. The limited coverage reflects the time available in Year 8. Some higher attaining pupils are not fully stretched in Years 7 and 8 because the lack of curriculum time restricts their opportunities to develop some of the higher-order subject skills. Overall, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of British, European and world history and they are able to tackle historical sources satisfactorily. They are less confident in giving reasons for historical changes or how and why historical events are interpreted differently.

95. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 11. Some very good and excellent teaching occurs at times. Very good lessons have good pace, and a variety of activities for pupils, which takes them by steps towards analysing reasons behind events, such as the rise of Hitler to the position of Fuhrer between 1930 and 1934. Use of the Internet for research, linked to mind-mapping about railway development and its effects in the nineteenth century, gave pupils good experience of thinking for themselves. The recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is in evidence in most lessons, with three or four activities, key vocabulary and guidance in writing for structuring answers and this emphasis has a positive impact on securing progress from all pupils. An emphasis on the use of sources of evidence in Year 7 saw pupils bringing in their family mementos, and learning to distinguish between primary evidence from eye witnesses to the Second World War and secondary sources, from what has been written about it since.
96. Management is good and leadership is satisfactory. The team is adapting and improving classroom teaching. The analysis of assessment data relating to individual pupils is not used sufficiently effectively to plan appropriate strategies to ensure that all pupils make the progress that they are capable of in their GCSE work, although pupils with Individual Education Plans have appropriate targets set for them. Improvement has been good overall since the last inspection, especially in relation to the achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in the department's use of ICT.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan together well and share good practice.
- There is a positive environment created for learning in all classrooms, and teachers have good relationships with pupils.
- A good field studies programme is developing throughout the school, using both the local area and visits to selected areas of the country.
- There has been insufficient planning of learning strategies to meet all the differing needs in lessons of pupils.

### Commentary

97. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the age of 14 in both 2003 and 2004 indicate standards that were below those of pupils of a similar age nationally. This is not fully

consistent with observations of pupils' current work in lessons and in their books. Most pupils are able to work diligently and with purpose and draw graphs and diagrams satisfactorily. Standards in their written work are weaker. Overall attainment is in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

98. The GCSE examination results were well below the national average in 2003 and 2004, with girls performing better than the boys in 2004. Results also showed that pupils did not attain as well as they do in their other subjects. However, current attainment in Years 10 and 11 is above national expectations and achievement is good. Some good achievement was seen in the pupils' work in Year 11 on the Mezzogiorno region. Pupils in Year 10 are also making good progress currently. These standards and achievement reflect the current quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
99. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11, with some examples of very good practice observed In Years 10 and 11. Teachers create a good environment for learning in the classrooms, and one in which all pupils are valued. Teachers' knowledge and skills are good, resulting in positive responses from pupils who are largely attentive and interested. In Years 10 and 11, pupils demonstrate well their capacity to work both independently and collaboratively. All lessons contain elements of literacy, numeracy and citizenship, re-inforced via supportive displays of key words, terms and other guides to literacy on classroom walls and this supports well pupils with special educational needs and those whose competence in English language is at an early stage of development. This supports the development of a classroom ethos where all pupils are valued. The use of ICT is satisfactory. There is some inconsistency in teachers' planning to meet all the differing needs of the pupils in lessons, including for the gifted and talented and for promoting pupils' skills in working independently. Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress and the marking of their work are satisfactory and is contributing appropriately to raising the standards pupils attain.
100. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although leadership has been inconsistent over time. However, a new head of department was appointed in September 2004. She has implemented the "Learning to Learn" initiative, and developed a new ICT resource for staff, that includes teaching, learning and administrative packages. Together with the introduction of a comprehensive fieldwork programme, these developments have had a positive impacted on raising standards. Management is also evolving to ensure that agreed teaching and learning strategies are consistently followed by all staff to support improving standards in all year groups. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, although GCSE examination results have been well below average.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision does not meet statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form.
- There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.



- The teacher in charge leads and manages the subject well.
- Standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils in Year 10 and 11 achieve well compared with their prior attainment.

## Commentary

101. Statutory requirements for religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form were not met during the last inspection and this is still the case. No religious education is taught in the sixth form. Pupils in the main school are disadvantaged because far too little time and resources are allocated to enable the programmes of study to be studied in sufficient detail. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection and there are concerns about strategic planning at senior management and governance level, although the leadership and management of the department has improved and is good.
102. Virtually all pupils in Year 11 took the short course GCSE examination in 2004. The results were far better than the previous year and above the school average for grades A\* - C, although well below national standards. Girls' results were far better than those of the boys. The attainment of the current Year 11 has improved and standards are just below course expectations. This is good achievement as pupils entered Year 10 with attainment levels that were well below those normally found. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make unsatisfactory progress. There is too little time for in-depth learning and the development of reflection and other aspects of spirituality. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 whose competence in English language is at an early stage of development make similar progress to that of their fellow pupils. Standards in Year 9 are below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and achievement is unsatisfactory.
103. A scrutiny of pupils' work over time indicates that teaching and learning, within the imposed time constraints, are satisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand the basic facts about the major religions. Pupils following the GCSE course know about the role of belief in social life, although there is insufficient stress on rigorous and detailed references to religious sources and teaching. Good teaching was seen in GCSE classes and the curriculum is systematically taught but there is too little time for research, extended writing or detailed preparation for high quality discussion. Teachers' assessment is good, giving pupils good guidance on how to improve. Well marked, regular homework is used to reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, the fortnightly lessons hinder its impact as pupils wait a long time before feedback. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and the teachers have expert subject knowledge. Well-planned lessons maintained interest through the use of a wide range of teaching and learning styles and pupils learn easily about the links between marriage and religious teaching. Unsatisfactory learning occurred in a Year 7 class as a result of poor classroom management and the negative attitudes of some pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress within the time constraints imposed and understand the basic facts about the major religions.
104. The department is well led and managed. A relatively new teacher in charge has vision, commitment and effective management skills. Schemes of work and assessment against set criteria levels have been extended. Careful monitoring of

teaching and learning occurs and support and in-service training for non-specialist, overseas trained teachers, is in place. Areas that require development have been identified, including the consistent planning for the use of ICT in lessons, and appropriate action, such as the recent acquisition of software, has been taken.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in the GCSE examinations are below the national average.
- Assessment and monitoring are well developed but pupils are insufficiently aware of what they need to do to progress further.
- Students have insufficient access to ICT across all material areas of technology.

#### **Commentary**

105. Results in the GCSE examinations were below the national average overall in 2004. In 2003, the results were significantly below the national average. The results have fluctuated over the past three years and across the different elements of the subjects. GCSE examination results in 2004 in textiles technology were much better than in resistant materials and food technology. Results in graphic products in 2004 were much lower than in the other three subjects. Girls have performed better overall than the boys. Current course work standards in the different subjects in Years 10 and 11 are in line with course expectations and the pupils' predicted grades reflect this. The restricted access to and use of ICT is impeding the learning and the presentation of GCSE course work, especially in food technology. The progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory; they are well supported by class teachers and cope well alongside others. There is currently insufficient specialist support for them during practical sessions. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is in line with that of their fellow pupils. Achievement overall in the four subjects is satisfactory.
106. Teacher assessments of pupils aged 14 in design and technology showed standards broadly in line with the national average. Current standards of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are in line with the national expectations. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teachers set tasks that are appropriately challenging and pupils learn appropriately. Pupils receive individual support from teachers in practical lessons and written work is carefully marked, with clear targets for improvement. Pupils make more progress from Year 7 to 8 and girls perform better than boys. Year 9 pupils, mainly boys, show a lack of concentration and commitment in lessons. This lack of concentration and commitment results in some poor behaviour, which restricts these pupils' progress and sometimes the progress of others in the class.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and examples of good teaching were seen. Lessons are well planned and organised with clear objectives. The teaching is more effective in Years 7, 8 and 11 as good demonstrations and

discussions raise pupils' skills and understanding. A real sense of purpose is seen in most lessons, with all pupils receiving good support. Practical skills and use of equipment are weak in the four subjects, with the pupils depending heavily on the teacher for reassurance, especially in Years 8 and 9. Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to develop their skills in working independently and teachers' expectations in this area are not sufficiently high. In Year 9, strategies for managing pupils' behaviour in the classroom are not always effective. The teaching of ICT is effective. Resources are well chosen to suit the tasks set and ensure pupils have equal access. In Year 11, pupils make good use of the examination criteria and benefit from constructive marking to help raise their grades. Teachers effectively recap previous work, using good questioning and answer techniques. The homework set was relevant and used to reinforce learning in lessons.

108. The leadership and management are good, with well-organised and planned strategies in place to respond to the challenge of raising standards. Changes in the GCSE courses over the past couple of years have affected the overall profile of the department. There have been some staff changes since the last inspection, and the department is now a committed team with a clear vision for the subject. New staff are not yet monitored sufficiently and further training is required to support improving assessment in design and technology, to ensure all pupils are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The department has developed some extremely good links with industry, thereby enhancing the work-related aspects of the subject. Extra-curricular workshop sessions are popular and are aiding the progression of those who attend. Accommodation is good; the new facilities for food and textiles are good. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in the quality of accommodation and resources but overall improvement is unsatisfactory as the GCSE examination results are well below average and the department currently does not have a high enough profile within the school's Specialist Technology College status.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The GCSE examination results fell in 2003 and in 2004, with 20 per cent of pupils attaining grades A\*-C in 2004.
- Teachers' rigorous assessment of work ensures pupils know what standard they are at and how to improve.
- Detailed lesson planning and schemes of work cater for all pupils including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Commentary**

109. Pupils enter Year 7 with levels of skill and understanding that are well below those found nationally. By Year 9, teacher assessments indicate that standards were above the national expectation in 2003 and were in line with the national expectation in

2004. These standards represented good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs also achieved well. There were no evident differences in standards between pupils from the various minority ethnic backgrounds and their standards reflected good achievement.

110. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were low compared with results nationally. Unconfirmed data for 2004 show that results have dropped still further. Girls are achieving higher standards than the boys. The results in the last two years coincide with a very high turnover of key teaching staff in the department.
111. Standards by Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Pupils learn how to use a wide range of materials and the basic elements of art such as line, pattern and texture and use them satisfactorily. Pupils' achievement is good. In Years 10 and 11, standards are below national expectations and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. The impact of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is having a good effect on the current standard of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9, as is the newly-implemented assessment and monitoring systems throughout Years 7 to 11.
112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is due to the specialist knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers. Planning of lessons is thorough and is structured to involve all pupils. Teachers are quick to give praise and have good relationships with their pupils, which encourages pupils to work hard in a lively but well-managed classroom. Pupils are studying a variety of artists and are encouraged in lessons and through homework to develop their capacity to work independently by researching these artists and their work, which leads to good learning. Some of the work in Years 10 and 11 is too prescriptive, and results are limited by the size of work. This limitation restricts individual flair and experimentation. Newly-implemented assessment strategies are having a good effect on raising standards throughout the department and particularly in the GCSE examination groups and pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what they need to do to improve. Pupils respond well to exciting and challenging teaching and when this is evident the pupils' standard of work is raised. The classrooms have a rich array of examples of work displayed, which gives pupils inspiration for their own work. Sketchbooks are used in all years, which is good practice for preparation work and homework. They are not used consistently for all projects and this is restricting pupils' progress. Pupils benefit from visits to art galleries and this broadens their knowledge of artists and designers.
113. Leadership is satisfactory. The newly appointed acting head of department has the enthusiasm and energy to take the subject forward and is already improving standards. There is a vision for the future of the department and a clear determination to drive up standards, improve the continuity of marking, the monitoring of pupils' work and the consistent use of lesson objectives. Management is satisfactory. The department is beginning to work together as a team, which is apparent through the newly-implemented schemes for assessing and recording of work and to monitor the data effectively to support pupils' improvement. There is good self-evaluation amongst the teachers and a desire to improve. Training in the moderation of GCSE work to enable a more accurate assessment of pupils' work is planned. There are no technicians in the department which prevents some activities, such as ceramics and screen printing, being undertaken.

114. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The GCSE examination results have declined. However, plans are in place for the future to improve these results and the team has the commitment and capacity to do this. Pupils are now taught to extend their capacity to work independently and to carry out research, through class time spent in the ICT suite and in the library, using the guidance of the librarian. Three-dimensional design and work is now undertaken by pupils in all years and there has been an improvement in the use of ICT across the department for research and design.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress and their attainment by Year 9 and Year 11 is in line with national expectations.
- The lack of ICT available to the department results in lack of access to the full statutory requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- The poor ICT provision prevents pupils from offering work of a standard and quality comparable with most other schools.
- Music resources, except for ICT, are very good and are used well by staff and pupils.
- The Specialist Technology College status of the school has had little impact on the music department.

### **Commentary**

115. Standards are well below national averages on entry. Teachers' assessments in 2004 showed that pupils' standards reached the national average by the age of 14. These standards are confirmed by the inspection and pupils' achievement is good. A small group of pupils took the GCSE examination in 2004 and results were in line with the national average. Standards by Year 11 are in line with the national expectation and the achievement of the pupils is good. Musically 'Gifted and Talented' pupils attain higher levels through their use of instruments and more fluent reading of notation. In tests and examinations, boys do less well than girls, but this was not apparent in the practical lessons observed. Pupils are achieving well overall, with particularly good progress in Years 7 to 9, despite the lack of adequate curriculum time in Year 9. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those whose English language competence is at an early stage of development make progress in line with other pupils, as do pupils with special educational needs. GCSE groups ably demonstrate the department's open access policy and a desire to ensure good progress for pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds. Where underachievement happens, in Years 7 to 9, it is the result of some unsatisfactory teaching.

116. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and consistently good in Years 10 and 11. Where teaching is good or better, pupils are engaged for the entire lesson through a variety of musical activities, which are taught with pace and energy. Interesting starter activities, linked to the lesson content, are frequently used to focus the pupils on music as they enter the classroom. Pupils in Year 9 benefit from some innovative curriculum planning, for example, in the work on how pop musicians learn.

Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, it is often linked to teachers' ineffective behaviour management strategies and the slow pace of progress which results. Teachers' marking in Years 10 and 11 lacks rigour, and pays insufficient attention, for example, to giving guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and the spelling of key words.

117. Leadership is good, because there is a strong sense of direction in the department, supported by very good evaluation of pupils' standards and the department's progress. Management is satisfactory, because staff are clear about their roles, the department runs smoothly and policies are consistently applied across the department. However, there is insufficient time for the effective monitoring of teaching, including that of the visiting instrumental teachers.
118. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The one improvement is that in standards by the end of Year 9. Provision for music overall has dropped from good to satisfactory with a notable drop in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Other factors in the lack of improvement include the lack of curriculum time in Year 9 and the lack of ICT provision, both of which were issues at the last inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in the GCSE examinations are improving annually and are now slightly above the national average.
- Staff show good coping skills and commitment in managing the accommodation difficulties.
- Extra-curricular provision offers a good range of opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their skills.
- Assessment data is not used sufficiently to target improvement in standards.

### **Commentary**

119. The GCSE examination results in 2004 were slightly above the national average and show a rise in the proportion of pupils gaining grade B than in 2003, when the results were in line with the national average. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well in physical education as their fellow pupils. Teacher assessments for pupils aged 14 in 2003 indicate that standards were below the national expectation.
120. Standards are below national expectations by Year 9 and are broadly in line with expectations by Year 11. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of physical literacy and experience a range of different sports to develop basic skills. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 7 show a limited movement vocabulary, and are still developing control and precision in transferring weight using different body parts. In

netball, taught to both boys and girls, passing lacks accuracy, although the more capable pupils understand the need to pass ahead to avoid interception. Skills in placing the ball are not secure. There are pupils in Year 8 who are still not proficient at swimming a length of the pool. The standards of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are in line with their fellow pupils.

121. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11, but unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with other pupils, as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. In both GCSE examinations and teachers' assessments in Year 9, boys achieve higher standards than the girls. In lessons seen during the inspection, boys also attained higher standards. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are more motivated, and engaged but boys show a higher level of skill, being proficient in passing and dribbling at speed in basketball. In Years 7 to 9, boys have better basic skills. They are more adventurous in gymnastics in Year 7, have better basic skills in football in Year 8, although this variation in standards is less marked in netball. Occasionally in lessons, a small minority of pupils show a lack of concentration, and some unsatisfactory behaviour, especially in Year 9, and this limits their progress and occasionally the progress of others. Achievement in some lessons is affected by the absence of clear diagnostic feedback from teachers or their fellow pupils, of clear criteria to make judgments against which to improve the quality of performance and also through progressing too quickly into more advanced skills before pupils' competence has been sufficiently developed.
122. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11. Good teaching is lively, offers a realistic level of challenge, with good pace so that heart rate is raised. Pupils work productively together on progressively difficult skill practices, although spatial awareness and application of skills in a game situation such as basketball, badminton and volleyball are hindered by restrictive indoor accommodation. Pupils have opportunities to share ideas, to analyse and to evaluate their own work and that of others. Teachers are generally effective in securing good behaviour from the pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities that are open to all, and the support of an additional nine members of staff provides for more and varied options.
123. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is committed leadership with clear lines of responsibility and examples of effective teamwork. The department has identified the need to include more opportunities for involving pupils in analysing performance. Management has clear procedures. Change has been implemented through the development of profiles on pupils using ICT, the use of computers with GCSE pupils to analyse and interpret data, and to maintain longitudinal records of pupils' fitness levels - a special feature of the department. Innovative use of work-related learning to create situations whereby pupils organise sport festivals with local primary schools has been successfully implemented. Data relating to results is collated by gender and ethnicity but there is no clear plan for how this will be used to improve standards. The provision in Years 7 to 9 is not yet sufficiently matched to pupils' needs, nor organised in a way that is consistent with a relentless focus on raising standards.
124. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. GCSE results have improved; schemes of work are more robust with clearer learning objectives and greater

involvement of pupils in evaluating and improving performance. The use of ICT has been developed. There are however still some health and safety issues relating to the personal safety of pupils which have had insufficient attention and these have been drawn to the attention of the governing body and senior staff.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

It was not possible to see any citizenship lessons or lessons covering personal, social and health education because the lessons were scheduled for the alternative week in the school's ten day timetable.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There was a high standard of writing in some of the work of the best students in Years 9 and 11.

### **Commentary**

125. No lessons in citizenship were available to be inspected during the inspection week. Standards in writing in all years ranged from excellent to satisfactory, but in most cases this only reflected the two modules that have been taught this term. The best examples show pupils' abilities to argue a point of view well. However, other examples were short and inadequate. Overall, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. Marking varies from good to unsatisfactory but is satisfactory overall. Reporting is satisfactory. There was good reference to citizenship issues in a Year 9 geography lesson on trade differences in the Far East and Europe. There is good mentoring support by pupils in ICT. Through the special education needs department, pupils are involved in running parties for older people. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to develop citizenship skills and pupils respond positively to these opportunities.
126. Leadership is satisfactory with evidence of planning for citizenship in most but not all departments, for example in ICT, but not in physical education. Management is satisfactory. The citizenship programme is monitored to see that pupils receive their entitlement. The subject was not inspected during the last inspection.



## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

### *Level 3 GCE AS level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	4	100	80.1	25.0	23.7	35.0	29.9
Biology	3	66.7	65.2	0	11.1	13.3	20.6
Business studies	1	100	76.4	0	16.3	30.0	26.2
Chemistry	8	37.5	72.7	0	13.9	7.5	24.1
Communication studies	3	66.7	86.4	33.3	23.8	26.7	32.0
Economics	8	87.5	73.6	25.0	20.1	28.8	26.4
English literature	4	100	85.9	25.0	19.1	32.5	30.2
French	3	66.7	78.2	33.3	18.9	30.0	27.6
Design and technology	6	100	74.9	16.7	15.1	35.0	25.3
General studies	29	96.6	73.9	34.5	17.8	39.0	25.7
Geography	9	55.6	74.3	0	19.8	18.9	26.5
German	6	50.0	81.5	16.7	19.3	18.3	28.9
History	4	100	80.7	0	19.5	27.5	28.6
Information and communication technology	9	55.6	67.0	0	10.9	14.4	21.4
Mathematics	11	54.5	61.9	27.3	17.1	23.6	22.1
Other languages	5	80.0	82.6	60.0	42.9	42.0	36.2
Other social studies	7	85.7	69.7	28.6	16.7	27.1	24.1
Physics	9	77.8	68.6	11.1	14.4	25.6	22.7
Sociology	12	66.7	71.8	25.0	18.4	24.2	25.4
Sports/PE studies	1	0	73.2	0	11.4	0	23.1
Vocational studies	10	60.0	62.8	10.0	12.3	18.0	20.8

**Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	100	98.6	16.7	50.2	60.0	87.5
Biology	9	77.8	96.4	11.1	39.2	57.8	78.6
Chemistry	7	100	97.6	28.6	49.0	77.1	84.9
Communication studies	4	100	99.4	100	37.8	105.0	82.1
Economics	8	100	98.9	12.5	52.0	72.5	88.3
English literature	17	100	99.5	35.3	46.5	82.4	86.5
French	4	100	98.8	25.0	51.5	85.0	87.6
Geography	3	100	98.7	0	44.5	80.0	84.0
German	5	100	98.4	0	47.9	64.0	84.8
History	10	100	99.0	50.0	44.6	84.0	84.6
Information and communication technology	15	100	95.6	20.0	24.6	73.3	69.5
Mathematics	12	100	96.7	50.0	55.6	88.3	88.8
Other languages	8	100	96.9	62.5	64.5	92.5	93.8
Other social studies	6	83.3	97.4	50.0	42.7	73.3	81.8
Physics	4	100	96.7	75.0	44.6	90.0	81.7
Sociology	13	100	98.2	53.8	44.3	92.3	83.6
Spanish	1	0	98.3	0	50.2	0	86.9
Business	28	100	65.0	3.6	14.6	65.0	60.1

**ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

**English literature**

Provision in English literature is **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The A-level examination results were in line with the national average in 2003, and improved in 2004, with 100 per cent of students attaining grades A-E, and nearly 60 per cent attaining grades A and B.

- Attainment is currently in line with course expectations and achievement is good overall.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- New technology is enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

## Commentary

127. The department has an open policy towards students choosing the subject at A-level, and thus levels of attainment at the start of Year 12 vary considerably. Some begin the course with a GCSE grade D. Overall attainment is below average at the start of the course but results are in line with national averages by the time students leave Year 13. Achievement is therefore good. Results in 2003 at A-level were in line with the national average – all students passed the examination, with over one-third achieving grades A or B. The 2004 results are better, with seven of the twelve candidates reaching at least grade B and all students attaining a pass grade. The current Year 13 reflect a range of abilities, but most performed well in their AS modules last year, with all gaining overall grades A to D. These successes have added to the popularity of the subject, so that there are now about 50 students on Advanced Level and AS English literature courses across Years 12 and 13. Those students from minority ethnic backgrounds who take the course attain standards in line with the other students.
128. Teaching is good overall. The students benefit from good, often very good, teaching. Each class is split between two teachers, allowing most of the English staff to teach at this level. The teachers represent a good range of experience and all are well qualified and knowledgeable. Activities are organised that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, for instance in the close reading of the opening scene of *Othello*, in groups that co-operate extremely well and are ready to report back to their peers on the emerging themes. Teachers provide appropriate background resources for them to do this well. New technology allows students to become even more sophisticated in their presentations. Students in Year 12 develop Power Point presentations in computer rooms, drawing on resources on the Internet as well as using their own writing. They are then able to show these presentations back in the classroom and present their work on interactive whiteboards. Detailed analysis of work done on *Return of the Native* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* was presented with confidence, including text, pictures and moving images. In one case, two girls had put their work onto a CD so that they could include film clips, with their own voices over. Other students arranged for copies of the slides to be given to the rest of the class. The teachers have become facilitators of very good independent learning. The computer technology encourages students to spend time on these presentations and take a pride in their work, and the learning is shared efficiently.
129. The head of English exercises good leadership and management of the subject, not only in the deployment of staff, but also in the monitoring of students' learning. Student folders are checked regularly, and assessment is thorough. There are opportunities for students to attend relevant conferences and performances: the school was ready to subsidise a theatre visit, to see a performance of *Othello*, because the tickets were expensive. The provision for English literature continues to

be good, even though results fluctuate from year to year. At the time of the last inspection, results were above average. A similar picture is reflected currently.

### **Language and literacy skills across the curriculum**

130. Most students in the sixth form have language skills that are more than adequate for them to undertake their chosen courses of study, but there are a few students, particularly those for whom the competence in English language skill is at an early stage of development, who face problems, particularly in mathematics and science subjects. The school has some specific targeted support for some of these students but other strategies for supporting these students are missing - for example, key skills courses - so the school is not tackling fully the needs of a minority of sixth-formers and this is a significant weakness.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

The focus of the inspection was German, but three lessons of French were also sampled. At AS level in 2004 all students gained a pass grade. Written work seen in Year 13 is in line with course expectations. Teaching and learning were good in two lessons, and satisfactory in the third.

#### **GERMAN**

Provision in German is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standard of speaking and writing is high in Year 13.
- The teaching of German is very good and promotes very good learning.

#### **Commentary**

131. The A-level examination results in 2003 and 2004 were below the national averages. At AS level they were in line with standards nationally and included one grade A and two grades B. In the present Year 13, standards are above course expectations with students able to speak fluently and accurately and write extensively. This represents very good achievement, which is reflected in their learning in lessons, as they develop very well both their language skills and also their understanding of German history and culture. Their speaking and writing skills are very good, with very good pronunciation and high standards of accuracy. Listening and reading standards are also very good. In Year 12, attainment is below course expectations, although students' achievement is good. A major problem for these students is inaccurate pronunciation and a lack of fluency in their speaking. Their writing has not yet developed in fluency and there are still misunderstandings concerning the use of German. Students understand most of what they hear and can understand a text with occasional help. The standard of male and female students is similar in both years.

132. Teaching and learning are good in Year 12 and very good in Year 13 and good overall. Major strengths are the teachers' good planning, their use of the German

language and their choice of appropriate and interesting subject material. For example, in Year 13 students were studying the political opinions of some German young people and developing a political vocabulary. As a result students learn well, though the speed of learning is slower in Year 12 as students are still getting to grips with the demands of the AS course. Marking and assessment are good. The department uses assessment data well in determining appropriate targets for the students. Leadership and management are both good. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall and because of this students achieve well.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about the subject.
- Students do not use enough ICT to support their learning.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their capacity to work independently.

### **Commentary**

133. In 2003, the A-level results were above the national average. The A-level results in 2004 were lower but there is no comparative data available as yet against which they can be compared. The AS examination results in 2003 were also above the national average. In relation to their earlier GCSE results, students' achievement is good. Standards are generally consistent with course expectations and recent examination results. Students have secure algebra skills and those in Year 13 are able to use techniques learnt in pure mathematics effectively to solve problems encountered in mechanics and statistics.
134. Students in Year 13 are making good progress with their modular course leading to A-level and are achieving well. Students in Year 12 are coping well with the demands of sixth form work. Students whose first language is not English achieve in line with other students but in some cases experience difficulty with comprehension when reading and interpreting notes and textbook material. There are differing results by male and female students year on year but overall standards are similar.
135. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate their enthusiasm for the subject to students. This, together with students' very good attitudes, leads to good achievement. Work is well sequenced and concepts are clearly explained. Questioning of students involves all students, and students respond well to this with answers that demonstrate a secure understanding of the work they are studying. In a pure mathematics lesson with Year 13, there was effective use by students of the interactive whiteboard during a class discussion which involved chosen students demonstrating to the rest of the group how to solve problems. Apart from this, however, students do not themselves use ICT enough to support their own learning. Homework is regularly set using past examination questions and exercises from textbooks with progressively more difficult examples. Beyond this, there are limited opportunities for students to work independently and undertake personal research.
136. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The subject is taught by a very well qualified team of teachers who work well together to teach modules of the course. Very good relationships enable students to approach teachers for help which is available outside of lessons. Teachers use assessment data well to monitor the students' progress and to set them appropriate targets. Students are willing to seek advice when needed and they have a

good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

137. Students' proficiency in mathematics supports their learning and enables them to cope well with their chosen subjects. In science subjects, students demonstrate competence with numerical skills and the manipulation of formula. Data handling skills are effectively used in several other subjects, for example, in geography and business studies.

## **SCIENCE**

The focus for inspection was physics. Work was also sampled in chemistry and biology. The A-level examination results in 2003 were well below the national average in biology and average in chemistry. One lesson of each subject was seen. Standards of work seen were below course expectations in biology in Year 13 and in line with course expectations in chemistry in Year 12. Teaching is good in both subjects. Students' work shows that their achievement based on their previous examination results, is satisfactory in biology and is good in chemistry.

### **Physics**

Provision in physics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of students at both AS and A-level is good.
- The teaching is sensitive to the needs of the students and brings about good learning.
- The high number of students recently arrived in the country who are successful.
- The use of ICT to support students' learning is not developed sufficiently.
- Students complete very few tasks that require them to work independently.

### **Commentary**

138. Standards in AS and A-level examinations were above the national average in 2003 but have varied widely during the past four years. Although the number of students completing the course during this period has been small and stable it is not possible to identify any statistically reliable trend in these results. The achievement of students in both Years 12 and 13, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, is good, based on their previous GCSE and AS results. Their attainment on entry to the sixth form is below the level normally found. Standards of work seen are in line with course expectations.

139. Teaching is good. Two lessons were observed, taught by different teachers and both were good. The teaching is sensitive to the needs of the diverse groups of students without compromising the challenge of the work undertaken. Students' learning is good because the teaching is well structured and makes good use of the extensive range of support materials, including topic notes and revision sheets. There is a clear focus on using practical work to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as developing their experimental and numerical skills. These features enable a significant number of students who have recently arrived in the

country to complete the course successfully. Some students use computers to complete their homework tasks and present their practical work but teachers do not use them routinely in their work or exploit their particular advantages to fully support students' learning in physics. Students' ability to work independently is not developed sufficiently. Apart from routine homework tasks, students complete few tasks that enable them to develop the skills of researching, speculating and making links between different parts of the syllabus.

140. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear focus on maximising the attainment of every student based on the effective co-ordination of the teaching and some analysis of the examination results of previous students. The teachers work closely together and provide mutual support based on a clear sense of direction. The resources for physics teaching are very good. The laboratories are well maintained and the department is well organised with a very good range of teaching resources. The subject was not inspected during the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the national average at A-level.
- Students confidently create complex data systems.
- Teaching and learning are good; teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject.
- Students are enthusiastic and work well.
- The department does not provide opportunities for students to gain first hand experience of the use of ICT by organisations outside the school.

### **Commentary**

141. The most recent examination results for ICT have been above the national averages, both for the proportion of students achieving a pass and for those achieving one of the higher grades A or B. Similar results were achieved in the A-level examinations in 2003. Results are now better than they were at the time of the last inspection. They have improved each year over the last three years. Since the earlier achievement of students who take this course is generally average, these latest results represent good achievement. There are differing results between male and female students year on year but overall standards are similar. The attainment of students with minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with that of their fellow students.
142. The work of students seen in lessons, in their portfolios and in conversations confirms that standards are above course expectations overall and their achievement is good. In general, students do well on those parts of the course that are concerned with their own ability to use software. They confidently create complex data systems using linked spreadsheets with macros and data entry screens, and are designing and starting to create relational databases. Standards are also high on the parts of the course concerned with understanding how organisations use ICT. Students talk in depth about real uses of ICT systems they have investigated; their understanding of this aspect of the subject comes largely from their research, class discussions and

their textbooks. Students are good at ensuring that their design will fully meet the needs of the intended user. All students show interest and enthusiasm for the subject. When they are working individually on computers in lessons, they are good at helping each other and discussions are common: they are always relevant to the work and contribute usefully to the good learning. Many students are able to do some of the work at home and they also make good use of the facilities in school. Students have good access to the resources they need.

143. In all the lessons teaching is good. Teachers have a very good command of the subject. They transmit their enthusiasm for the subject to their students. They are good at anticipating aspects that are likely to be misunderstood and they make good use of questioning to check on students' understanding. When students are working individually, teachers make good use of their time, discussing work with students and make good use of opportunities to stretch students by asking them challenging questions and showing them further possibilities. Teachers are influenced by the keenness of the more enthusiastic students and make sure that the quieter students fully understand key points. The one significant gap in the teaching is the lack of opportunities for students to visit organisations to investigate their use of ICT or to have visiting speakers to talk about their use of ICT.
144. The department is well led and managed. A well-organised system of recording individual results for each unit and comparing current standards with earlier attainment supports individual student's progress successfully and helps in the identification of underachievement. The monitoring of teaching has resulted in greater consistency in the quality of teaching, which has been accompanied by improved standards in recent years. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

145. Students' competencies in ICT in the sixth form support their studies well and there are good facilities to support the development of students' capabilities to work independently and carry out research skills effectively. These strengths are not consistently used in all subjects to support students' learning and, for example, they are underused in science and mathematics. ICT is used effectively in English and contributes well to students' learning and thereby to the standards they achieve.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Current attainment is in line with course expectations.
- The use of ICT is good, especially at A-level.
- Teaching is good.
- The teaching team in the sixth form is well led by a new departmental head.

#### **Commentary**



146. Standards at both AS and A-level in 2003 and 2004 were below the national averages, with few students gaining the highest grades of A or B. The achievement of the students however was satisfactory relative to their capabilities. There were no significant differences in standards attained by students of different ethnic groups. There is no clear difference in the pattern of male and female performance.
147. Lesson observations, discussions with students and the analysis of student files confirm that the current attainment of students following the A-level course is in line with course expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. The students apply well-directed knowledge to case studies and examination style questions. All students displayed satisfactory levels of understanding of the concepts of physical and human geography; a few individuals show good understanding. Teachers place great focus on setting challenging lesson objectives, and the use by students of appropriate geographical terms in all their writing. Students' files show that their practical skills are satisfactory, as are their levels of synthesis and application. Work is well monitored by individual teachers via regular marking and appropriately supportive comments. The work seen at A-level shows satisfactory progression over the two years. Students work soundly under well-structured tuition, demonstrating a satisfactory understanding of the patterns and processes demanded by the broad range of geographical studies. Use of ICT is good, particularly at A-level. There is lively debate and interaction between teacher and students at A-level, with AS students currently more passive.
148. Teaching in the sixth form is good, and has elements of very good practice. Subject knowledge of staff is extensive and up-to-date. A range of strategies is used to extend students' knowledge generally and to apply that knowledge more specifically in meeting examination requirements. A positive feature of teaching is the sharing of learning objectives and the desired outcomes with students.
149. The teaching team in the sixth form is well led by a new head of department, who is strongly supported by a range of very experienced teachers. New strategies and teaching styles will take time to mature. The relatively low uptake of geography in the sixth form is a complex issue, but is particularly related to the lack of a full ability intake opting for the subject at GCSE in Years 10 and 11. Resources are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject attracts a viable group of interested and articulate students each year.
- Very good leadership is distributed through the team of teachers, who all contribute to AS or A-level courses.
- "Bridging the Gap" is a successful introductory course which has led to high standards for AS students.
- Achievement is better in Year 12 than in Year 13

## Commentary

150. Standards in the 2003 A-level examinations were in line with the national average. Students in Year 12 attain high standards at AS level as a result of targeting subject skills in the first half term through the "Bridging the Gap" course. The A-level results in 2004 were slightly better than those of 2003. Variations between the attainment of male and female students are linked to preferences in learning styles: male students doing better in source analysis, female students in coursework, which is a component at both AS and A-level. Overall, the standards they attain are similar. Current standards in Year 13 are in line with course expectations and above course expectations in Year 12.
151. Achievement is good, especially in Year 12. Students enter the course with grades A\*-C at GCSE, usually including history, Students know what their strengths and weaknesses are. Folders for each component are checked regularly and work graded, with a chance for students to indicate what learning points they need to develop. Revision for examinations and preparation for coursework are good. Extended writing is the area where a number of students experience difficulty, especially in making the jump to A-level expectations at the beginning of Year 13 and the department takes steps to improve this element of their work. The achievement of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with that of the other students.
152. Teaching and learning are good. A range of activities maximises opportunities for all students to make good progress. Individual presentations by students about Russia in the 1905 Revolution were well resourced and delivered. The "Use of humour in Stalinist times" provided a very good commentary on the control exercised by party officials, and led to study of a variety of sources on those persecuted by the government between 1925 and 1936. A structured approach to the long lessons works well for students, encouraging comparison, analysis and historiography in the study of three totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century, Russia, Italy and Spain, in contrast to British foreign policy over a similar period. Students' learning is aided by the very good assessment, the result of which is that students know very clearly what they need to do to improve.
153. Management is good and leadership very good, shared between a group of expert and enthusiastic teachers. Leadership changes from 2000 were well timed to aid the development of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to attend historical conferences each year and are offered a range of texts. Library provision is weak. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, building on experience of the previous examination system, but clearly targeted at the new AS and A-level courses.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

### **Performing arts**

Provision in performing arts is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good, linked to the performing background of the teachers.
- A-level results were above the national averages in 2003 and 2004.

- Students achieve well, especially in their practical skills.
- Links with professional performers are strong.

## **Commentary**

154. A-level results were above the national average in the subject in 2003 and were similar in 2004. In 2002, results were in line with the national average after a year in which they were below. These results have shown a consistent improvement. Although the numbers of students on the course are variable, very few drop out. The attainment of current students in Year 13 is in line with course expectations. Their achievement is good, with practical skills a strength. The achievement of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that of other students. In a lesson on political theatre, students' well-developed skills of collaboration enabled them to demonstrate good achievement as they devised a plot to fulfil the requirements of the brief. In this lesson, practical skills were of a high standard. Students took direction well and further extended them as they entered into constructive dialogue with the teacher. In a lesson on contemporary dance, students learned well as they increased their visual repertoire by means of video performances. Their conceptual language improved as they were given vocabulary to describe what they saw in the dances "Without Trace" and "Still life in Penguin café".
155. Standards at AS level were above the national average in 2003 and slightly lower in 2004. The attainment of students in Year 12 encompasses a wide range, and overall it is in line with course expectations. Students achieved well in their assessment of the dance "Pulcinella." They made good gains in their analytical and technical vocabulary as they prepared for planned analyses of single and combined performances already in rehearsal. Well-focused self-assessment procedures helped this process.
156. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Both teachers have a performing background, which helps to ensure high standards. Lessons are planned from a secure knowledge base. The development of writing skills is a strong feature of lessons which is bringing about an improvement in analytical writing, a weakness in past essays. Relationships are good and support the high quality of ensemble work which informs and improves the practical learning.
157. Leadership, which is firm, competent and committed, is good as is management. Procedures are clear and improvements which are being made are monitored effectively. A good level of support is available to students.
158. A strong programme of public performances in school and the wider community enhances the curriculum. There are strong and productive links with a national dance troupe based at a local university. The department links with the National Theatre to organise backstage visits and students benefit from concessionary tickets. The frequent opportunities to visit the professional theatre, orchestral concerts and dance performances continue to widen students' horizons.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good relationships between teacher and students have a positive effect on learning.
- There is an inconsistent approach to highlighting fundamental concepts and a strong focus on links between different aspects of the subject.
- Assessment, including the use of data about prior attainment, is still underdeveloped although some action has been taken.
- Students benefit from a range of visits and activities and from the opportunity to take AS accounts as part of the AVCE course.

### **Commentary**

159. The results in business studies compared with the national averages have been variable over the last four years. They were in line with the national average in 2003 and above it in 2002. There was a dip in 2004 when students obtained results that were below the national averages. The reasons for this, which centred on the assessment of coursework, have been identified and appropriate action taken. Current standards in business studies are broadly in line with course expectations and students' achievement is satisfactory. The current Year 13 class contains some students who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and are often new to the school in the sixth form. They have positive attitudes, work hard in class and their achievement is in line with that of their fellow students.
160. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good relationships between teacher and students support learning well and lessons are enhanced by the use of a range of teaching and learning styles and materials. Examples of good teaching and learning were seen: a Year 13 class was expertly taught about partnership accounts and the students were able to apply this new knowledge in different contexts. Students are good at calculating the effects on profit and loss and appropriation accounts. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen but there is insufficient focus on making the links between the different course units clear to the students in some lessons. Fundamental economic and business concepts are sometimes insufficiently stressed, as are the techniques required for good evaluation. The syllabus is covered methodically. Work is marked regularly, although there is not always a precise and rigorous approach to the use of assessment criteria to show students what they need to do to improve and thereby raise levels of performance.
161. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A specialist team of staff is well established. The long-standing head of department has ideas for new courses but she has a number of roles within the school that lessens her ability to concentrate solely on the business education department at a time of considerable change. Although the monitoring of teaching is in place, there has not been a consistent emphasis on certain aspects of learning, such as the effective use of information about prior attainment and the students' capability to inform the planning of lessons. This has limited the department's ability to fine tune its response to the educational needs of the individual student. There is no annotated book list, a list of web sites nor a range of textbooks of different levels of difficulty to help students' self-study skills. Although students undertake research as part of their course work there is not a continuous

focus on reporting and evaluating current business news. Students benefit from a range of visits and business activities, from the opportunity to participate in Young Enterprise and from their teachers' commitment that allow them to gain an additional AS qualification in accounting. The use of ICT to aid learning is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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