

INSPECTION REPORT

WANSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Wanstead

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102851

Headteacher: Mr C Van Bussel

Lead inspector: Mr M Beale

Dates of inspection: 6-10 December 2004

Inspection number: 269002

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of students: 11 - 18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1493

School address: Redbridge Lane West
Wanstead
London
Postcode: E11 2JZ

Telephone number: 020 8989 2791
Fax number: 020 8530 8879

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr Gordon Rolfe
governors:

Date of previous 11 November 2002
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The number of students on roll has fallen slightly since the last inspection, although the school is much larger than other secondary schools. There are 14 per cent more boys than girls, this difference being most marked in Year 8. Mobility is below average. There are four students in the care of the local authority. Sixth form numbers stand at 290, making it larger than other sixth forms. The figure for free school meal entitlement is broadly in line with the national average in the main school and in the sixth form. The intake is ethnically and culturally diverse. The percentage of students whose first language is believed not to be English is very high, although only a small number are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are substantial numbers of students from Indian, Pakistani, black-Caribbean and black-African heritages. About 23 students are refugee and asylum seekers. The main first languages spoken are Urdu, Punjabi and Tamil. The number of students with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average; the number of students with statements is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is average and to the sixth form is below average. The school achieved Artsmark in 2004 and Healthy Schools in 2000. It has been a specialist performing arts school since September 2004. There is a leisure centre on site, which is the responsibility of the school. The facilities are used by the school during the day and by the public in the evenings.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Lead inspector	
14066	Gill Hoggard	Lay inspector	
32928	Carol Homer	Team inspector	English
6044	Roger Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics
30563	Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Science
8052	Ken McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Economics (sixth form)
10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	Religious education
31685	Val Girling	Team inspector	Art and design
15051	Lynne Kauffman	Team inspector	Design and technology
33015	Richard Winter	Team inspector	Geography
23324	Sylvia Greenland	Team inspector	History Special educational needs
12408	Alan Frith	Team inspector	Modern languages Citizenship
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	Music
23268	Kevin Corrigan	Team inspector	Physical education Business (sixth form)
7871	Jean Mackie	Team inspector	Chemistry (sixth form) Biology (sixth form)
4351	Jeanne Strickland	Team inspector	Drama (sixth form) Media studies (sixth form) English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

PBM, Brookbridge and Bedford Ltd
13A Market Place
Uttoxeter
Staffordshire
ST14 8HY

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about*

Ofsted Inspections', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	21
WORK RELATED LEARNING	23
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The new headteacher is providing a clear direction for the work of staff. The school is improving but not sufficiently rapidly in important aspects of its work. However, the foundations are in place to secure sustained improvement, and to remove the remaining inconsistencies. Girls perform well throughout the school, but a significant minority of boys do not do as well as they should. Recent test and examination results are in line with the national average, although GCSE results have fallen slightly in recent years. However, standards are now rising and are above average by Year 11 in several subjects. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- girls achieve well and make good progress to GCSE, whereas many boys do not achieve all that they are capable of in Years 7 to 11;
- the drive to raise the quality of teaching and learning is meeting with success, although there is room for further improvement in Years 7 to 9;
- many subject leaders have adopted an effective role, but not all are contributing effectively to the consistent implementation of improvement strategies;
- although satisfactory overall, the curriculum does not provide sufficient routes to meet the interests and aptitudes of all students from Year 10 upwards;
- though attendance is satisfactory in the main school it is poor in the sixth form and a considerable proportion of students are regularly late to lessons throughout the school.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The main reasons for the progress in the last two years are the rigorous approach taken by the headteacher to monitoring the work of staff and the focus on improving the quality of their teaching. The atmosphere around the school is now more positive. Progress has been made in many areas, although there is still considerable scope for more. Achievement has improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science where it is now satisfactory. This is starting to show through in rising standards. However, achievement and standards in information and communication technology have not improved sufficiently. The main shortcomings identified at the last inspection are being tackled with varying success. For example, citizenship is now taught successfully as part of the newly developed programme for the students' personal development. The school's recently gained performing arts status is also starting to have an impact on the opportunities for students and links with other schools.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	C	C	D
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	D	D	

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. It is good in Years 10 and 11. Year 9 test results were broadly average in 2004, levelling off following a period of significant improvement. Overall standards are in line with national averages by Years 9 and 11, although they are above average in several subjects by Year 11 including English

and science. Standards are average at the same stage in mathematics but are below average in information and communication technology. There is evidence from test and examination data to show that girls do better than boys. In particular, boys of black-Caribbean and Pakistani backgrounds do not do as well as other groups. Both matters are being tackled by the school with some emerging success. The standards of students on entry to the sixth form are below those seen nationally. However, the students make satisfactory progress so that standards are close to the national average in many subjects by Year 13. This reflects the improvements in A Level results in 2004.

The ethos of the school is satisfactory. **The students' personal qualities, including their moral, social and cultural development are good. Spiritual development is satisfactory.** The students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The vast majority of students are keen and interested in their work and concentrate well in lessons; however, the achievement of some boys is affected by their lack of motivation and self-discipline. Attendance is satisfactory, but a significant number of students do not move purposefully between classrooms and lessons regularly start late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory, and is more effective in Years 10 and 11 than in other parts of the school. The lessons of a significant number of teachers are lively and interesting. They engage the students' attention so that they learn new skills rapidly. However, the drive to improve teaching has not eliminated all inconsistencies. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, but the school has not taken the opportunity to introduce greater flexibility in the programmes offered from Years 10 to 13 to meet the aptitudes and interests of all students. The daily tutor period is not used effectively by all teachers. The school has made strenuous efforts to seek the views of parents and students in helping to shape developments. While assessment practice has improved, reports to parents vary in their quality and usefulness. Procedures to help the students to settle into the school work well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputies provide a clear educational direction for the school. Thorough processes have been introduced to monitor the work of staff to secure improvements in their performance. However, these are not fully effective as leadership and management are inconsistent elsewhere. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body provides effective support and challenges the headteacher and senior leadership team. However, statutory responsibilities for collective worship are not met.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are largely in support of the school. They are pleased with the improvements that the new headteacher has introduced, but feel that there is more to be done. The students are also generally pleased with the improvements to the school and feel safe and secure. Their main concerns are over the unpleasant state of the toilets; a matter with which the inspection team agrees.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the achievement and raise the standards of boys, in particular boys of Pakistani and black-Caribbean backgrounds;
- improve teaching, learning and the students' achievement in information and communication technology;

- develop the role of subject leaders in the drive to eliminate inconsistencies in practice and improve teaching and learning;
- develop a curriculum in Years 10 to 13 that responds to the students' aptitudes and needs;
- improve advice, support and guidance in the sixth form;
- reduce absence in the sixth form and ensure that all lessons start on time.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- make provision for a daily act of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT WANSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

This satisfactory sixth form provides satisfactory cost-effectiveness. Provision has improved since the last inspection and accommodation has been improved by the building of a new sixth form block. There is a clear commitment to improvement from sixth form leaders and action introduced is steadily having a positive impact. Students enter with below average standards. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, although female students achieve better standards than their male counterparts do. Standards are rising and are average in several subjects but below average overall by Year 13.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- students achieve well in subjects such as history, art, drama, media studies and sociology;
- teaching and learning are good in a significant number of subjects, although there is scope to extend the range of teaching styles adopted by teachers;
- there is a good range of AS and A Level subjects but insufficient alternatives to these academic courses to meet the needs of all students;
- advice, support and guidance is patchy and targets are not always sufficiently challenging to raise achievement;
- attendance levels are poor and severely affect the achievement of the students concerned.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English is satisfactory. Standards are below average overall but there is some very good teaching and learning.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory. Standards are below average but students' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
Science	Provision in biology is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Achievement is satisfactory although standards are below average. Provision in chemistry is satisfactory. Standards are below average. There are some strong features in teaching and learning but achievement is satisfactory overall.
Information and communication technology	Provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good and standards are now average.
Humanities	Provision in geography is satisfactory. Standards are average although achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good as is assessment. Provision in history is good. Standards are broadly average and students achieve well because of good teaching and their positive attitudes to learning.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and design is good. Standards are above average. Students achieve well because their attitudes are very positive and teaching is good overall. Provision in drama is good. Students achieve well with good teaching and excellent extra-curricular activities. Take-up rates and overall standards are improving.

Business	<p>Provision in media studies is very good. Students achieve well in the improved facilities. The department is very well managed.</p> <p>Provision in business studies is good. Students achieve well by the end of Year 13 as a result of good teaching and effective subject management.</p> <p>Provision in economics is satisfactory. Standards are average and students' achievement is improving because teaching is now satisfactory.</p>
----------	--

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

Students are not happy about the quality of advice, support and guidance they receive either before they start on sixth form courses or in preparation for further education. This weakness was highlighted at the last inspection and it has not improved sufficiently since. There are shortcomings here and considerable variations in the quality of support and guidance they receive in subjects. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to support the students' achievement, although there is good practice in subjects such as drama and media studies.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Issues identified in the last inspection have been tackled with a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Steps have been taken to monitor the implementation of action taken, but monitoring lacks rigour and inconsistent practice is still evident.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students' views vary considerably. The main concern of Year 13 students is that they were given insufficient guidance about sixth form courses and then in preparation for higher education. Several feel that they chose the wrong sixth form course. This is partly reflected in the high proportion of AS Level entries that were unclassified in 2004. However, Year 12 students' views are that changes in procedures have made guidance more helpful. Most students feel that the school seeks and acts upon their ideas and concerns, although some Year 13 students are not convinced that their views are always listened to and several do not like having to be in school until after lunch each day.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory overall but with considerable variations. Girls are doing better than boys throughout the school; in particular boys of Pakistani and black-Caribbean backgrounds attain lower standards than others and do not always achieve as well as they should have. Standards are average overall by Years 9 and 11. Standards are below average in the sixth form. However, this represents satisfactory progress from students' below average standards on entry to post-16 courses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Girls achieve well and make good progress to GCSE, whereas many boys do not achieve all that they are capable of in Years 7 to 11.
- Achievement is good overall in Years 10 and 11 where teaching is more effective and focused well on examination requirements.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science rise as the students move through the school and are better than national averages by GCSE.
- Examination results and standards in information and communication technology are very low.
- Achievement is very good in design and technology in Years 10 and 11, and standards are well above average.

Commentary

1. Test results for Year 9 students rose more rapidly than nationally over the period from 1999 to 2003. The 2004 results in English and mathematics were broadly the same as in 2003. Results fell considerably in science and by a greater rate than the fall nationally. Results in 2004 were in line with the national average in 2004 in all three subjects. These results represented satisfactory progress overall in mathematics for the students from entry to the school, but barely satisfactory progress in English and science. Girls performed better than boys - a pattern that has been consistent for the last three years. Based on their attainment on entry, boys' progress was less than they should have made. Furthermore, boys of black-African and black-Caribbean backgrounds gained lower results than other groups.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.9 (33.0)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	35.8 (36.1)	35.5 (35.4)
science	32.6 (34.1)	33.1 (33.6)

There were [number] students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. GCSE results have fluctuated since 1999 but with a downward trend. Results in 2004 fell slightly from 2003 and were in line with the national average. These results represented barely satisfactory progress overall from the students' Year 9 test results. There were considerable variations in performance by gender and by ethnic

background. As at Year 9, girls did much better than boys in 2004; this pattern has been evident for the last four years. Furthermore, girls of all backgrounds and both boys and girls of Bangladeshi backgrounds achieved better results than expected given their Year 9 test results. By contrast, boys and particularly boys of Pakistani and Black-Caribbean backgrounds did not achieve all that they should have at GCSE in 2004 given their earlier attainment.

- There were also considerable variations in the performance of different subjects. Results were well above average in science, design and technology, French and music and above average in English language and mathematics. Achievement was at least good in these subjects as well as in German and physical education and for girls in English literature and religious education. Results were below average in business studies, geography and drama and very low in information and communication technology. Achievement was unsatisfactory in these subjects. GCSE results were also below average in English literature and religious education because of poor performance and achievement of boys.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	52 (55)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (93)	89 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	284.5	282.5

There were 241 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Achievement is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 because teaching and learning are more effective and the students have a more positive attitude to their learning on examination courses. However, the narrow range of vocational and work-related alternatives to GCSE limits the progress of students for whom such alternative courses would be more applicable. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are sufficient to support the students' progress, but weaknesses in their competence in information and communication technology have a detrimental effect on overall achievement. The best achievement is in design and technology and music in Years 10 and 11, where the students are making very good progress. Consequently, standards are well above average in design and technology in Year 11 and above average in music. Achievement is also good throughout the school in history, modern foreign languages and physical education largely because of the quality of the teaching that engages and interests the students in these subjects.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall from Years 7 to 11, with some subject variations, because not all subject teachers plan effectively for the range of students in their classes. Students in Years 10 and 11 who follow the study support option achieve satisfactorily in the small tuition groups that give them individualised support and this helps them to gain qualifications in the reduced number of GCSE subjects they sit. Of 20 Year 11 students on the special educational needs list in 2004, all gained at least one GCSE grade A* - G. Gifted and talented students also make good progress overall in Years 10 and 11 because of the programmes that focus on stretching and extending them in individual subjects; they make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. Most students at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language make good progress in work across the

curriculum and often take the lead in class discussions and presentations. Students at early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress.

Sixth form

6. Overall A Level results improved in 2004 but were below the national average. As in the main school, female students' results were much higher than those of their male counterparts. The average A Level grade in each subject and the proportion of A and B grades were both below average. However, there was significant reduction in the proportion of unclassified results in 2004 and the proportion of A to E grades was above average. These results represented reasonable progress from the students' GCSE grades but with considerable variations between subjects. The best performance was in design and technology, sociology and physical education where results were above average and virtually all students exceeded their target grades based on their GCSE results. Students also met or exceeded their targets in art and design, English literature, history, media studies and psychology. Students generally made slower progress and failed to achieve their targets in English language, mathematics, biology, chemistry, information and communication technology, drama and economics. AS Level results in 2004 also varied considerably between subjects, although no valid comparisons are possible with national figures, as the method of accounting for these grades has changed significantly. However, over one-quarter of entries were unclassified and only one-sixth were at grades A and B. In many cases, students have dropped their unclassified AS Level to concentrate on three A Levels in Year 13. This dropping of AS Levels accounts for the slightly higher standards now than these AS Level results indicate.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	91.1 (87.0)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	23.2 (25.4)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	221.0 (215.9)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 87 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

7. The satisfactory achievement in the sixth form is based on satisfactory teaching and learning overall. However, achievement is not all that it could be for a minority of students because of their poor attendance records. The quality of the teaching and positive student attitudes are leading to good achievement in art and design, media studies, business studies, art and design, information and communication technology, geography and history. Achievement in the remaining subjects inspected in depth is satisfactory. Standards are above average in Year 13 in art and design and drama. By contrast, standards are below average in English, mathematics, biology and chemistry. Basic skills are secure in literacy and the use of information and communication technology, but shortcomings in the students' competence in mathematics holds back progress in subjects needing these skills. Good achievement was seen in the sixth form for students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall but very variable. Behaviour is good in the sixth form. Personal development is good. Attendance is satisfactory in the main school but poor in the sixth form. Punctuality is unsatisfactory across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many students enjoy school and feel it is a safe and friendly place.
- There are often good relationships, and there is good racial harmony around the school.
- Sixth form students willingly take on responsibilities around the school.
- Attendance in the sixth form is well below what is required and punctuality is unsatisfactory, because the school's procedures are inadequate and inconsistently applied.
- Punctuality in the rest of the school is often very lax, especially at lesson changeovers.
- A small minority of students smoke in the toilets and intimidate others.
- Some subjects make a good contribution to personal development, although spirituality is not consistently planned for across the curriculum.

Commentary

- Attendance is broadly satisfactory, although there are still too many students whose attendance slips below 85 per cent. The school has made concerted efforts to monitor and promote good attendance, and with the introduction of a new electronic system they are beginning to monitor absences by ethnicity and gender. Many students arrive on time to school, although far too many students and staff show few signs of urgency about starting lessons punctually. By reducing the effective learning time, achievement is also reduced. Latecomers add to the problems of behaviour management where these exist.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.0	School data	1.0
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

- The majority of students indicate that they enjoy school and find it a friendly and welcoming place. Year 7 students in particular found the procedures to aid their transfer into the school very useful and as a result feel they settled in easily. They also commented that the dedicated sixth form mentors help them to feel comfortable very quickly and provide a listening ear if they are worried about anything. There are good relationships across and between the year groups, greatly helped by activities such as drama, music and sport in which students of all ages take part. The school population contains a wide variety of races, faiths and ethnic heritage yet there is no racial tension or harassment and most students get along very well with their peers.
- The exception is a small minority of students who smoke in the toilets and intimidate others who try to use them, despite attempts to control use through keys. There is also evidence of some graffiti and littering around the school grounds and a casual attitude to the school environment. Some doors are routinely kicked open and a few displays have been defaced or damaged. Numbers of exclusions have fallen as new behaviour management systems have become embedded in the life of the school.

There was an imbalance in the proportion of exclusions of black-Caribbean and black-African boys in the last year. The school is taking action to deal with this. There are indications that this action has met with some success over the first term.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	676	37	3
White – Irish	11	0	0
White – any other White background	91	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	32	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	18	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	29	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	228	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	157	6	1
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	49	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	36	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	77	9	0
Black or Black British – African	41	12	2
Black or Black British – any other Black background	18	3	0
Chinese	5	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	12	2	0

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

- Personal development is good. Subjects such as art and design and design and technology make a good contribution to moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a lesson on product design students were given good opportunities to work in small teams, hence facilitating the development of skills of collaboration, negotiation and co-operation . . . Students in art and design tackle a good range of work from van Gogh to Japanese prints. They look at artists from North America, ancient Egypt and the Aztecs as part of a departmental plan for spiritual development, moral responsibilities and an appreciation of social issues. The performing arts also contribute well and ‘enrich the school’ in the words of one parent. For example, there are Sikh and African drumming groups and a gamelan orchestra. The school successfully celebrates and promotes the cultural backgrounds of students at the school. It is also successful in promoting a wider understanding amongst all students of the cultural diversity inherent in British society today. However, school-wide planning for personal development is much less systematic: spiritual development is just satisfactory but more by accident than design, as it is not consistently planned or implemented across the school. There are missed opportunities to develop spirituality in assemblies and tutor periods, although there are pockets of good practice around the school.

Sixth form

12. By and large behaviour is good in the sixth form and always better when students are stimulated and challenged by good teaching. Sixth formers willingly take on responsibility around the school. Several sixth formers act as peer mentors and a group ran a very effective and moving anti-bullying tutorial with Year 7 students. Others work in the library, at parents' evenings and have collaborated to make a video about the school, as well as working on the new sixth form prospectus. However, attendance and punctuality are a major source of concern and are poor enough to impact on achievement. Although the school has recently taken up an electronic registration system it is used inconsistently and students are cavalier about coming on time, whether to school, to lessons or tutorial periods. Several drift in up to 15 minutes late or even have to be cajoled out of the common room. In the week of inspection average attendance fell below 80 percent. Apart from a negative effect on standards this is also poor preparation for life after school. Members of staff are not uniformly strict in setting out their expectations.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching varies in consistency, although there is much that moves learning forward at pace. The curriculum meets statutory requirements but is limited in the range of options and routes it provides for students from Year 10 upwards. There is a good range of enrichment activities, particularly in sport and the arts. The school council is a valuable vehicle for enabling students to have a voice in the life of the school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and is more effective in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Assessment is satisfactory throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 largely because of a sharper focus in planning.
- There remain inconsistencies in several aspects of teaching that the school is working hard to eliminate.
- The national strategy for improving teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is starting to have a beneficial effect in many lessons.
- Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and better use is now made of the information available to teachers.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 175 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (2%)	33 (19%)	75 (43%)	49 (28%)	11 (6%)	3 (2%)	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.

13. There is a sharp focus placed on improving the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior management of the school. This drive has met with some success, but it is recognised that there is still a considerable distance to go if the students are to achieve all that they are capable of on a consistent basis. There is a considerable proportion of the teaching that is good or better. Several teachers regularly teach high quality lessons which are lively and interesting. These lessons engage the students' attention, involve them at all stages and promote a very wide range of learning. The variety of activities adopted helps to generate pace to learning and results in highly motivated students who learn and achieve well. However, this quality is not consistent across the school and learning is only satisfactory at best in a substantial minority of lessons.
14. Many of the characteristics of teaching in the best lessons are missing in the weaker lessons and account for why learning in these is less than satisfactory. For example, the better lessons are carefully planned and prepared. Objectives for learning are sharply defined and shared with the students so that they have a clear picture of the purpose of the lesson. The success in meeting these objectives is evaluated so that teachers and students are aware of what learning has taken place and what the next steps will be. Weaknesses in many lessons stem from the failure of the teachers to plan their lessons with sufficient focus. Objectives are vague so that students do not understand the purpose of what they are learning and do not engage in the lesson. Restlessness and poor concentration often ensues, which teachers do not deal with effectively. This leads to a slow pace to learning. The national strategy to improve teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 has been adopted with considerable success by many teachers. Their lessons are well structured and have clear objectives for what the students are to learn. This enables learning to build systematically.

15. There are also considerable inconsistencies in the expectations of teachers and the challenge that they provide in their lessons. Teachers put their subject expertise to good use in many lessons by their probing questioning of the students that deepens their understanding of the material. Teachers in these lessons plan materials and adopt techniques that tackle the learning needs of all in their classes whatever their needs might be. The most able are stretched, students with special educational needs are supported and targeted and the language development of learners of English as an additional language suitably targeted. However, despite an overall improvement since the last inspection, there is still some inconsistency of approach to planning for students learning English as an additional language in individual lessons. Several subjects are seeking ways of improving the achievement of boys by adopting strategies such as boy/girl seating plans and clear short-term goals for each part of the lesson. These methods are working well but are not consistently adopted across all subjects.
16. Students with special educational needs learn well in their support lessons because of the sympathetic and knowledgeable guidance they receive from their teachers. Learning support assistants play a positive role in the learning of students in subject lessons, sometimes taking part in team teaching. In some subject lessons teachers provide very well for the whole range in the classroom, including students with special educational needs; in others the provision is unsatisfactory because teachers lack awareness of how best to enable these students to learn.
17. There have been improvements in assessment procedures since the last inspection. Regular assessments have been introduced to monitor students' progress and are used as a basis for target-setting and teacher planning. However, as with teaching there is a lack of consistency in the quality and use made of assessment in several subjects. Target grades are now set as more than the minimum expectation and are based more accurately on performance in individual subjects. There have been improvements in the quality of marking so that students are better informed of what they need to do to improve, but again the approach is not uniform across the school.

Sixth form

18. Many of the features of teaching in the main school are also evident in the sixth form. Several high quality lessons were observed where the teacher challenged the students' thinking and generated very positive attitudes. The best teaching is stimulating and well informed, requiring considerable thought and involvement by the students. Most respond well and enjoy participating in discussions and arguments. There are occasions when the teaching is over-dominated by the teacher and not adjusted well to sixth form students. Learning is more pedestrian in these cases and does not develop the necessary independence of thought needed at this level.
19. Assessment has also improved in the sixth form. It is used well to give students and understanding of how they can improve and to respond to individual needs in art, music and history in particular. However, there are weaknesses in the science subjects in both respects. Sixth form tutors now check the students' folders not just for their organisation but also for content to help identify students who may be underachieving.

The curriculum

Limited choice of courses for students in Years 10 to 13 means the overall curriculum does not meet their needs sufficiently well and is, therefore, unsatisfactory. The school provides a good range of well attended enrichment activities. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory in the main school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of GCSE courses offered in Years 10 and 11 but the provision of vocational courses is very limited.
- The sixth form curriculum provides a wide range of AS Level and A Level courses.
- Progression routes from 14 to 19 are too narrow and do not cater for the aspirations and abilities of all students.
- The school is making good progress in using the curriculum as a vehicle to ensure that the specific needs of students can be met.
- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities particularly in performing arts, sport and music.
- The use of new technology and the promotion of numeracy skills in subjects are inconsistent.

Commentary

20. The school meets its statutory requirements in providing the necessary National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and has gained improved balance in its provision by moving to a two-week timetable. Shortcomings in the curriculum identified at the last inspection have largely been tackled, although there are still serious concerns over the provision of numeracy across the curriculum where the school is currently without a co-ordinator. As a consequence the implementation and evaluation of a cross-curricular numeracy policy is yet to be fully tackled. Literacy is now embedded in the curriculum and its implementation and co-ordination have improved since the last inspection. All departments are aware of their responsibilities to implement the school's literacy policy although the impact of this drive to improve students' literacy skills is yet to be evaluated. New technology use across subjects in Years 7 to 9 is patchy at best with no use of computers at all by students in history and art and design.
21. Provision for students learning English as an additional language has improved overall since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Since then there has been further staff training and greater emphasis on the needs of these students, particularly the early stage learners. The language support centre is well managed, but would benefit from more resources, especially access to computers and suitable software. The provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory although guidance to help subject staff implement the curriculum for these students is not sufficiently focused on effective teaching and learning support strategies. The school is starting to develop its programme for extending the gifted and talented. Individual subjects already have interesting activities, but the provision has not been fully exploited at a whole-school level.
22. There is a very wide range of GCSE courses offered to students in Years 10 and 11 which cater for the needs of many. However, there are a few general vocational courses offered but not sufficient to cater for the needs of all those for whom the full diet of GCSEs may not be the most appropriate pathway. The school is aware of the need to develop this aspect of their provision. A handful of students have taken level

1 NVQ courses at one of the local colleges and the school has this year offered applied business for the first time. The less able students benefit from having a support option in Years 10 and 11 which gives them an opportunity to catch-up on coursework and to be supported in a smaller range of GCSEs.

23. Curriculum provision in some subjects is very good and engages students' interest well. For example, extensive use of three-dimensional work in art and design and very good use of computer aided-design and computer-aided manufacturing in design and technology provide an interesting and stimulating environment for students to develop their practical skills. All students have an opportunity to study an accredited information and communication technology course in Years 10 and 11 and many students are entered for the short course GCSE in physical education. The physical education curriculum has also been extended with dance and outdoor education but timetable time is below the statutory guidance for non-examination students in Years 10 and 11. All students now follow a short course GCSE in religious education in Years 10 and 11, which fulfils requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is also now a programme to cater for the students' personal, social and health education in Years 7 to 10; however, this has not yet worked through to Year 11. The school is also providing a formal programme of citizenship studies and hence is now meeting its statutory requirements in this subject.
24. The provision of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities for students is good. There are homework clubs which are well attended by students and a good range of sports teams and clubs which are enthusiastically taken up by boys and girls of all year groups. Students have good access to and make use of the many computer facilities in the school. There are numerous foreign trips undertaken, particularly for those studying a modern foreign language. The very good timetabled music curriculum, where different music styles are enthusiastically and expertly taught, is enhanced with a very good range of visits which support students' learning. Students participate in various choirs and musical productions and a relatively large number study a musical instrument. As befits its performing arts status, extra-curricular provision in drama is very good. Students participate in the varied plays and productions offered and the 'Wanstead Oscars' celebrate student achievements. Unfortunately, there are currently limited opportunities offered for students to enrich their English studies.
25. Members of the teaching staff are suitably qualified and there are a sufficient number to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum. There are particular strengths in physical education, which has a good number of specialist teachers, and in design and technology, where staff work very closely together and are very good role models. Staffing in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because there is too much part-time and temporary provision. This adversely affects the students' achievement. Accommodation is broadly satisfactory, except for information and communication technology which is sub-standard. Physical education has good accommodation with plenty of space and dedicated teaching rooms for theory lessons. Resources are mostly satisfactory with strengths in design and technology, mathematics, physical education and religious education. Despite being relatively small, the library is well planned and organised to provide a welcoming and stimulating work space. However, access to new technology resources is unsatisfactory throughout the school. This limits the possibility to use new technology to enhance teaching and support learning in several subjects.

Sixth form

26. Although the curriculum overall is unsatisfactory, the sixth form offers a good range of AS Level and A Level courses, including some subjects not studied at GCSE such as classical civilization, politics, psychology and sociology. These courses often attract a good proportion of students on entry to Year 12. Whilst the size of the sixth form is larger than that typically found in schools, only just over half of the previous Year 11 chose to remain for further study. However, the school has attracted students from other neighbouring schools. The entry requirements are quite modest and, as a result, some students who embark on A Level courses find the demands high and do not achieve the standards required to continue their studies into Year 13. In contrast to the good number of A Level subjects on offer, there remains a limited range of courses that have an alternative accreditation, with only two vocational programmes in the sixth form, both at Intermediate Level. This was noted at the time of the last inspection. The school is aware that the curriculum at present reflects a programme that no longer meets the needs of all of the students who wish to stay on and plans to broaden it, in the first instance by offering a new health and social care one year AS Level course in September 2005.
27. The general studies course provides appropriate opportunities for students to develop their understanding of the world around them beyond their specific subject options. Some good materials are available to support discussion and debate but students who were spoken to did not fully appreciate the rationale for the course and its relevance to them. This was reflected by the poor attendance in some of the lessons observed. The school has taken satisfactory steps, through the general studies programme, to rectify the non-compliance with the requirement to provide religious education. Students will also be engaged in planning a focused conference later in the year and it is intended that members of the religious education department will make a significant contribution to this. The school does not provide a compulsory time for sporting activities.
28. There is a satisfactory range of clubs for sixth formers including music, sports and art. Visits to higher education establishments and visitors to the school also help to enhance the experiences of the students. For example, good opportunities are provided to support the personal development of the students through the peer mentoring scheme. There is an appropriate number of qualified staff to support the sixth form curriculum and resources are adequate. The new sixth form block has helped to create a stronger sense of identity for the students and provides a good social and private study base, which is well equipped with computers.

Care, guidance and support

Attention given to care, support and guidance is satisfactory, although inconsistent. Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory in the main school but unsatisfactory in the sixth form. Arrangements to seek and act upon the views of students are good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Initiatives such as the school council and peer mentors offer good opportunities for students to take responsibility.
- The use of tutor time is very variable.

- There are good arrangements for the students' transfer from primary school enabling them to settle into the school quickly.
- Insufficient progress has been made in improving the quality of advice and guidance in the sixth form.

Commentary

29. Form tutor time is used very inconsistently. There is no thought for the week or similar pause for reflection; some tutors are diligent in working to a timetable of assemblies, checking planners, looking at homework and offering support and guidance, but too many are not. Over time this adds up to a substantial number of occasions on which students do not do anything useful. On rare occasions, worthwhile activity occurs, such as a very good session on bullying seen in Year 7. However, all too often students waste time chatting and doing nothing. Good pastoral routines exist, but are not yet consistently implemented or monitored.
30. The transfer arrangements from primary school are good. Members of staff visit the incoming primary school students, and they have a taster day in which there are sample lessons and a tour of the school. Despite the size and complexity of the site, students report they quickly settled in and felt at home, assisted by their sixth form mentors.
31. The school council in Years 7 to 11 is successful and well regarded by its students, having tackled a number of important issues such as canteen food. Students are elected by their peers into year councils who then send representatives to the overall school council. This arrangement works well and senior members of staff treat its business with respect; younger students are glad they became involved and feel they genuinely have a voice which is listened to. There are a number of other ways in which students successfully take responsibility: they can be librarians, act as ushers at parents' evenings or take part in drama, sport and music outside school hours.

Sixth form

32. Students generally do not feel that the level of help and support that they get in the sixth form is adequate. There is a carefully planned programme of general studies, tutorial sessions and timetabled supervised study periods. Whilst students value opportunities to discuss personal matters on a one-to-one basis with their tutors, they do not all find the tutorial sessions or the general studies course particularly relevant. A significant proportion felt that they had not had enough guidance on which courses to follow in the sixth form and had subsequently found the Year 12 programme so demanding that they were unable to reach the standard required for the examinations at the end of the year. The general introduction programme covers important aspects such as study skills but most of the introductory sixth form work is undertaken within subjects. The quality of provision is variable and not all students receive an effective introduction to the courses that they have chosen to study. There are links with higher education establishments with both visits and visitors, but again, students felt that they had not been given enough advice about researching universities and completing UCAS forms. There is a clear system for setting both target minimum grades and aspirational targets but the understanding and use of these by staff to support and challenge students is also variable. Some students themselves are sceptical about the grades and their effectiveness in helping them to gauge their progress.

33. The school seeks the views of the sixth form through a council of representatives. The representatives themselves feel that it is a useful forum for exploring and discussing issues of importance to them but a number of students do not feel that their concerns are being taken seriously. The school is trying to establish a balance between providing firm guidance on the importance of study and the need to develop self discipline and independence amongst the students. The more positive responses of some Year 12 students suggest that this is beginning to happen, but at present the systems are not sufficiently well embedded and, as such, are not as effective as they should be.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community are satisfactory and so are the links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are positive about several areas of the school's work and that there has been definite improvement since the last inspection.
- The performing arts contribute well to links with the local community.
- There are significant weaknesses in the documentation given to parents and annual reports about progress remain unsatisfactory.

Commentary

34. Parents feel that the school has definitely improved in recent years. In particular school uniform, better behaviour and keeping students in the school at lunchtimes have made significant contributions to raising the school's image in the local community. Parents are complimentary about many subjects; art, modern languages, performing arts and physical education all come in for praise. There are mixed views on the help and support given to students with special educational needs, and some concerns about behaviour in lessons and homework. They recognise that, since the last inspection there have been notable improvements in the ethos and most students now enjoy school. Local opinions of the school have certainly improved as these changes are recognised.
35. Communications with parents are also improving and parents report good responses from individual teachers; however, there are significant weaknesses in the documentation provided for parents. The prospectus is professionally produced but lacks statutory information such as National Curriculum test results and information on those studying vocational courses. The governors' annual report to parents also lacks Key Stage 3 test results, targets for GCSEs and some information about governors themselves. The school holds annual review days twice a year in which performance data is collected and disseminated to parents. However, the quality of this assessment varies and in some cases the targets set are unrealistic or too simplistic to be useful. Based on this data the annual reports to parents are unsatisfactory; very few indicate exactly what students know, understand and can do or how they should improve. Grades are not always used and are on occasion contradictory. Parents are justified in feeling that the information they get is sometimes inadequate or misleading.
36. The school's links with the local community and other schools are satisfactory, with particular strengths in the performing and expressive arts. The media studies

department has organised visits to films, a local media centre for a news simulation and a BBC show. Visitors such as a filmmaker and a magazine journalist come in to enrich learning. Primary children come in for a choral and orchestral day, professional musicians run workshops and the school's drumming troupes perform at local primary school and festivals. As a result performing arts have a high profile and add greatly to the work of the school; the recent granting of specialist performing arts status will extend and add to this process.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory. The headteacher is providing good leadership and a clear direction for the school's improvement. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory overall. Management processes have improved and are satisfactory in the main school and in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and deputies provide a clear educational direction for the school.
- There is a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Procedures to monitor the work of the staff are more rigorous but there remain inconsistencies in the effectiveness with which subject leadership operates.
- Governors have re-organised their operation so that they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but do not take a sufficiently long-term view of its development.

Commentary

37. The headteacher and deputies work well as a team with a shared understanding of what is needed to secure further improvements. They have been instrumental in the progress made in many key areas since the last inspection. The headteacher, in particular, has made a considerable difference in his two years in post. Parents, students, staff and governors all recognise the value of the changes he has introduced and support his commitment for further improvement. He has made his ambitions for the school abundantly clear to all and has communicated the clear message that while improvements have been secured, there remains much to do. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to achieve and to participate in all that the school offers. Measures to ensure race equality are in place and outcomes carefully monitored.
38. Part of the drive over the last two years and the main immediate priority for the school is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Many teachers have embraced this and have become reflective of their performance. These teachers show a strong commitment to improve. Various mechanisms have been adopted, including giving teachers the opportunity to observe each other to share good practice. The national strategy to improve teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 had previously not been adopted consistently or rigorously. This has changed over the last two years and teachers are starting to adopt the principles of the strategy with greater effect. There is still a considerable distance to go as the headteacher recognises, and as the teaching seen during the inspection shows.

39. Management systems and procedures have been strengthened since the last inspection to focus on the drive to raise achievement and improve teaching and learning. However, there is still scope for their impact to be felt more consistently across all areas of the school. A secure base of assessment data has been established and mechanisms to evaluate and analyse this information have been developed. Several departments use this well to help them to identify strengths in performance and where action needs to be taken to secure improvement. Many heads of department are developing their leadership skills well and are helping to drive development forward. However, this is not a consistent picture across the school and further coaching and training is being provided where improvements are needed. The line management by senior management of the work of departments varies in its consistency and rigour. The systematic observation of lessons has been a key to improvements in management. The headteacher and senior staff have a very good picture of where strengths lie and the action needed to eliminate weaknesses. These processes are used well to identify priorities for the next stage of the school's improvement and to plan for their implementation. However, the response of departments remains somewhat inconsistent with planning not always sharply focused or outcomes of action easily evaluated.
40. The governing body has gone through changes over the last two years and is stronger for it. The committee structure is now more efficient and effective. Key governors play a crucial role in supporting the school's improvement. They have become increasingly questioning of the headteacher and staff as their expertise and understanding have developed. The governing body provides appropriate challenge so that school management has to justify the outcomes of action taken. Financial management has improved, although decisions taken before the last inspection were resulting in the budget rapidly moving into deficit. Action has been taken quickly to stabilise the position, but this has limited some possibilities for development. Where governors still have scope to extend their role is in helping to shape the strategic direction for the school's future. They have sight of the school improvement plan as it is being prepared and confirm its action, but have not given a longer-term framework in which school management can operate.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,538,732	Balance from previous year	129,100
Total expenditure	5,629,470	Balance carried forward to the next	38,362
Expenditure per student	3,830		

Sixth form

41. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory overall. There is a clear focus on strengthening provision and raising standards. The head of sixth form, in conjunction with the senior leadership team, has worked hard to secure improvements since the last inspection. For example, a new and informative teaching and learning policy has been established. This mirrors that of the main school and which has been informed by an extensive survey of students' views undertaken last year. The introductory handbook has been updated as has the students' home/school agreement, with a view to encouraging sixth formers to develop an increasingly responsible attitude to studying independently. These initiatives, along with several other priorities are carefully outlined in the improvement plan for the sixth form, but the

success criteria against which progress is to be measured are insufficiently directed towards student achievement. As a result, the monitoring which is currently being undertaken, whilst helpful in giving informal feedback, lacks focus and does not give a clear picture of the impact of any action.

42. The skills of subject leaders are variable with examples of good practice evident in some areas. In these departments, the teaching and learning policy is being implemented with enthusiasm and evaluation is taking place regularly. Elsewhere, skills are not so well developed, with some particular weaknesses in the analysis and use of data to inform planning. In these departments there is less clarity about how to improve provision. These inconsistencies are recognised and there is a strong commitment to eradicate them.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision for work related learning is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-established work experience programmes help students to gain an understanding of the world of work and links to external careers advice are effective.
- The limited number of vocational courses does not enable the school to respond to the wide range of the students' aptitudes and interests.
- There is no policy to encourage departments to contribute to work related learning.

Commentary

43. The school careers co-coordinator and line manager, together with organisations providing external careers advice have established a good work experience programme. However, there are problems with monitoring placements because allocated members of school staff are not always available to visit students. The lack of a work related learning policy results in departments missing the opportunity to play their part in this aspect of the curriculum.
44. Work experience gives students a good insight into the world of work. However, little use is made of the experience because it occurs at the end of the summer and is not reviewed until September when it is no longer fresh in the memories of students. Some subjects are supporting workplace skills by planning lessons where students work in teams or small groups and establish responsibility and personal development. Examples of where subjects help students to explore workplace skills include modern language study tours, design and technology teamwork; drama presentations and coaching skills in physical education. Students explained that they enjoy these activities because they are purposeful and make them feel involved. Unfortunately only a limited number of subjects are adopting this approach specifically to support work-related learning. However, in many cases these skills are being introduced through the new teaching and learning focus of whole-school planning.
45. The teaching and learning programme being developed by the school, has one consistent area that supports work-related learning. This is in promoting opportunities for students' reflection about themselves in a group or team activity, which has a good impact on raising self esteem. The increased flexibility programme is restricted to very few students. A limited careers library and office do little to stimulate interest in the world of work. There are few business links to draw on for work-related conferences or exhibitions and there has been no audit to determine whether parents may be interested in contributing to the programme.

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 **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in English are above average.
- Girls achieve well in this school. Boys are not making sufficient progress because teachers have low expectations of them.
- Teachers do not adapt teaching and activities enough in lessons to provide opportunities for the most able and low attaining students.
- Good support is given within the department to newly qualified teachers.

Commentary

46. Achievement in English is satisfactory overall. Test results in Year 9 in 2004 were in line with the national average although these results represented barely satisfactory progress overall for the students from entry to the school. Not enough students reach Level 6 and above in test results, particularly when compared to levels on entry, because lessons offer insufficient challenge for the most able students.
47. GCSE results in English were above average in 2004 when compared to all schools and similar schools. Standards in Year 11 are above average and students make good progress but girls do better than boys. Current standards in Year 9 are typical of students' performance nationally and are broadly average. The most able students in Year 9 can write in a variety of styles, capturing the reader's interest and by Year 11 most students can explore ideas and respond to media and literary texts with confidence. However, low attaining students are reluctant to write at length and make many mistakes in spelling and punctuation.
48. Girls do well in English. They make good progress from their entry levels and GCSE results are well above average. Boys do not achieve as well as they should because expectations are not sufficiently high. This is identified in Year 9 teacher assessments, which underestimate the achievement of boys in test results. Girls achieve well above average standards at GCSE in English. It is commendable that the school has such a high entry rate for English literature although boys achieve below average and these results affect the overall grades.
49. Some progress has been made since the last inspection, although there is still inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the department. This is largely because teachers do not adapt activities enough in lessons to provide opportunities for all students, particularly for lower attaining and gifted and talented students. However, teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, students build on previous learning and teachers plan swift transitions between a good range of activities. Students listen well to others students' views and respond thoughtfully to texts. In lessons that are too teacher-led, students have insufficient opportunity to

learn independently and therefore do not progress as well. Teachers prepare resources to capture the interest of students but do not always use a wide enough range of teaching methods to engage all students. Teachers have good relationships with students and classes are generally well managed.

50. Some teachers are marking constructively, outlining what students are doing well and how they can improve. However, there are still inconsistencies across the department in the quality of marking and some teachers offer the briefest general comments and concentrate too much on the quality of presentation.
51. There has been improvement and the department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The recently appointed head of department provides satisfactory leadership and management. He has identified important priorities for improving performance of students in Years 7 to 9, but these are in early stages of implementation. Particularly good support and guidance is provided for newly qualified staff through shared teaching and helpful curriculum planning. Lesson content and resources are planned together and schemes of work are shared across the department to ensure consistency. The school provides a generous time allowance for an experienced teacher to team teach with newly qualified teachers, offering a useful opportunity for shared planning and evaluation and for more experienced teachers to model examples of effective teaching strategies and skilled classroom management.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Satisfactory progress has been made in the development of language and literacy skills across the school since the last inspection and standards of literacy are average. However, the school does not monitor sufficiently across departments to eliminate inconsistencies and ensure that objectives written into schemes of work are evident in lessons.
53. Students write in a variety of styles, participate well in discussions and listen to the opinion of others. They communicate ideas effectively through flow charts, annotations and brainstorming. By Year 9, higher-attaining students write at length and read with good understanding and Year 11 students can write extended essays, make notes and analyse different types of text. However, lower-attaining students are less confident in speaking in lessons and they often produce short written answers that restrict their achievement in all years.
54. Most departments emphasise the importance of using subject specific vocabulary, using word walls successfully to highlight key words. Successful strategies, most notably in history, physical education, design and technology and religious education include good use of starters and review sessions, display of questions and answers and students' work and well-structured group work. There is a whole-school marking policy but departments are not consistent in their implementation so some teachers do not correct inaccuracies in students' writing.
55. The library is welcoming and well stocked, offering a breakfast club and open-access during the day. Students have good opportunities to develop research skills and their interest in wider reading and departments are well supported with additional resources on request.

French and German

Provision in French and German is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has maintained the subject's popularity and standards.
- Attainment at the end of Year 11 is above average and students do well in comparison with their other subjects.
- Students' speaking skills are less well developed than listening, reading and writing.
- The department promotes students' cultural awareness very effectively.

Commentary

56. The leadership and management of the modern foreign languages department are very good. There is a clear vision and the department has chosen the right priorities for the development of languages in the school. The department organises its work very well and ensures consistent practice by carrying out regular observations of lessons. Line management arrangements work well, keeping the school's senior management aware of all developments. The department keeps track of students' progress, gives them all target grades and analyses GCSE results in order to understand how to keep improving. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, but the department does not analyse students' results at the end of Year 9 in sufficient depth and some inconsistencies remain in the quality of different lessons. There is good teamwork and the head of department is aware of shortcomings, deploying a network of support mechanisms to deal with them.
57. Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11, where they focus strongly on what they need to know in order to fulfil their potential and gain good grades. They also achieve well in Years 7 to 9, with most working to capacity in most lessons. Students from all groups, including those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented, and minority ethnic groups achieve equally well. There is some evidence to suggest that boys do not achieve as well as girls overall in French in Year 9, but this varies from year to year. French and German GCSE examination results were above average in 2004 and students did better in both languages than they did in the average of all their other subjects. The performance of both boys and girls was similar in French, but boys gained higher results than girls, well above the national average, in German. The school's analysis shows that all girls and most groups of boys gained results which were above their individual expectations. In 2004, levels assessed by teachers at the end of Year 9 were above national averages of 2003, with boys just above and girls well above. Standards observed in lessons were above average in Years 10 and 11 and average overall in Years 7 to 9.
58. Teaching is good overall in all age groups, with some very good examples. Most teachers use the foreign language to conduct most lessons most of the time and this benefits all students, especially those learning English as an additional language. Nevertheless, most students lack confidence when asked to speak in the foreign language because they do not practise enough themselves. Teachers invent imaginative lesson activities and most adjust the level of work to suit students' needs. Students know what is expected of them because teachers make the lesson objectives clear at the start of lessons and assess their work thoroughly and constructively, providing useful guidance on how to improve. Students are strongly motivated by the programme of visits and links with schools abroad, and by the very good development of their awareness of foreign cultures, which is a feature of many lessons. The use of new technology to promote language learning is not consistent across all classes. The school provides an opportunity for students to learn Urdu in Years 10 and 11. GCSE examination results were average in 2004, with boys doing much less well than girls. Standards observed in lessons were above average, with students achieving well because of good teaching.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' performance in tests at the end of Year 9 is improving steadily year by year.
- The newly appointed head of department has brought a fresh vision for the future development of the subject.
- The implementation of the guidance of the national strategy for improving teaching and learning in mathematics is patchy so some students do not gain fully from its benefits.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards well, but make too little use of computer rooms to enhance learning.

Commentary

59. Test results for Year 9 students were in line with the national average in 2004. These results represented satisfactory progress overall for the students from entry to the school. Girls performed slightly better than boys overall, but black African and Caribbean girls made less progress than other groups. There is a gradual upward trend in results year-by-year. GCSE results were just above the national average in 2004 and slightly below those of 2003. Students achieve satisfactorily in lessons and over time in the school. Their standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are average overall. Students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. They make good headway in lessons when helped by members of support staff who have prepared material jointly with the teacher and participate in its presentation.
60. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The newly appointed head of department is making a positive impact on improving teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best lessons teachers manage students effectively, involving them fully in discussion and activities so they acquire knowledge and understanding steadily. The department makes particularly good use of recently introduced interactive whiteboards. These enable students to obtain a much sharper and more immediate perspective on the mathematics they are learning and, thereby, raise their achievement. In a Year 11 lesson a student gave an excellent presentation of her answer to an algebra question using the interactive whiteboard very effectively. An adverse side effect of the whiteboard introduction is a reduced concentration on literacy skills. Although key words receive too little attention at present, there are plans to employ the interactive whiteboard to much better effect once teachers appreciate its full potential. Some lessons start late because students take a long time to walk from their previous lesson. This impedes their achievement and learning.
61. Implementation of the national strategy for improving teaching and learning is at an early stage. Teachers use the national strategy guidance inconsistently. The quality of starter activities varies. Some of these activities engage and motivate students but others are too involved and take too long. Students lose interest and begin to misbehave. In some lessons there is insufficient mental work to sharpen students' skills so they do not always readily recall basic number facts. Review sessions are equally varied. The best lessons end with a clear summary of what has taken place so that students enhance their knowledge and understanding fully. In some lessons the purpose of the review session is unclear so students do not gain a rounded review of what they have learnt.
62. There has been good progress since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Year 9 are rising. Extra-curricular provision is good with students participating in mathematics challenge competitions, video conferencing and various after-school

booster classes. Teachers and students are making good use of the interactive whiteboard but there are still too few opportunities for students to experience hands-on activities in computer rooms. Assessment of students' work has improved. Students are routinely given written targets after their work is marked. They have a better appreciation of what they need to do to improve but some targets lack precision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Students' standards in applying mathematics in other subjects are average overall. Provision is uneven because there is no co-ordinator in post to guide its use uniformly. Opportunities are missed in afternoon tutor sessions to interest and challenge students with cross-curricular mathematical examples. There is good use in subjects such as geography and design and technology. In geography, students complete climate graphs and analyse beach pebble distribution. In design and technology they produce scale models, calculate the calorie content of foods and consider pattern in work on textiles. Students in science complete graphs from experimental data and measure ultrasound depth. Although standards are average students sometimes forget to label axes or state units. History students confuse large numbers, such as one hundred thousand and one million, in the study of populations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching has contributed to a significant rise in standards at GCSE level.
- Teachers do not make enough use of different tasks to match the different scientific and literacy ability levels of students.
- Marking is inconsistent.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on activities to promote students' scientific thinking.
- There are good activities to enhance the curriculum.

Commentary

64. Test and examination results and standards of work seen are an improvement on those at the time of the last inspection. Results of national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were in line with the national average. In 2004 GCSE students took a mixture of single and double science. Both these groups of students had results above the national average and the students made very good progress compared to their results at the end of Year 9, but less well in relation to the attainment levels expected from when they entered the school.
65. Work seen in the inspection confirms these standards. In lessons seen there was no consistent pattern to any variation in attainment by gender although examination results show girls have usually performed better than boys in tests at the end of Year 9. Students with special educational needs and those with learning English as an additional language achieve at a similar rate to other students. Members of staff know the students well and general support is given in lessons. Students in Year 9 have satisfactory achievement in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Students in Years 10 and 11 do better than expected by their prior levels of attainment and so their achievement is good.

66. Good teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 have contributed to this rise in standards. In the better lessons, work has an appropriate challenge and students are constantly encouraged. Firm student management promotes a secure environment for learning and makes a positive contribution to the progress and learning in lessons. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are satisfactory and they are satisfactory overall. In the less successful lessons, the management of students is weak and there is a lack of tasks designed specifically to the ability level of different students, even when these are included in the planning. The marking of books is inconsistent in all years, although again it is better in Years 10 and 11 where there is a greater use of comments linked to the examination expectations. Overall there is little use of constructive comments that enable students to understand their current level of work and what is needed to raise that level. This means that students do not have a clear lesson-by-lesson guide as to how they can improve their work and comments that are made are not always followed up. Lesson starter activities tend to be used to recap facts rather than to stimulate students' thinking. This inhibits the development of their inquiry skills. This also happens when questioning is used to draw out factual information rather than encouraging students to develop lines of thought. The visits arranged for students and the events such as the science week have helped to raise the profile of and stimulate interest in the subject and give good support to the curriculum. Numerical skills are used appropriately and the new computer facilities are leading to a greater use of new technology to support teaching and learning. Most students' work well individually, in pairs and groups.
67. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear vision for the development and improvement of the subject. With a number of staff changes the new head of department has already put strategies in place to move the subject forward although it is too soon to see the impact. There is thorough monitoring of staff with good support for new and unqualified staff. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has managed the department with strong determination to tackle weaknesses. There has been some improvement in all the areas identified at the last inspection and with the significant improvement of standards at GCSE.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results at GCSE were well below average and completion rates were low.
- Staffing difficulties have had an adverse impact upon the department and the students' achievement.
- Unsatisfactory teaching has adversely affected achievement and standards in Years 7 to 9.
- All students now have timetabled information and communication technology throughout Years 7 to 11 in which to develop their skills and capability.
- There is now a clear vision and drive for improvement, which is having a positive impact upon achievement particularly in examination classes.

Commentary

68. Improvement is satisfactory, in the short time since the last inspection. However, staffing difficulties have had an adverse effect upon achievement and standards in the recent past. Teaching is still unsatisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9, where achievement is unsatisfactory in a significant number of lessons as result of ineffective classroom management. Consequently, overall standards are below average by Year 9. However, the staffing of lessons in Years 7 to 9 is more stable this year. There are more specialists in post and some satisfactory and good teaching was also seen.
69. All students in Years 10 and 11 now have the challenge of an appropriate examination course, either a short GCSE or the additional challenge of the applied GCSE course. Achievement and standards are now improving because the management, staffing and teaching in the department have improved largely because there are more specialists in post. However, examination results were well below average in the GCSE short course and in the GNVQ course in 2004. The unsatisfactory level of coursework completion on both courses was a significant factor. Teaching and achievement are now satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The good teaching seen in classes taken by the more experienced staff is leading to good achievement for the majority of students. The improved examination curriculum makes a positive contribution to raising standards. Standards in the applied GCSE course are average. Standards are below average in the GCSE short course where there is less teaching time and students have wider range of ability. Because more students take the short course, standards overall are below average by Year 11. The procedures for monitoring coursework have been improved. The more rigorous management of the courses and in particular the coursework element is having a positive impact. This effort needs to be maintained consistently by all teachers to overcome the shortcomings, which were evident in the management of coursework in the past.
70. Leadership and management have improved and are now satisfactory. The department is clear about its future direction and is starting to deal with the legacy of past problems which adversely affected achievement and standards. The department is aware of its current weaknesses and is working hard to develop an effective team ethos and support teaching staff where it is needed. Resources continue to improve. The number of computers is now average for a school of this size and technical support is effective. Good use is being made of data projectors by most teachers, but in some Year 7 and 8 lessons this technology was not used effectively. There is very limited access to interactive whiteboards within the department to encourage more student participation in whole-class teaching activities.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory overall, but patchy in Years 7 to 9. All students have timetabled information and communication technology lessons in which to develop their skills and knowledge from Year 7 to 11. Although standards are below average in Years 7 to 9 students are able to use core software adequately to enhance learning. The number of computers is close to the average for a school of this size. There is a good deal of autonomous use by students for homework in all years and for coursework in most subjects. This consists mostly of word processing with suitable graphics where necessary, although there is also some use of spreadsheets and presentation software. There is also some use of the internet for research in most subjects.
72. Resources have increased in the two years since the last inspection. This includes a significant number of data projectors and also some interactive whiteboards which are

having a very positive impact upon the use of new technology to support teaching and learning in many subjects. The use of information and communication technology is good and often very good in design and technology. Good use is made of new technology in geography, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Information and communication technology use is generally just satisfactory in other subjects with a few exceptions. Access problems are holding back more systematic use of new technology in most subjects. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards in mathematics but the use of computers by students is very limited. The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory in art and design, geography, history and religious education.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' learning in lessons is not sufficiently consolidated.
- Teachers do not plan lessons with the whole range of abilities in mind.
- Teachers plan activities so that students are actively engaged in their learning.
- The subject makes good contributions to improving literacy and numeracy.

Commentary

73. Students make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. Teacher assessments of Year 9 students rose in 2004 to above average. This improvement is explained by more frequent and varied assessments which resulted in more accurate measurement of student attainment. Overall teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory throughout the school. However, within teaching groups some students achieve less well where lessons lack pace and organisation. Many students make rapid progress whilst others are engaged on mundane tasks such as cutting and gluing. Often there are ineffective starter activities to recall previous learning and feedback sessions that are too brief to consolidate learning. Learning is much better where teachers check on the students' understanding by well targeted questions and where students work together and learn from each other. Learning is less effective where teachers do not challenge students but rely on volunteers to answer questions and where they fail to ensure that all students contribute to group work. Students' learning also slows where there is no extra support for writing for the less able and those with special educational needs and no extension tasks for more able students. However, there is good learning assistant support for those students learning English as an additional language. Boys and girls achievement is broadly the same in lessons. Student's attitudes vary from unsatisfactory to good depending on whether their interest has been engaged and on the degree of classroom management. There is much good collaborative work but some unproductive chatter.
74. In GCSE examinations in 2003 a large number of boys were awarded a grade D. To tackle this issue, the department instituted after-school sessions with the result that the proportion of D grades gained by boys in 2004 was less and more gained an A*-C grade. By contrast, girls' attainment was well above average. However, overall

results fell in 2004 to below national averages and students did less well than in many of their other subjects.

75. Standards are now average overall by Years 9 and 11. Students develop a good balance of skills throughout the school. The subject makes valuable contributions to their literacy development through imaginative activities, such as letter writing and journalistic style writing. Students' numeracy skills are developing well as shown in their work on climate graphs and population pyramids. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9. Coursework in Year 10 is of a high quality and here computer skills are used well to produce digital photographs and generate graphs showing results of questionnaires conducted as part of students' fieldwork.
76. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Some aspects of teaching and learning have improved but there is still insufficient focus on preparing the students for examinations. There have been improvements in leadership and management, both of which are now satisfactory. There is a commitment to monitoring the subject's performance and tackling weaknesses. The popularity of the subject is improving at GCSE level and fieldwork opportunities have been extended and include a very valuable residential trip. The department is becoming more reflective and making changes where necessary. Teachers collaborate well together to produce resources. There is a well focused programme of lesson observations and monitoring of homework setting and marking. Marking is satisfactory; it is mostly thorough and contains comments on how to improve. Consequently, students now have a better understanding of their attainment levels.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in teaching strategies have brought about rapid improvement in GCSE results.
- There is a clear progression of learning from Year 7 to Year 11.
- The use of new technology to enhance teaching and learning is still not developed.
- Student management strategies in Years 7 to 9 are not consistently applied.
- Leadership is well established as a force for improvement.

Commentary

77. GCSE results improved considerably between 2003 and 2004. They are now in line with the national average, although there were no A* grades in 2004. The gap between girls' and boys' results has narrowed and is now smaller than nationally. This marked improvement is due to the introduction of a new regime of teaching styles that provide challenge and interest for all students; current standards indicate that the upwards trend will continue. Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards seen during the inspection are at least average by Year 11, although the work of some groups shows above average ability to analyse source material and write reasoned answers to examination questions. Year 11 students, preparing for their mock GCSE examination, have good recall of key information and can discuss motive and causation with confidence; this shows good achievement. Weaker students can still recall information but are not sufficiently perceptive to tailor their answers to fit the questions asked.
78. Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average with clear progress in the development in skills and presentation from Year 7 to Year 9. Students achieve well as they master new historical knowledge and understanding. By Year 9, many can successfully link information from a variety of sources and then evaluate the usefulness of each source. Other students write descriptively rather than analytically, but still show clear understanding of events such as those leading to the outbreak of World War I.
79. All classes now learn in a positive and participative manner. Groupwork and discussion enable higher-attaining students to lead and support the others, including students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, who therefore achieve well as a group. This develops personal and social skills as well as extending knowledge. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Year 10 and 11. Students in Years 7 to 9 are sometimes more difficult to manage. On occasion extraneous chatter disturbs learning, when behaviour management strategies are inconsistently applied. In Years 10 and 11, students concentrate on their work intently and with much interest. At present teaching is not sufficiently well supported by the use of new technology. This misses an important opportunity to enrich resource material. Assessment is very good, through consistent marking practices and continuous assessment in class, so that teachers are aware of the needs of every student, and the students know how to improve their work.
80. Improvement since the last inspection is good, not least of all because of the rising GCSE results. In the relatively short time she has been in post the head of department has built a strong and cohesive team, emphasising the importance of continuous monitoring and sharing of best practice in the classroom. This very good and well informed leadership and management is having a positive effect on students' learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The easing of some staffing difficulties means that this is an improving department.

- All groups of students are now beginning to achieve well because of good teaching and positive attitudes.
- Teachers are reflective and committed to improvement.
- Teachers need to ensure that boys continue to achieve well and do not under-perform in examinations.

Commentary

81. Results in the 2004 short course GCSE examination were below the national average. Although these results show that most girls achieved well in terms of their prior attainment, all groups of boys achieved less well than they should have. However, 2004 was the first year where all students took an examination course in religious education; prior to this, the subject was optional and tended to be chosen by the more able youngsters. An additional problem was caused by several years of staffing instability with some examination groups being taught by a series of supply teachers. A second specialist has recently been appointed and the evidence indicates that standards are beginning to rise and that teachers are coping better with teaching right across the ability range.
82. By the end of Year 9, students' standards are average overall. This represents good achievement since students enter the school with below average levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. By the end of Year 11, students' standards in the short course GCSE are also average. This represents good achievement, particularly in the context of recent staffing instabilities. There is no evidence that boys in Years 10 and 11 are still under-achieving. This is because teachers are making very good use of strategies that engage and motivate them.
83. Year 9 students have secure knowledge and understanding of the key beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other world faiths represented in Britain and can appreciate the ways in which such faiths affect daily life. They use specialist vocabulary with growing confidence. Most students have developed good skills in empathy and reflection. All students move beyond the externals of religion to probe deeper questions of meaning and morality. Throughout the year groups there are examples of sensitive writing. Students in Years 10 and 11 build effectively on existing skills and knowledge. They form their own ideas on a wide range of ethical and religious issues and can apply their understanding to current situations.
84. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. There are many strengths in the teaching, which have a very positive impact on both students' attitudes and the quality of their learning. Lessons are well planned. This means that students enjoy their lessons and rise to the challenges they face. Clear exposition, coupled with effective questioning and prompting makes students think beyond the obvious in all year groups. Because of the good teaching, students participate in their lessons and are prepared to work hard. Although students have many opportunities to discuss their ideas, the next stage should be ensuring that they work more effectively in groups, sharing their ideas and building on each other's answers. Most students behave well and enjoy their lessons because teachers have clear behavioural expectations. During the week of the inspection, some very good practice was seen with regard to engaging the interest of boys.
85. Leadership and management are both good. There is clarity of vision and a shared commitment to improve. Procedures are supportive and non-bureaucratic. The appointment of a second specialist has meant that the department can move ahead more quickly. Teachers are reflective about their teaching and work hard to ensure that good practice and concerns are shared. These factors have all contributed to good improvement since the last inspection.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department's focus on learning and very good assessment procedures are raising standards.
- Dynamic and resourceful leadership challenges members of staff to improve learning and teaching.
- Improvements in the use of new technology are raising standards but a lack of equipment such as interactive whiteboards limits teaching styles and the students' achievement.
- The introduction of applied GCSE courses is a start towards helping to meet students' needs.

Commentary

86. Students have few designing and making skills when they join the school and there is no baseline assessment to make an accurate judgement on standards. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. The students' knowledge and techniques improve rapidly and by the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national average. GCSE results in 2004 were well above the national average and represented very good progress for the students concerned. Girls did better than boys, and most students achieved better results in design and technology than in their other subjects.
87. From Year 7 to 9 students experience a full range of design and make materials and develop good approaches to designing. Many skills are taught well through very good demonstrations by teachers which help to set the standards expected. Display work is effective in further clarifying expectations. Very good assessment ensures all students are tracked across all the elements of designing and making. There is a sharp focus on the progress of the individual. This ensures that students learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs respond very well to opportunities to excel in making, even when they find theory work more difficult.
88. Achievement is very good in Years 10 and 11 and standards are well above average by Year 11. At GCSE level very good speed sketching and design development taught in graphics enable all students to come up with very effective and unexpected solutions to problems. Students like designing and making and there is much evidence of high quality products in displays around the department.
89. Learning and teaching are good across the department, with examples of very good and excellent teaching. Planning makes very good use of short sharp tasks to structure learning; this is a feature that has been introduced to improve boys' learning. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology provide good support for the students' achievement. Generally behaviour is very good and students develop a good sense of responsibility for their work. Homework is used to extend learning and teachers make good use of a wide range of teaching styles that capture the advantages of working in groups and teams. Less successful lessons miss the opportunity to use students to lead the end of lesson review, so they do not develop as well in critical awareness of designing and making as they could.
90. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The team leaders have created a stable and unified team including technicians. Standardisation of work, piloting and embedding policies makes progress secure. Performance management is used well to identify and share good practice. High quality

assessment enables students to challenge themselves to do even better and informs modifications to schemes of work so that they meet students' needs well. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The department have initially developed an effective response to vocational accreditation through health and social care, which is now being considered for extension to other areas.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

91. Students made good progress in a very enthusiastically taught and very well prepared Year 10 **dance** lesson. They responded well to the teacher's clear demonstrations and explanations of dance terminology and were able to complete routines that were rhythmic, imaginative and illustrated good extension. The use of a video of monkeys at the start of the lesson was an imaginative use of new technology to illustrate the theme of humour.
92. Results in **drama** that were above the national average in 2002 at GCSE had declined to just below in 2003 but improved in 2004 to approach the national figure. New initiatives include introducing Year 7 students to speaking Shakespeare, and possible co-operation with the English department.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables students to learn well in Years 10 and 11.
- Achievement of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is adversely affected by curriculum and timetable arrangements.
- Computers are used but not enough to develop work creatively and to support teaching and learning.
- Extra workshops outside lesson time offer valuable opportunities for students of all years.

Commentary

93. In recent years by the end of Year 9 most students have been working in line with expectations according to teacher assessments. A particularly talented cohort in 2004 contained a high proportion of students who attained above and well above national expectations. The percentage of students gaining A*-C grades at GCSE in 2004 improved to be near to the national average but still below it. Graphics results dropped drastically from well below average to be poor. As a result graphics is no longer offered as a GCSE option. The gap between the achievement of boys and girls was more than that seen nationally.
94. By the end of Year 9, most students are currently working in line with expectation and their achievement is satisfactory. Students in Years 7 to 9 rotate between teachers in the department every ten weeks. Time and continuity are lost which result, over the years, in less progress being made. Teachers do not know students very well and planning is less attuned to their varying needs. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to

9. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average and most students achieve well because teaching is good. Students in GCSE options have the same teacher for two years thus providing continuity. Progress is better because teachers know students better and are more able to respond to the needs of individuals. Assessment is closely related to examination requirements and informs students in Years 10 and 11 about their strengths and areas to improve. Students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates in all years.
95. Computer equipment does not work reliably. This means that students have few opportunities to develop ideas creatively; nor can teachers use computer technology to show artists' work to students. There is a wealth of books and pictures in the department but these are not as effective for showing to large groups of students as presentational software.
96. The cohesive and effective team is well led and managed through discussion and delegation. This has resulted in good progress being made on issues raised in the last inspection. For example, new courses have been introduced in Year 7, class sizes reduced in Years 7 to 9 and more three-dimensional work offered to improve the achievement of boys.
97. Art makes a good contribution to students' personal development through reflecting on their own and others' work and that of artists both here and abroad. Art is very popular and the extra workshops at lunchtime and after school offer opportunities not only to do extra work but also to share experiences and socialise with students across all years. Displays of vibrant, high quality artwork considerably enhance the environment and celebrate the achievement of students studying art.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skilled leadership of the subject is securing continued development of music in times of rapid turnover of staff.
- Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good, due to very methodical teaching.
- Students' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, and is held back by the poor behaviour of some students.
- The range and quality of extension activities contributes very positively to the school's ethos.

Commentary

98. Since the previous inspection improvement has been satisfactory, despite considerable fluctuation of staff. Many classes in Year 7 to 9 last year were taught by a succession of teachers covering for absent colleagues this had an adverse impact on students' progress. Currently, all teachers are recently qualified, except the subject leader. Through her excellent example and high aspirations she provides strong support to her staff and has skilfully deployed them to secure improved achievement in Years 10 and 11 and greater student interest in both the GCSE and GCE options.

99. GCSE results in 2004, as in 2003, were well above average with most students doing better than in their other subjects. Standards in Year 11 are above average. In Year 9 standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 7, unaffected by temporary staffing issues, achievement is good. Boys do not achieve as well as girls, but the gap is narrowing, especially in Years 10 and 11.
100. Overall and in Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and structured, with pace and variety to hold the students' interest. In some classes teachers do not manage disruptive behaviour well, inhibiting better performance, especially of boys, and the effectiveness of homework to provide continuity between lessons. In work in groups at keyboards, students' concentration on the task in hand and their collaboration with their peers is inconsistent. However, very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 makes links between the skills of composing, performing and listening and takes account very well of the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student, with additional support out of hours. These students learn very well. They use new technology well to develop compositions, an area under-developed in Years 7 to 9 due to the limited number of computers for larger classes. Because of the strong engagement with a range of ethnic musical styles, variation in achievement by groups of different racial backgrounds is insignificant. All students in Year 7 have supplementary samba percussion classes and various drumming groups develop very good liaison with primary schools by giving frequent workshops. The achievement of students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language benefits from the good deployment of learning support assistants and work well tailored for these students.
101. The subject is very well led and managed. Very good use of assessment data supports clear and well focused departmental planning. Very good liaison with the local music centre gives opportunity for an above average proportion of students to learn instruments or singing and to perform in borough ensembles. A very good range of well led musical groups includes a large and well balanced orchestra. Community initiatives, such as the forthcoming production of *Noyes Fludde*, and summer schools and additional activities for talented students also ensure the department makes a very good contribution to the students' personal development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students consistently achieve well in this subject, including in both the full and short course GCSE.
- Specialist teachers prepare stimulating, well-structured lessons which engage the students' interest.
- The subject is led and managed well with a clear vision for developing provision further.
- Indoor facilities are spacious but in need of refurbishment.
- There is insufficient curriculum time for non-examination students in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

102. Students achieve well across all years. They enter the school with levels of below average attainment, but consistently good teaching and a broad, stimulating curriculum taught by expert teachers ensures that they make good progress and are at least in line with national averages by the end of Year 9. For example, in a good Year 9 hockey lesson most students were able to receive, pass and shoot with good control and understood the basic rules of the game. Students achieve well at GCSE with results consistently at or above the national average. In 2004 students performed relatively better in physical education than in their other subjects. Although results in the short course dipped from the previous year's very impressive performance, this still represented good achievement for the students.
103. Current GCSE students are working at average standards. They benefit from expert teaching and an impressively laid out and resourced theory classroom which creates an ideal learning environment for students, particularly with its emphasis on improving students' literacy and understanding of terminology. Students' folders are exceptionally well organised and demonstrate a thorough understanding of theory including anatomy and physiology, principles of fitness and training regimes. Students learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are well known and catered for effectively; as a consequence these students achieve as well as their peers.
104. The department benefits from good teaching provided by five qualified subject teachers with no lessons judged less than good during the inspection. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are very well structured and authoritatively taught; as a consequence learning is at least good. For example, in a very good Year 7 netball lesson, the teacher communicated enthusiasm and skills in equal measure enabling all to develop their passing and footwork skills. Opportunities to demonstrate responsibility and leadership, particularly for the more able, are limited. However, Year 11 students worked with enthusiasm and commitment when coaching a range of basketball skills to Year 8 students. Students are generally well behaved, teacher-student relations are very good and students work co-operatively and productively in groups. However, there is a small but significant minority of students in all years who do not always participate and are given relevant work to complete or refereeing duties. Assessment of students' performance is good and the department is now beginning to use new technology to monitor and evaluate student performance, although the subject is without access to the school's intranet.
105. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department effectively deploys and manages the team of specialists, has a very well planned and stimulating curriculum, particularly with the inclusion of dance and outdoor activities. However, non-examination students in Years 10 and 11 only have one hour of physical education each week; this is below the statutory guidance of two hours. Relevant additional courses such as junior sports leader awards, have still not been offered. There is a good range of extra-curricular teams and clubs which are enthusiastically taken up by both boys and girls and there is a range of school teams across all year groups. There are good links with outside clubs, where the most able are directed to. Links with feeder schools are being developed but are not yet formalised. The department's development plan is comprehensive but would benefit from having sharper, more explicit and more challenging targets. The subject uses the community sports hall and two other indoor areas, but as stated in the last report

these are in need of a major overhaul. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in terms of staffing and teaching.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

106. Very good subject knowledge, enthusiastic teaching and very good use of targeted questions ensured all students achieved very well in a very good Year 11 **business studies** lesson. Students showed good understanding of business objectives and decision making, such as whether firms should lease or purchase capital equipment.
107. One lesson was also observed in **health and social care** to Year 11 students. This was very well taught and the students' achievement was very good. As a result, the standard of their work was above average for the course.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection.
- Teachers have started to assess students' work, but the department did not complete an evaluation of students' progress at the end of Year 9 in 2004.
- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because they are well taught and the course is well planned.
- Students in Year 10 now have the opportunity of citizenship lessons for the first time.

Commentary

108. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. At that time, citizenship did not have a place on the timetable and the school had undertaken no audit of opportunities for students to develop their skills and knowledge, so provision was unsatisfactory. This led to a breach of statutory of regulations in 2004 because the school could not report on the standards reached by students then in Year 9. The teacher with responsibility for remedying this situation has worked effectively to enable the majority of students now in the main school to receive regular, well-taught lessons and to achieve well. Leadership is good, with a clear vision for the course, good strategic planning and a clear view of how to phase it in. There are innovative ideas for involving students in the life of the school and an imaginative programme of external speakers and events for students in Years 10 and 11. The school council contributes well to students' awareness of the functioning of democratic institutions. Management is satisfactory, but improving. There is some monitoring of teaching and of students' work, but no assessment results have been produced yet and the department has not yet evaluated the effectiveness of teaching by analysing data and looking at the comparative performance of different groups of students.
109. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with national averages by Year 9. Students in Years 7 to 9 achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of them all, including those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those from minority ethnic groups. Occasional instances of misbehaviour undermine

the learning of a minority of boys, but overall, boys achieve as well as girls. Teaching is good, characterised by good planning, which ensures that all three strands of the programmes of study in citizenship are covered. Students know what the learning intentions are at the start of every lesson so they know what they are doing and why. They have confidence in their teachers, who have a good understanding of their strengths and learning needs. Teachers create a positive atmosphere and most students regard the lessons as interesting and relevant, with the result that they work hard, set their work out neatly and take pride. Opportunities are taken for giving students an insight into the way democratic institutions work, by letting them take part in surveys conducted during lessons. Most of the teachers' marking is good with advice to students on how they might improve their performance or find out more about the topics. While a small team does most of the teaching, a large number of teachers are also involved, teaching only one class each, and in some of these cases, the quality of marking is less good. Students in Year 10 have one lesson every two weeks, but none could be observed during the inspection. The work seen indicated that the achievement of older students is satisfactory, but they had not had lessons in citizenship before this year. The course is well designed, but has not had time to make an impact and no formal qualifications have been taken yet.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	10	100.0	78.3	30.0	21.6	36.0	28.5
Biology	8	62.5	63.5	0.0	10.4	18.8	19.8
Business Studies	6	66.7	75.3	0.0	15.4	16.7	25.7
Chemistry	3	66.7	70.3	0.0	13.2	16.7	23.0
Classical Studies	2	50.0	89.1	0.0	36.0	15.0	36.5
Communication Studies	9	100.0	87.2	22.2	24.9	38.9	32.8
Drama	5	100.0	86.6	20.0	19.8	38.0	30.9
Economics	3	33.3	71.6	0.0	18.6	13.3	25.8
English / English Language	4	100.0	85.3	0.0	16.1	27.5	29.0
English Literature	3	100.0	86.2	0.0	17.4	23.3	29.7
French	1	0.0	79.8	0.0	19.4	0.0	28.2
General Studies	43	86.0	73.6	30.2	16.9	31.2	25.5
Geography	2	50.0	75.5	0.0	20.4	10.0	27.0
History	3	66.7	82.2	0.0	20.8	13.3	29.2
Information Technology	8	37.5	66.6	0.0	8.8	11.3	20.6
Mathematics	1	0.0	59.9	0.0	14.1	0.0	20.5
Music	2	50.0	79.8	0.0	16.9	15.0	27.5
Other Languages	1	100.0	82.5	0.0	47.7	20.0	37.8
Other Social Studies	16	68.8	67.8	6.3	15.1	20.6	23.2
Physics	1	100.0	66.4	0.0	14.8	30.0	22.4
Religious Studies	1	100.0	82.2	0.0	26.1	30.0	31.2
Sociology	14	92.9	72.1	14.3	19.6	32.1	25.9
Sports / PE Studies	1	100.0	72.2	0.0	11.8	20.0	22.8
Vocational Studies	2	0.0	56.7	0.0	8.9	0.0	18.0

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	20	90.0	98.3	40.0	50.2	70.0	87.1
Biology	8	87.5	96.6	0.0	40.0	52.5	79.3
Business Studies	11	100.0	98.9	9.1	39.4	63.6	81.8
Chemistry	8	87.5	97.7	0.0	50.0	57.5	85.7
Communication Studies	22	100.0	99.2	31.8	40.4	82.7	83.5
Drama	8	87.5	99.6	37.5	42.8	65.0	85.1

Economics	5	80.0	98.8	0.0	54.3	44.0	89.8
English / English Language	17	88.2	99.2	5.9	36.4	56.5	81.1
English Literature	17	100.0	99.4	23.5	44.9	77.6	85.5
French	2	100.0	99.0	0.0	53.1	80.0	88.9
Design and Technology	7	100.0	97.8	28.6	35.0	82.9	77.9
Geography	5	100.0	98.8	20.0	46.4	72.0	85.2
German	3	100.0	98.6	33.3	49.6	73.3	86.3
History	11	100.0	99.0	36.4	45.6	81.8	85.1
Information Technology	17	94.1	96.3	17.6	25.7	60.0	71.1
Mathematics	13	92.3	96.8	23.1	56.6	67.7	89.5
Music	2	100.0	98.2	50.0	37.1	90.0	79.5
Other Social Studies	26	100.0	97.4	34.6	42.5	77.7	81.6
Physics	3	100.0	96.7	0.0	45.3	66.7	82.6
Sociology	12	100.0	98.5	58.3	45.3	91.7	84.6
Sports / PE Studies	6	100.0	97.8	50.0	30.9	80.0	75.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English offers a choice of three A Level courses, and it is currently the most popular sixth form subject.
- Results in the 2004 A Level examinations showed a sharp decline from the previous year.
- In some Year 12 groups, poor attendance affects performance and achievement.
- Good teaching was seen in both years.
- Not enough has been done to remedy the weaknesses noted in the previous report.

Commentary

110. More students choose English at A Level than any other subject. The department offers a choice of English literature, English language and a combined literature/language course. The extent to which teaching the three is advisable or viable, in the light of last year's disappointing results, has not been evaluated because sixth form work has not been a priority in this term's departmental reviews. Nor is there any evidence of the monitoring of attendance in relation to results or choices. Results at A Level fell in 2004 in all three subjects. English literature had the largest number of candidates in 2004, when 28 percent of students gained A and B grades in comparison with 44 percent in the previous year, when results were below the national average. In English language, only 8 percent of students attained A and B grades, which is very low. In comparison 38 percent gained a grade A or B in the previous year. Four students took the combined paper and none attained A or B grades. These results might be seen as a decline for one cohort in one year, but the AS Level results do not promise better outcomes in 2005. Results in English literature and the

combined course were lowest, with a significant number of students achieving poorly and not reaching their target grades.

111. Standards of work seen during the inspection reflected these results to some extent, although in literature there was some good work by higher-attaining students. Overall achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. Evident interest in literature and language, and response to good and very good teaching in some lessons indicates that there is potential for higher attainment and also for more sharing of good practice in teaching. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and the approach to sixth form teaching, with most lessons taught in seminar style, is appropriate. Teachers enjoy the subject and most use their knowledge skilfully to develop students' understanding and enthusiasm and to encourage them to express and exchange views. Relationships are good and the atmosphere in most lessons friendly and focused. Where groups were small there was effective use of whole group discussion and commendable absence of worksheets or writing frames. Students learning English as an additional language, all at advanced stages, were making satisfactory progress and a student with special educational needs contributed valuable critical points in an excellent lesson on *Othello*.
112. There are areas for improvement in teaching and learning, which were satisfactory overall. Students are not writing enough or benefiting from the short essay or study, regularly submitted for comment and assessment in between major assignments. If the general level of writing is to improve, this is a priority. Students' folders contain far more background material, both provided by the school and downloaded from the internet, than their own writing. This mixture of handouts, articles and essays makes it very difficult for student or teacher to follow through the work they have done over a term and to monitor quality or see improvements which are emerging or needed. Separation of these would be helpful. Satisfactory lessons could improve to good with higher levels of expectation, both of student understanding and student participation. Overall, there is scope for encouraging more independent learning, with students coming to class prepared to deliver findings from their own reading and research and thus to take the lead in discussion.
113. In Year 12 poor attendance in one lesson of the combined course and one GCSE English retake class showed that English too is suffering from the poor attendance levels in the sixth form generally. Few lessons were without some absentees. This has an inevitable impact on progress and more needs to be done to monitor and challenge poor attendance.
114. Some of the good features noted in the last report are still evident, particularly the good range of challenge in the best lessons and teachers' love of their subject. However, too many points have not been tackled so that improvement over the two years remains unsatisfactory. Data on students' performance is still not being used to track progress and set teaching targets. Absences and lack of active participation by students are still a concern and curriculum enrichment requires more than the occasional theatre visits, welcome as these are. At present the leadership and management of sixth form work are unsatisfactory and the new head of department has rightly recognised the need to produce a more coherent system for A Level work, although the deadline suggested does not give this a high enough priority. The large English team, which includes several newcomers, has shown enthusiasm and commitment. Students choose the subject in large numbers. This is a good moment for careful evaluation of A Level English and some determined planning for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

115. Reading and writing competence was judged satisfactory or better in the subjects which were a focus of the inspection. Weaknesses in literacy are not a serious concern in sixth form work, and there were no reports of progress being held back for this reason. However, in some subjects both teachers and inspectors noticed areas for improvement. In media studies, where there was excellent extension of vocabulary, good ideas were not always well expressed in essays. In physical education, a Year 12 class showed below average ability in their language use. In science there was insufficient extended writing to develop higher quality writing skills, and no policy for the consistent correction of errors. Very good work was seen in history, with a strong emphasis on vocabulary development, reading and extended writing. Students and teachers were making a real effort and good work was produced. In geography, analytical skills were developing well and in art high attaining students were extending their range of language structure and vocabulary.
116. In most subjects students are encouraged to take part in discussion and students talk well in art, science and in some English and drama lessons. In mathematics, students are less articulate and not readily involved in class discussion. The extent to which tutorials, assemblies and the personal, health and social education contribute to students' language competencies varies widely. In the school's extra-curricular programme, high quality drama productions are particularly valuable, but there is scope for more use of debate, discussion, lectures and visits to extend students' range of thought and language.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at A Level and AS Level in 2004 were well below average but show signs that standards are currently higher.
- Well-organised and varied teaching ensures most students make satisfactory progress through the course.
- The unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality of some students limits their achievement.
- Students make good use of interactive whiteboards but have too little scope to utilise other aspects of information and communication technology.

Commentary

117. Results in 2004 at both A Level and AS Level were well below average because few candidates achieved the higher grades. This was a decline over results in 2003, which were in line with the national average. The department has taken suitable action to redress the very high number of students who achieved ungraded AS Level results in 2004. In 2005 students will take some papers at a later date than in 2004 so they have sufficient time to prepare properly.
118. For students currently studying mathematics in the sixth form, standards are below average in Year 13 and Year 12. A significant proportion of students enter the course

in Year 12 with GCSE grades based on the intermediate course. Many of them struggle to keep pace with the AS Level course but are helped to keep on board by some effective teaching. They lack confidence and experience particular problems with the level of algebra required. A high proportion of Year 12 students do not continue with mathematics to A Level in Year 13 although a few retake AS Level papers while in Year 13.

119. Students achieve satisfactorily overall because teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students receive a good grounding in the basic AS Level course because teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and plan lessons well. Students comment that mathematics is well organised. For example, teachers carefully mark their work and take trouble to explain difficult points in lessons. Teachers involve students effectively in a variety of ways such as paired or group work and encouraging them to give mini-presentations of their work. This raises students' confidence and enables them to come to terms better with the challenging level of work required. Teachers are beginning to use interactive whiteboards well to enliven lessons and to highlight aspects of the work more effectively.
120. The department uses the three-part lesson structure to plan lessons but with variable quality. In the best lessons a brisk starter engages students' interest straight away and the review session ties up the lesson well to reinforce their learning. Lessons are less successful when the starter is too long and thus limits the time available for the main theme. Some students do not attend school regularly enough to achieve satisfactorily in mathematics. Others arrive very late to lessons and miss important aspects of the work. The sequential nature of the subject makes it hard for these students to catch up.
121. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A concerted effort to introduce the interactive whiteboard across the department is bearing fruit. Several high quality members of staff contribute to A Level teaching. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. A wider range of teaching strategies and resources are in place to meet students' needs. Assessment data is used better to help students make progress. Students participate in using interactive whiteboards in lessons and use graphical software on computers, but their wider use of new technology is at an early stage of development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

122. Standards overall are below average. Provision is satisfactory in most subjects but good in geography where it plays a major part in fieldwork. Students accurately determine the strengths of solutions in biology. In chemistry, they can calculate rates of reactions. However, students in physics struggle with density equations and are insecure about estimating. In information and communication technology they construct and interpret spreadsheets satisfactorily.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is at least secure and some is good.

- Students demonstrate positive attitudes towards the subject.
- There are insufficient opportunities provided for students to take on more responsibility for their own learning.
- Assessment data is not used regularly to monitor the progress of students against targets set and guidance on how to improve is too vague.

Commentary

123. A Level results in 2004 were well below average and a significant number of students did not do as well as they should have given their earlier GCSE results. Results for the AS Level examination for Year 12 students were similarly well below average, with a high proportion of students gaining no grade at all. However, results for this examination have improved over the last three years. Inspection findings show that standards in Year 13 are currently below average given that a number of the students who failed to gain a grade at AS Level have now left the course.
124. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and this is resulting in satisfactory achievement in lessons. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and often use this well to underpin clear explanations about both key biological principles and experimental procedures. As a result, students are able to tackle both individual and group activities with confidence as was evident in a Year 13 lesson on inheritance. Students enjoy practical work and show good levels of co-operation in these sessions. Skills of note taking are less well embedded. In some lessons, whilst expositions are clear, there is an over-reliance on teacher talk and the students, whilst listening attentively, are not being sufficiently involved or challenged to check their levels of understanding. For example, there are too few opportunities for them to prepare for new topics and subsequently lead discussions on them.
125. The students say that they find those lessons where they are able to take more of an active role through discussion are the most effective in helping them to consolidate their understanding. All have found the transition from GCSE to A Level very tough. The subject handbook has some useful information in it but it is not referred to sufficiently to help the students to gauge the standards that they are currently working at and those to which they should be aspiring. In general, marking practice is inconsistent with some work, but not all, being graded. Comments rarely give extensive feedback on what students need to do next to improve. Individual feedback in class is usually constructive but opportunities to do this are more limited with the larger group sizes in Year 12.
126. The head of department has only been in post since September. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Results have been analysed and areas for development identified. Strategies planned are largely appropriate although a number are short-term. Teaching and learning is recognised as an area for development but specific actions are not listed as the head of department does not have a complete picture of provision as yet. There is a clear commitment to improve and, with focused support from senior staff, the potential is there to make further progress. Overall improvement since the last inspection, given the staff changes, is satisfactory.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some of the teaching is well-paced and challenging.
- Positive attitudes are displayed by the students.
- There are inconsistencies in assessment practice as data is not being used to inform planning and set challenging learning targets for the students.

Commentary

127. A Level results in 2004 were well below average and a significant number of students did not do as well as they should have given their earlier GCSE results. Results for the Year 12 students were also well below average. Standards in Year 13 observed during the inspection are higher and are now below average as many of the Year 12 students who did not gain a secure grade in the AS Level examinations are no longer studying the subject.
128. Teaching and learning are more consistent than at the time of the last inspection and are satisfactory overall with some good features. Lessons generally progress at a brisk pace and students are often challenged to apply their knowledge of chemical principles to new situations. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure, resulting in well-focused questioning for individuals, some lively group discussions and good reinforcement of practical techniques. The students respond well to these approaches and engage enthusiastically with the tasks in hand. The teachers have created an atmosphere where the students have the confidence to express their ideas and explore possible explanations of observations. The commitment shown is reflected by the fact that some Year 13 students are now attending additional Year 12 lessons in order to consolidate their understanding of modules studied earlier in the course.
129. Students are being given some guidance on coursework requirements but there is limited evidence of consistent and regular assessments with clear written feedback on how to improve their work. Procedures for introducing students to sixth form work have not been sufficiently well developed with limited exposure, particularly in Year 12, to the expectations of the A Level programme and final examinations. Too little account has been taken of the prior attainment levels of those entering the course. The subject handbook, which contains some helpful guidance on standards, has not been used as much as it could have been. As a result, whilst teaching and learning have improved, achievement overall remains satisfactory.
130. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The head of department shows a clear commitment to improving standards. He has analysed examination data although the interpretation is rather more favourable than the results warrant. However, strengths and weaknesses have been identified particularly those aspects of the course that have proved most challenging for the students and sensible steps are being taken to tackle shortcomings. A number of these are short term such as additional revision sessions, although there is a commitment to longer-term improvement strategies based on establishing more effective assessment procedures. At present the development plan for the subject is too vague and insufficiently focused on outcomes for students. Given the more secure teaching and learning and other steps taken to raise achievement, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results in A Level computing are a strong feature of the department.
- Teaching is good on AS and A Level courses.
- The curriculum has improved and now provides two courses to suit different student needs and aspirations.
- Standards have improved and are now broadly in line with the national average.
- Some accommodation for A Level lessons is poorly furnished and it does not provide a comfortable or welcoming working environment.

Commentary

131. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, although recent examination results have fluctuated. A Level results improved significantly in 2003. The proportion of A and B grades was above the national average and all candidates passed. In 2004, there were no A or B grades but all candidates passed; however, overall results were below average. In A Level computing, which was taken by a small number of candidates for the first time in 2004, all candidates passed the examination.
132. Achievement is good overall across the courses. Standards seen in lessons and students' work are average overall in both courses within a reasonably wide range of attainment. There are some strong candidates in both groups this year. Some students are producing a good standard of work and there is little overall difference in the performance of male and female students. The A Level computing course is taken predominantly by male students all of whom were very clear about why they chose this particular course. Achievement is at least satisfactory and but there is good achievement on both courses. The majority of candidates are very diligent in lessons and in the production of coursework. Good peer support is a feature of lessons because students are cooperative and keen to share their expertise.
133. Teaching and learning are good overall and some very good teaching was seen. Courses and lessons are well prepared and good, challenging resources are used. Learning objectives are shared with students so that they have a clear picture of what they are to tackle in the lesson. Expectations are high and a good working atmosphere generated in lessons. Teachers ensure students are fully involved through good individual support and frequent question and answer sessions to reinforce learning. Students' work is assessed appropriately and regularly. They know how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve.
134. Leadership and management are good and the teachers work effectively as a team. Curriculum development has been appropriate and the A Level courses cater appropriately for different aspirations. The teaching room used for the computing course is in a poor state of repair and does not provide a particularly good learning environment. Data projectors are available in teaching rooms but there are no interactive whiteboards in the department to support more student-centred lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

135. The use of information and communication technology across the sixth form curriculum is satisfactory overall. Most students in the sixth form now have opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills in earlier years. Word processing and presentational software are used effectively in some lessons and more generally in coursework. Students have appropriate skills and generally make good use of the internet for research in homework and coursework in all subjects. The relatively limited numbers of interactive whiteboards that are available are used effectively in those departments where they have been installed. There is more scope in most subjects to use new technology to enhance teaching and learning in the sixth form but access to appropriate facilities restricts use. This is a particular concern where the regular use of data and research information is needed and where software for data analysis could help to provide more rigour in students' work and teachers' presentations.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain below average standards at A Level particularly in the higher grades.
- Curriculum provision is not suitable for the lower-attaining students.
- Students achieve well in lessons through experienced teaching that focuses well on promoting higher literacy standards.
- Students adopt very positive attitudes and are actively engaged in their learning.

Commentary

136. The current standards being reached by the students are in line with the national average. Achievement in lessons is good largely because students are learning to deal with complex themes through a developmental approach in which they are fully involved; they also benefit from knowledgeable and skilful teaching. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Students still do not attain the highest grades at A Level, although this is largely due to their below average attainment on entry to the sixth form. In 2004 there were no A grades and only one B grade. Overall results were below the national average. Nearly all the students who have not taken GCSE geography only follow the subject as far as AS Level and attain below average standards.

137. The satisfactory leadership and management are committed to improvement through monitoring the subject's performance and tackling its weaknesses. This has led to consideration of how to widen the curriculum by developing a vocational examination course for students for whom A Level is not suitable. Teaching is good. The subject benefits from experienced teaching in the main, but is seeking to improve further through providing support for those less experienced. Learning is good because students learn from each other, such as when they adopted roles as environmentalists and dam builders to debate the damming of the Colorado River. This enabled them to demonstrate their good knowledge and understanding and use this effectively to put arguments and counter arguments clearly. This style enables the students to learn to take a more balanced view of issues so that they can answer examination questions

more effectively. Where lessons are dominated by the teacher, students are more passive and progress is less evident. The students benefit from the very good fieldwork opportunities and through this lessons come alive as teachers relate theory to real world examples that are familiar to the students. They concentrate well, work at a good pace and are positive about their learning.

138. There are good contributions to the development of literacy, such as when the students critically analysed an examination question that had been answered at a low level. They identified its weak points, conducted a thorough analysis through class discussion and wrote a high level answer for homework. This was very effective in enhancing the students' knowledge of how to reach higher levels of attainment as well as being valuable revision for examinations. Similarly, a Year 13 lesson on ecosystems was carefully structured so that the students were able to build upon their prior knowledge. The teacher ensured that the relationships between various factors and processes were demonstrated clearly by constructing a mind map which the students played a full part in developing. Assessment is used to respond to individual needs. Marking is diagnostic and helps students to improve their work. Students find teachers' comments on work particularly informative, although they do not always take action to improve. For example, essays are well written but teachers frequently comment on students' work that they have not written a conclusion.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and the evidence indicates that standards are improving.
- Teachers focus well on learning and on enabling students to become more independent learners.
- Leadership and management are good with a clear focus on improvement.
- Punctuality to lessons is poor for a small minority of Year 12 students.
- The department does not provide sufficient support for the less able students.

Commentary

139. Results in the 2004 A Level examination were below average for A and B grades, but in line with the national average overall. However, all students obtained a pass grade and their progress was satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Although AS Level results were well below average for the same year, this was largely due to poor performance in one particular paper, caused primarily by staffing problems. The evidence indicates that standards are beginning to rise; standards have improved significantly in the last two years and the staffing problems have been resolved.
140. When students enter the sixth form, standards are at best below average. Standards are average by the end of Year 13, and all groups of students achieve well. Above average and average students are enabled to work to their fullest potential; there is still scope to support the least able more effectively. Students write carefully constructed essays and can explain their historical arguments with growing confidence. However, many find it difficult to fully analyse historical documents and this is something the department is targeting with increasing effectiveness.

141. Teaching in the sixth form is good with some very good features. Teachers make use of a wide range of strategies to engage students' interest and enable them to develop independence in their learning. Lessons are challenging and well planned. Teachers are clearly enthusiastic about their subject and students are positive about their history lessons. During the week of the inspection, for example, several students attended a lunchtime revision session for their AS Level re-sits. However, a small number of Year 12 students show casual attitudes towards the start of lessons, often arriving late with no real reason for their poor punctuality. Marking is of a high standard with clear guidance on what students need to do in order to improve.
142. Leadership and management are both good. Teachers are reflective and have worked hard to improve provision. The head of department has established a very clear focus on learning and teachers spend time sharing good practice and concerns. She has a very clear understanding of departmental strengths and weaknesses and focuses very effectively on these. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

143. No subjects were inspected in depth in this curriculum area. However, lessons were observed in textiles and resistant materials.
144. The **textiles** course inspires the students and their achievement is very good. Students' appreciation of renowned artists and textiles designers, both past and present, helps to develop their critical awareness of influences on creativity and encourages excellent experimentation. Teaching is outstanding and challenges the students' fertile imaginations. Leadership and management of the course are very good gaining local interest from students in other schools who have joined the sixth form.
145. The **resistant materials** course attracts mainly male students. They enter the course with below average standards and struggle with the theory aspect of the course; however, their practical work is good. The course is taught by more than one teacher and the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Surprisingly for sixth formers, students often display very immature and disrespectful attitudes to some teachers.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

146. One lesson of **music** was observed in Year 13 during the inspection. Standards are above average. Good, well-structured teaching, sensitive to the different learning needs and musical experiences of the students, is securing good learning and achievement. Students view the course positively and numbers taking the subject are increasing.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good student attitudes enable them to achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Computers are used but not enough to inspire, inform and develop work creatively.

- Work by higher-attaining students using mixed media is extremely effective.
- Good quality painting sometimes lacks depth in interpretation because of a lack of challenge to extend their ideas.

Commentary

147. Art is a popular choice at AS Level with most continuing to the full A Level. Results have been around average in recent years with most students achieving as expected at AS Level. At A Level, results have generally been above average, dropping to be well below average in 2004 with most students achieving as expected given their earlier results. From work seen during the inspection, students in Years 12 and 13 are working at above average standards and are achieving well in both art and photography as a result of generally good teaching and the very positive attitudes of all students towards their work.
148. Groups are shared between teachers and the co-ordination of this and the good quality communication about students is led and managed well. Good personal support ensures students develop individual responses to themes and assessment criteria are used very well to ensure that every student knows their strengths and the areas to improve. Work in mixed media by higher-attaining students is impressive and painting and drawing are strikingly confident. However, mid and lower-attaining students who produce technically competent pieces are not challenged enough to extend their ideas to be original and perceptive. Most students make connections between their own and artists' work, but few students record the development of their ideas and why these happen.
149. Information and communication technology is used in the form of internet research and to manipulate images using software, although work in this area is not of as high a quality as in other aspects of their work. Lack of reliable facilities also affects the way teachers are able to vary lesson presentation to inform and inspire students' work. Visits to galleries and museums and to take photographs on location make a huge impact on students' work in both fine art and photography. Students take their work seriously and their positive attitudes have a good effect on their learning. The sixth form studio is pleasant, spacious and well equipped and enables students to work in addition to their usual lesson time. Leadership and management are good. As there were no specific areas for development identified in the last inspection, and students continue to achieve well, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staffing problems in the past have affected numbers and at A Level; the subject has attracted comparatively few students until this year.
- Examination results were well below average in 2003 but improved in 2004.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and are keen to develop the work of the department.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

150. At the time of the last inspection, the drama department was undergoing a staffing crisis which made it difficult for the school to maintain its previously high level of examination results. The effects of that instability were still being felt at A Level in 2004 when results were well below average. However, results at AS Level in 2004 were among the best in the sixth form with almost all students achieving their target grade or above. This indicates that the department is now moving away from a period in which few students chose A Level drama or did well in it. Although only four Year 13 students will take the A level examination in 2005, there are now 14 in Year 12.
151. Achievement is now good, largely because teaching is good overall. Standards of practical work in the lessons observed during the inspection were above average. Students understand and follow the disciplines of drama, and they were working with good control, imaginative improvisation and much enjoyment of the work. Students in both Years 12 and 13 are keen and committed. Some very good work on the play *Equus* was seen in Year 12, students showing good understanding of how to use physical and vocal skills to plan, direct and present a short scene. There was good collaboration and students' evaluation of their own work and that of others was perceptive and well expressed. The teacher guided the activity well, with carefully judged interventions to show students how they could develop and improve their work.
152. In Year 13 the work was to some extent limited by the small size of the class. There was compensation for this in the intense concentration on their work by the students and both their teachers as they prepared for the examination presentation. Their devised piece, based on literature and biography, was original and striking in its content and structure. Students' individual performances were convincing and they had identified the need to improve the overall coherence and flow as they worked to achieve high quality in performance.
153. A very effective sixth form teaching team consists of the head of department, appointed last year and a newly qualified teacher with acting experience. Their enthusiasm gives the department a buzz of activity and excitement and their expertise provides careful guidance to students in understanding the criteria and meeting the requirements of the examination. Under very good leadership and management, drama is making a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The choice of plays for the regular school and sixth form productions is enterprising and varied. There are good links with colleges, and several student trainees have been working in the department.
154. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Current achievements, thoughtful self-evaluation and imaginative planning for the future show that drama is recovering well from past difficulties. Its work throughout the school is central to the development of a successful performing arts college. It also does much for students' personal, social and cultural development, increasing their self-confidence and their ability to work in collaboration with others.

Media studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Media studies is a popular A Level option attracting a consistently high entry.

- Results were above the national average in 2003 and in 2004.
- Accommodation and facilities have improved since the last inspection.
- The attitudes and participation of some Year 12 students are unsatisfactory.
- The subject is very well led and managed by a keen and experienced head of department.

Commentary

155. Although numbers have declined slightly as new subjects appear on the curriculum, media studies remain a popular and successful A Level option. Results in 2003 were above the national average. There was a drop in A and B grades in 2004, but a 100 percent pass rate with 18 of the 22 students gaining B and C grades and none below D. Overall achievement is good in a subject which has hitherto been new to A Level students. Standards of work seen during the inspection were variable, but were above average overall. From this year, media studies is also being offered at GCSE where it has attracted a large number of students. Most students embarking on the A Level course in 2006 will thus have a basis in Media Studies from which to measure their A Level progress.
156. Achievement in the lessons seen was closely related to students' attitudes and responses. In a vigorous discussion of gender issues and encoded assumptions in magazines, Year 13 students developed some good understanding of this medium, what influences it and how it may influence its readers. Another Year 13 class, although working with keen interest, appeared to have more limited knowledge of film genres and range as they prepared for their written examination on film genre. In contrast, a group of students in Year 12 were confident in their work on film theory, using appropriate terminology as they analysed a piece of narrative for adaptation to film in preparation for practical film making in the following term. In one Year 12 group, students were not achieving as they should because of lacklustre attitudes and inadequate effort. Their response was surprising in a subject which they had chosen and which the majority of students clearly find exciting and motivating.
157. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons, teaching was very good. For example, the teacher's expertise led students to analyse media texts critically, venture opinions and develop a new vocabulary to judge the material they were considering. They became aware of the cultural and sociological implications of some of the visual and print texts examined. New territory was explored and issues confronted, with a good deal of enjoyment and humour. Some students still have difficulties with structure and spelling in their written work and sound ideas in essays and evaluations are not always well expressed. This is recognised in some very good marking, which points out to students how to improve. The challenge for the subject now is to share best practice and ensure that all teaching matches the quality of the best. With two newly qualified teachers, both of whom are keen and well-informed, the possibilities are encouraging.
158. There is a careful and realistic analysis of current strengths, results achieved, changes made and areas for development. Teaching of the AS Level course has been reviewed and improved, and a one year intermediate level vocational course. The subject contributes well to the school's extra-curricular activities, with visits to the school by media practitioners and visits by students to work in other studios. There are productive links with outside bodies and the head of department has contributed to media education for teacher trainees. A second sixth form magazine will be produced

this year and students are working on a promotional video to be used in sixth form recruitment. There have been good improvements since then. The status of media studies as a separate department has been confirmed, and accommodation and resources improved, with the addition of a small computer suite, digital cameras and more computers. Further access to new technology, training and support will be needed for the expansion of a department which is contributing much to the work of the sixth form and the school as a whole.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

159. There are no arrangements for students to take physical education lessons as part of their compulsory sixth form courses. A very good Year 12 AS **sports studies** lesson on skill acquisition was very well prepared utilising an extensive range of resources and was expertly taught. Whilst not all of the students followed the instructions for performing the exercises correctly, they worked productively and co-operatively and were able to gather a range of relevant information for further analysis. Teacher-student relations in this lesson were excellent.

BUSINESS

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well by the end of Year 13, all meeting or exceeding their target grades.
- Students benefit from good teaching which is characterised by very good individual support and carefully structured lessons.
- There is no alternative vocational course for students in the sixth form.
- Students generally have a positive attitude to the subject and appreciate the access to teachers and computers.
- There is some under-achievement of students entering the AS Level.

Commentary

160. Despite entering the sixth form with below average attainment levels, and often without a business studies background, students achieve well in this subject by the end of Year 13, all gaining at least a pass grade. Although results overall are generally below the national average or well below average as was the case in 2004, all students entered met or exceeded their 2004 target. AS Level students have generally not performed as well; a significant number entered in 2004 not passing with a sizeable minority of students not gaining their target grades. The staffing problems and ineffective teaching which had led to this underachievement has been resolved with the current students now benefiting from authoritative teaching of very well structured lessons and very good individual support. As a consequence current students are achieving well and standards are average. Year 13 students have a satisfactory knowledge of business terminology, such as on the objectives of marketing, business stakeholders and how to calculate and use financial ratios. Current Year 12, particularly those without the business studies GCSE, are less

secure in their knowledge, understanding and usage of technical language and would benefit from an induction period which tackles this.

161. Teaching and learning are good overall and where it is enthusiastic, authoritative and engages students' interest they make very good progress in lessons and achieve well. For example, in a very good Year 13 lesson, the very well prepared and enthusiastically taught lesson ensured that the students gained a secure understanding of the key features and example of democratic practices in the workplace. Where the lesson is not structured and tasks not adapted in such a way as to accommodate all, particularly the less able students, they make satisfactory progress as seen in a Year 12 lesson on the difficult topic of critical path analysis. Students appreciate the access to staff and the good range of computers.
162. The department does not provide a vocational business course in the sixth form. However, it has started the applied business course in Year 10 and is planning to introduce the AVCE in September 2005. This will provide a broad range of business courses as well as a structured business pathway from Year 10 upwards. This is part of a comprehensive departmental development plan which also has a key focus on improving teaching and learning. However, targets are not sufficiently sharp to enable the department to measure and evaluate how well they are doing. Leadership and management are good, with the head of department setting high aspirations for expanding the subject further, being a good role for staff and students and evaluating thoroughly the performance of students and the department. Accommodation and resources are good, if a little cramped for the numbers; students have good access to computers. Business links are expanding but are not yet extensive enough to provide a significant contribution to students' learning. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Economics

Provision in economics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results were below average in 2004.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- The monitoring of AS Level candidates lacks rigour.
- The economics department lacks ready access to new technology to retrieve and analyse current economics data for teaching purposes.

Commentary

163. Improvement in the since the last inspection is satisfactory. A Level results showed a good improvement in 2003 and were above average representing good progress for the small number of candidates involved. However, results fell back again and were below average in 2004. The majority of students who completed the AS Level course in 2004 attained grades above their school target. This was good progress for some students, but there was a significant proportion of unclassified candidates and results were below average overall.
164. Achievement is now satisfactory in both Years 12 and 13. Standards now are average; students' achievement is improving because teaching is now satisfactory. Standards seen in portfolios and class work were average overall in both the A Level

and the AS Level courses and some good work was seen at A Level. In a Year 13 lesson about the range of macro economic objectives available to governments, students worked well in pairs to identify the cause and effect of various economic policies. They outlined their arguments and conclusions accurately and effectively. In presenting them to the class, they demonstrated a good understanding of the issues, as they answered probing questions from the teacher and other students.

165. There is a wide range of attainment in the AS Level group. In one Year 12 lesson, most students demonstrated a good understanding of different types of taxation and were prepared to answer questions in appropriate detail, often with good examples to illustrate their points. However, some of the boys in the group were less well motivated and easily distracted. Students in Year 12 need to be monitored more critically to improve completion rates in the AS Level course.
166. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good subject knowledge and is now used to employ a wider range of teaching strategies, including more student-centred and group activities. However, some printed teaching resources are rather dated. Assessment is satisfactory overall although students in Year 13 have a better understanding of their progress and what is needed to improve further than those in Year 12. In the economics teaching base, there is no access to new technology to provide current economics information and statistics or to enable students to use computers for analysing data. This limits the scope of teaching and learning activities in this.
167. The leadership and management of this subject are now satisfactory. Appropriate development opportunities have been provided for economics staff since the last inspection which has improved teaching. Faculty monitoring has improved although recent examination data needs to be analysed more rigorously to inform planning.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

168. Year 12 students follow a course leading to AS Level in general studies. Results were considerably below average in both 2003 and 2004. This course makes a reasonable contribution to the students' personal development and supports the school's ability to fulfil requirements for religious education. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in a lesson seen, although some students are inclined to be too passive. Students are not hugely committed to the course and several show limited motivation and interest.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	4
How inclusive the school is		4
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
Overall standards achieved		4
Pupils' achievement	4	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		4
Attendance	6	4
Attitudes	4	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	4	4
How well pupils learn	4	4
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5	5
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	5	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	4
The leadership and management of the school		4
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	4	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).