

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITEFIELD SCHOOL**

Cricklewood, London

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101347

Headteacher: Mr Peter Blenkinsop

Lead inspector: Mr Martin Pavey  
Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 February 2005

Inspection number: 269006

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11-19
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	818
School address:	Claremont Road Cricklewood London
Postcode:	NW2 1TR
Telephone number:	020 8455 4114
Fax number:	020 8455 4382
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Lewis
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-19 is at Brent Cross, North London. There are 496 boys and 322 girls in the school. These numbers include the sixth form, with 118 students in Year 12 and 24 in Year 13. Students come from a wide range of heritage backgrounds. Around two in five students are from White backgrounds and a further third from Black backgrounds. Students from Asian backgrounds make up some 10 per cent of the school, and Chinese and other backgrounds are also represented. The percentage of students speaking English as an additional language (EAL), is very high at 58 per cent, and 127 of these students are at an early stage in learning English. The percentage of students having special educational needs (SEN) is 38.7 per cent, well above the national average. Students' SEN is caused either by the specific learning difficulty of dyslexia, other learning difficulties or by social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The percentage of students with statements of SEN is 4.5 per cent, above the national average. The percentage of those eligible for free school meals (45 per cent) is well above average.

Students come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, but the above figures confirm that many students come from backgrounds with a high level of disadvantage. A higher than average number of students joins and leaves the school at other than the usual times. By Year 11, only 50 per cent of students had been at the school since the usual starting age in Year 7. Students' ability on entry, seen in the results of the tests taken when they arrive at this school, is overall well below the national average level. Difficulties in handling English mean that, for a large minority of students, their attainment on entry is well below average, even though their ability and potential may be considerably higher.

The school has specialist provision for students with physical disability and is fully adapted for wheelchairs. There are 10 students with such disabilities at present, and they are fully included in the life of the school.

Since the last inspection, numbers have increased by over 100 students, including an extra 60 sixth form students. The school has achieved specialist status as a Sports College and has become a Full Service Extended School (FSES), providing a range of services for the local community.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17650	Mr M Pavey	Lead inspector	
9724	Mrs B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector	
32852	Dr A Edwards	Team inspector	Geography
1249	Mr J Edge	Team inspector	Biology in the sixth form Work-related learning
10060	Mr D Gutmann	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Business education in the sixth form
8139	Mrs B Johnstone	Team inspector	Music
18912	Mrs C Large	Team inspector	Religious education
1085	Mr J Laver	Team inspector	Physical education
28097	Mrs S Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics
16950	Dr C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Citizenship
33160	Dr N Power	Team inspector	English Drama
4474	Mr I Punter	Team inspector	Art
2183	Dr P Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology
33727	Dr N Vinall	Team inspector	Science ICT in the sixth form
33623	Mr C Walker	Team inspector	English as an additional language
20497	Dr V Williams	Team inspector	History Leisure and tourism in the sixth form
33204	Mrs F Wright	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school with many significant strengths.** It gives good value for money. Leadership is very good and management good. Though standards are below average, students achieve well, making good progress over their time in the school. Teaching is good and students learn well. The school welcomes students from a great variety of countries and cultures, and many arrive with very little English. The very large numbers of students with English as an additional language (EAL), special educational needs (SEN) and entitlement to free school meals indicate a considerable level of challenge. Only 50 per cent of Year 11 students joined the school at the usual time in Year 7. The school does very well to overcome all these potential barriers to learning and to give its students a good education. It gives everyone a very strong sense of community and common purpose.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has an excellent vision and sense of purpose for his school. He and his senior team lead this demanding school very well.
- Relationships are very good. The school is excellent at including everyone in the education and opportunities it provides.
- Arrangements for the welfare and guidance of students are very good. Links with the community and other schools are very good also.
- Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Attendance statistics are satisfactory, but during the inspection attendance was unsatisfactory, and poor on several occasions.
- The school's arrangements for students with SEN are very good.
- The school provides very good data on the attainment and progress of students. However, not all teachers are making good use of this to plan their lessons so that all students benefit.
- The school provides a very wide range of activities outside the normal day. Students' participation in sport is excellent.
- Within subjects, English, French, physical education (PE), work-related learning and sixth form business studies are very good. Art and citizenship are unsatisfactory. Sixth form design and technology (DT) is poor.
- More time is needed for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, throughout the school.
- Acquiring sports college status is a very good development, but the school needs to reflect its emphasis on sport in all its subjects.

Improvement has been good since the last inspection in January 1999. The school has tackled the key issues for action given in the last report well. Results have improved, particularly in GCSE and the sixth form, and teaching is much stronger. The school now makes very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.*

**Students' achievement is good.** Most students enter the school with standards well below average. Their achievement is satisfactory over Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11 and in the sixth form. Examination results have improved in recent years. The many students with SEN make very good progress, and students who have EAL make good progress, thanks to the good support they receive, at all levels of the school.

In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, English results were well ahead of those in mathematics and science. In English, students achieved very well over Years 7 to 9 to reach results not far short of the national average. Mathematics and science results were well below average, representing satisfactory achievement over this period. As in English, achievement is already better than satisfactory in some subjects in Years 7 to 9. In French, ICT, drama and music, students achieve well. Girls achieve well and boys very well in PE. Good teaching and very good relationships are starting to have a positive effect. This leads to good progress over Years 10 to 11 and to the school's improving GCSE results. These results are much higher than those predicted from the performance of the same students in their Year 9 tests.

Students enter the sixth form with levels of attainment well below average. Over their one, two and three year courses, they achieve well, making good progress. Results improved considerably in 2004, but were still well below national averages. The E\* in the table above, representing results in 2002 and 2003, indicates that in those years, results were in the lowest five per cent of results nationally. The school intends to provide an education for everyone who can benefit from it. Despite these low results, the great majority of sixth formers succeed in continuing their studies in further and higher education, thanks to the very good encouragement they receive from teachers and careers staff. They gain confidence and purpose from their time in the sixth form.

**Students' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Attendance is satisfactory but punctuality is not. However, attendance was unsatisfactory during the inspection, and numbers in some classes were low. Attitudes and behaviour are both good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good.** Teachers assess students' work well in the main school. Assessment of work in the sixth form is satisfactory. Overall, the curriculum provides a good range of opportunities, and a very good range in the sixth form. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation is very good and other resources are good. Standards of care are very good. Students receive very good advice, guidance and support. Arrangements to involve them in the work of the school are very good. Links with parents are good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** Leadership from all key staff is very good and management is good. Governance of the school is good. However, there are two areas in which governors have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements. These are the provision of a daily act of worship and a course of religious education in the sixth form. Leaders give everyone an excellent chance to benefit from the many opportunities the school provides.

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

Parents and students are pleased with the education the school provides. Opinion at the parents' meeting before the inspection was very positive. In their questionnaires and the several interviews held during the inspection, students' views were very positive in most respects. Generally, they think this is a good school to be at. They appreciate the warm personal support which teachers give them. In the 33 questionnaires returned from parents, 29 parents were supportive of the school's

work and four were not. Six parents made written comments, of which four were very favourable, one had some reservations, and one was very unfavourable. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents and students.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Further improve the use by teachers of the very good data provided on the attainment and progress of students, so that teachers plan their lessons to help individuals even more effectively.
- Improve provision in art and citizenship throughout the school; improve provision in DT in the sixth form.
- Improve punctuality and check attendance in individual lessons more rigorously.
- Find more time for the teaching of PSHE and citizenship, throughout the school.
- Reflect the emphasis on sport, derived from sports college status, in all subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.
- Provide a course of religious education (RE) in the sixth form which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.



## SIXTH FORM SUMMARY REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Overall, provision in the sixth form is effective and provides good value for money.** The sixth form caters well for the growing number of students who continue in the school. It also welcomes people who join the school at this stage, often with little or no English and having had an interrupted education, or none. Almost all present students have a home language other than English. The school provides a very positive, secure place for them to be.

The GCSE results of those joining Year 12 are overall well below average and those new to the school often have a limited knowledge of English. While standards are much lower than in most sixth forms, students achieve well over their time in school. The curriculum is very good, with a wide range of courses and qualifications in Year 12. A number of students extend their study over three years, moving from vocational and level 2 courses to advanced work. Although the number of AS and A2 courses has increased, the number of students continuing their studies into Year 13 is small. Teaching in the sixth form is good and students learn well. Working relationships between teachers and students are excellent. Leadership of the sixth form is good and management very good. The sixth form is cost-effective and provides good value for money. Improvement for the sixth form since the last inspection has been good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teachers have a strong commitment to their students, know them well and positively support their academic and social development.
- Some students lose their chances to learn because of poor or erratic attendance.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very good relationships with students, who learn with confidence.
- The sixth form is well led and very well managed.
- Links with community groups and other educational institutions are very good. Students receive very good careers guidance.

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

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form at Whitefield School 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. Some, not listed here, were sampled.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	<b>Good in English:</b> standards are below average. Teaching and learning are both good and students' achievement is satisfactory.
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory in mathematics:</b> standards are below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is students' achievement.
Science	<b>Good in biology:</b> standards are below average. Achievement is good because of good teaching and learning.
Information and communication technology	<b>Good in ICT:</b> standards are below average. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Poor in design and technology:</b> standards are low. Despite satisfactory teaching, the students' commitment, learning and achievement are poor. The majority of students does not

	complete the course.
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Business	<b>Very good in business:</b> standards are below average but improving. Good teaching ensures that most students learn and achieve well.
Leisure and Tourism	<b>Good in GNVQ intermediate:</b> standards are below average. Students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. <b>Satisfactory in GNVQ Foundation:</b> standards are well below average but students make good progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

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

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Very good. Students' progress is very well supported by academic and year staff. Students joining from the main school are very well prepared for joining the sixth form. Information about sixth form courses is very good, as is the quality of advice on work and further study. Students receive regular, sensitive and practical advice on their work, which helps them to achieve well. Their progress is monitored efficiently. However, attendance and punctuality are not good enough, and require more effective monitoring and follow-up.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Very good. Leadership is good and management very good. The head of sixth form is committed to helping students get the maximum benefit from the sixth form. Day-to-day administration, with the exception of improving attendance and punctuality, is very effective. Performance data are well used to track students' progress. However, there is no act of daily worship for sixth formers, though assemblies are good. There is no course of religious education, and this is required.

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

Students are very positive about the sixth form. They enjoy life in its community and find their studies demanding, but rewarding. They feel that their very good relationships with staff help them to do the best they can. Students place a high value on the support and encouragement they receive. Inspectors find that their views are justified.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

*Note:*

*Attainment answers the question, 'How high are standards?' This means the actual standards students have reached, when compared with the national average in tests and examinations. It is also used to explain the average level expected nationally on entry to the school, or the level of work seen during an inspection.*

*Achievement answers the question, 'Are standards for individual students high enough?' This means the level students have reached, based on the progress they have made in relation to how capable they are.*

### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Students enter the school with standards well below average. Their achievement is satisfactory over Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11 and in the sixth form. Examination results have improved in recent years. The many students with SEN make very good progress and those who have EAL make good progress, thanks to the good support they receive, at all levels of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results have been rising, particularly in GCSE and in AS-level examinations in the sixth form.
- Students' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11 and the sixth form. They make good progress overall.
- Students with SEN achieve very well and those who have EAL achieve well.
- Students achieve particularly well in English, French and physical education.

### Commentary

1. When students join the school, their attainment is overall well below average. Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in their primary schools are well below average, as are the results of other tests of ability conducted in Year 7 by the school. When they join, a high proportion is at an early stage in learning English, while the number with SEN is well above average. This means that a substantial proportion of students faces difficulty in handling the National Curriculum, when they arrive in Year 7.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.8 (28.7)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	30.1 (29.3)	n/a (35.4)
science	27.3 (27.7)	n/a (33.6)

*Test results and the number of students in the year group have not yet been reported in the Ofsted analysis. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were overall well below average in 2004 and the school did not reach its overall targets for results at this stage. However, results have been rising steadily over several years, at a faster rate than the national trend. Comparison of results in these tests with those in tests at the end of Year 6 cannot safely be made, as 40 per cent of the school's current Year 9 students are not recorded as having taken these Year 6 tests. Standards seen towards the end of Year 9 during the inspection were overall below average. In lessons across all three years, standards were well below nationally expected levels in almost half the lessons seen, and below in the other half, with very few students attaining

standards at the expected levels. Little difference in the performance of boys and girls is apparent at this stage. Though differences are not generally large, Black African and Black Caribbean students have performed better than other groups in these tests in core subjects in recent years. Students from Traveller backgrounds have performed less well.

- Overall, students' achievement over Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In the 2004 Year 9 tests, English results were well ahead of those in mathematics and science; students achieved very well over Years 7 to 9 to reach results not far short of the national average. Mathematics and science results were well below average, representing satisfactory achievement over this period. As in English, achievement is already better than satisfactory in some subjects. In French, ICT, drama and music, students achieve well. Girls achieve well and boys very well in PE. Already, therefore, students are starting to make good progress in some areas, and to make a secure base for good progress over Years 10 to 11. Good teaching and very good relationships are starting to have a positive effect.

### **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	43 (24)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	76 (66)	89(88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	90 (84)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	26.8 (25.2)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 158 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- Results in GCSE examinations have been rising faster than the national trend in recent years. Though they were below the national average in 2004 for achievement of five or more passes at grades A\*-C and for the average points scored, they were well above average when compared with the performance of students with a similar starting point, on both these measures. Students in this school therefore progressed over Years 10 to 11 much better than those they were compared with, adding very good value to their expected performance. In 2004, results for five or more passes at grades A\*-C rose to 43 per cent from 24 per cent in 2003, putting the school in the top 100 schools nationally for its GCSE improvement. The school greatly exceeded its target of 30 per cent. Its 2005 target of 31 per cent is still a reasonable one, in the context of these students' performance in the Year 9 tests. A target at around this level represents a good measure of improvement on existing Year 9 test results.
- In GCSE examinations over the last three years, results for both boys and girls have been well below average, but boys have done rather better than girls. Black African and Caribbean students performed better than others in 2004. White British students, and also Eastern European and Traveller students, performed slightly below the school average.
- Standards seen in Years 10 to 11 during the inspection were overall below nationally expected levels, though standards in some top sets were around, sometimes above, these levels. Overall achievement over Years 10 to 11 is good. In English, standards rose at this stage to the expected national level and students' achievement was very good. This is the result of good teaching and a successful emphasis on improving literacy. Standards in French are above expected levels in Year 11 and students achieve very well to reach these levels. Standards of drama are around the nationally expected level and achievement is good. In mathematics and science, standards remain below expected levels, but students achieve well over the science course and well in GCSE mathematics. In other subjects, standards seen

were overall below the nationally expected levels, but students achieved well, making good progress in the work and reaching higher levels and results than had been predicted for them.

7. Students' attainment in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is below the nationally expected level, but their achievement and progress are, overall, good. Students' literacy skills are below the expected level, but higher than the data on their attainment when they join the school would suggest. This is because provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is good. Teachers have a high level of awareness of students' basic literacy needs. The school has introduced some excellent initiatives to raise students' awareness of spelling, paragraphing and sentence structure and to provide a standardised marking scheme. Most departments promote literacy well, while the learning resources centre is an important focus for promoting reading.
8. Attainment in numeracy is also below expected levels, but provision for its development within mathematics is good. Students have good chances to use these skills in some other subjects, for example in geography and music. There are missed opportunities in design and technology. Overall provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory, but is not yet fully planned and co-ordinated.
9. Students' competence in the use of ICT across the curriculum is average in Years 7 to 9, but above average in Years 10 to 11. Significant improvements in accommodation and equipment have taken place, in several subjects. Several teachers make very imaginative and creative use of new interactive whiteboards. Students use the Internet well for independent research in several subjects.
10. Students with SEN achieve very well in lessons. This is the result of good joint planning and effective teaching between subject teachers and SEN support staff. For example, most students with statements surpassed their predictions in their achievement of five or more GCSE grades A\*-G. Gifted and talented students achieve well. They make rather more progress than other students over Years 7 to 9. These high achievers make rapid gains in English and those with practical talents make good use of their opportunities in drama and PE. Those who take part in the 'space project' in Years 7-8 profit from the extra stimulus they receive in the wide range of subjects included.
11. Provision for EAL students is good and overall they achieve well. Standards for the large number of students who have EAL and who come from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, vary greatly. They range from very low, for example in an induction class for those having no English at all, and at a very early stage in learning EAL, to very high, for example in a Farsi class for native speakers of this language. Students enter the school with standards well below average. Some students enter the school speaking no English at all. In 2004, only a very small number of EAL students was not entered for English GCSE, and in 2005 all will take this examination. The school makes comprehensive analyses of its examination performance and helps all students in need of assistance, from whatever background. Its analyses of progress suggest that students from minority ethnic groups generally achieve at least as well as the rest of the school and sometimes better, because some of them are very highly motivated. The school's overall analysis of the value added by different ethnic groups confirms that only White and Traveller students are achieving less than other minority ethnic groups, but that Traveller students are achieving better at Whitefield than elsewhere.

### ***Attainment and achievement in the sixth form***

#### ***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	78.7 (38.3)	92.3 (92.3)

Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	11.3 (5.0)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	128.5 (58.8)	265.2 (258.2)

*There were 25 students in the Year 13 group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

12. Overall, students enter the sixth form with standards well below the nationally expected level. After GCSE, a number of abler students leaves for college, and is replaced by students of lower ability, many of whom have only a rudimentary grasp of English. In recent years, many students have joined unready to embark on AS-level courses, and have needed much help to tackle a traditional sixth form course.
13. Results in the AS and A2 level examinations have improved in recent years, and rose considerably in 2004. The combined average points score for both examinations in 2004 was double that in 2003. Though results remained well below the national average, calculations of the value added to students' results are positive for almost all subjects.
14. Looking at the AS and A2 examinations separately, AS results for Year 12 students in 2004 are not very far behind the national average results, and points scored have doubled from 2003. However, A2 results for Year 13 students fell in 2004, compared with the near-average results achieved in 2003. Results seen in points scored in vocational examinations in 2004 were three times higher than in 2003, though still below the national average.
15. During the inspection, overall standards seen in the seven subjects inspected in detail were below, not well below, the expected level. In almost all these subjects, students were achieving well. They responded positively to good teaching and to the well chosen range of courses provided for them. Some students had overcome their English language difficulties and were now making rapid, confident progress. However, overall achievement in mathematics was no more than satisfactory, and achievement was poor in DT, with many students failing to complete the course. The confident progress made by the majority is confirmed by the fact that almost everyone goes into further or higher education on leaving the sixth form after one, two or three years – whenever they are ready for the next step. This is a considerable achievement for many students who appeared to have almost no prospects of success in post-16 education.
16. Improvement across the whole school since the last inspection in students' attainment and progress has been good. In 1999, progress was sound. It is now good in Years 10-13. Results have risen at all levels. The school has started to see its hard work reflected in improved performance, particularly in GCSE examinations.

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

Attendance is satisfactory but punctuality is not. Attitudes and behaviour are both good. Personal development is good. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are very good among students, while those between students and their teachers are outstanding.
- Too many students arrive late at the start of the day.
- Students from very diverse backgrounds mix harmoniously together.
- Students are very willing to be involved in school life and to take part in activities outside lessons.
- Proportionally more Black students are excluded for fixed periods than other groups.

### **Commentary**

17. Students have good attitudes to the school. They think highly of the community 'feel' of the school. Students like the sense of stability and of belonging that this brings. As a result, they are interested in their studies and ready to become involved in school life. Students are well motivated, keen to take part in lessons and thus increase their knowledge and learning. They respond well to a combination of encouragement and demanding teaching. Most take part in activities outside lessons. Sporting events receive enthusiastic support.
18. Standards of behaviour are good, especially in those lessons when teachers make it clear that they expect high standards. When teachers fail to do this, there can be some restlessness or low-level disruption. Behaviour around the school is also generally good, though not so consistently as in lessons. Students can be noisy and over-ebullient. There is some bullying, as indicated by questionnaire responses. Students interviewed agreed that bullying does happen, but they consider that the school deals with incidents well.
19. Levels of permanent exclusions are average in national terms, but are well below the average for schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. This is a good achievement. However, fixed term exclusions are high. The school uses the mechanism of exclusions to involve parents directly in the improvement of their children's behaviour and prospects. Proportionally more Black students are excluded than other groups (African last year, Caribbean last term). Most exclusions are for behavioural reasons.

## Exclusions

### *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	166	54	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	59	36	1
Black or Black British – African	67	57	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	161	19	1
Any other ethnic group	40	25	0

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

20. The attitudes and behaviour of students with SEN are very good. They take full advantage of the opportunities on offer and willingly participate in all aspects of school life. Students with physical disabilities are seamlessly integrated into all areas of school life. This is particularly evident in sporting activities where all students benefit from the school's status as a specialist sports college.
21. The school welcomes a great range of students from many countries, some with very little English when they arrive. Responding very well to the positive and friendly atmosphere, these students behave well and take very good advantage of the many opportunities they are given. With the school's dedicated and outgoing staff, they help to create the first rate sense of inclusion and partnership which people from many backgrounds, cultures and languages enjoy. All such students interviewed were positive, often very positive, about the school. The one Traveller student interviewed was very positive. Students from different minority ethnic groups get on very well. Students from some ethnic groups fleeing persecution, such as Somali and Albanian students, have successfully overcome their initial difficulties in adjusting to the school's ethos and expectations. Parents are positive about the attitudes and values that the school encourages.



22. Students' personal qualities are developed very well. The school's provision for their spiritual development is good, while provision for their moral, social and cultural development is very good. Subjects such as religious education and music provide a very effective spiritual dimension, but other subjects vary in the quality of their contributions to this aspect of students' personal development. It is not a consistent feature of schemes of work.
23. The school's moral and social provision (what it does) and its outcome (its impact on students) are very strong. All curricular subjects and aspects of pastoral care contribute very effectively. The result is obvious from the strength of the relations between students and teachers – which also helps achievement. Students feel that they have their teachers' goodwill and support, which encourages them to do well. Very strong moral and social provision is also evident from the way in which students from so many different ethnic backgrounds mix harmoniously as equals in a friendly manner. The school is outstandingly successful here. Among the reasons for its success are the assumption that all students have something of value to offer the community, and the range of opportunities for students to take part in community life. The programme of assemblies makes an additional contribution to students' personal development.
24. The school's very good cultural provision comes from taking advantage of its cultural diversity by organising a wide range of activities. For example, Black History Month is a big event in the school's calendar. Cultural and spiritual development is encouraged by the celebration, for example, of Christian festivals and Diwali. The school provides a prayer room for Muslim students. Very good cultural provision also comes from the very good programmes of activities outside the school day. There are good opportunities to take part in drama and music; generous opportunities to go to plays and concerts; very good activities in science; and very good programmes of sport and recreation.

### **Attendance**

25. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Statistics for attendance compared with national averages show the overall rate as satisfactory for the year 2003-2004 at 91.7 per cent, though unauthorised absence was higher than average at 2.1 per cent. Figures for the autumn term were broadly similar – 91.5 per cent overall, though unauthorised absence was lower at 1.6 per cent. When attendance is compared with that achieved by similar schools (those with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals), attendance at this school is well above average. On the basis of its reported figures, the school is therefore doing well, comparatively, in achieving the average national attendance rate.
26. However, attendance levels during the inspection were noticeably lower than these figures and were not satisfactory. Unsatisfactory attendance was reducing the effectiveness of too many lessons. Punctuality was also unsatisfactory, with too many students arriving late at the start of the school day, so that registration sessions were often ineffective, other than for checking students in.
27. The school is now analysing the reasons for the fall in attendance during the inspection. It thinks that the inspection may itself have had an adverse effect on attendance. Inspectors greatly appreciate the school's friendly and purposeful atmosphere, built on goodwill and a minimum of necessary enforcement. This has achieved a calm, constructive and purposeful school. Teachers have generally been unwilling to dictate to students, and have achieved remarkably good results by this consensus. There is no wandering about during lessons, for example, and once students are in school, lessons start and end promptly. However, it is time for teachers to stress the importance of punctuality and attendance, ensure that registrations are better used and insist that reasons for absence from class are always followed up and explained.

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

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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School data	6.2
National data	6.9

School data	2.1
National data	1.1

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

## Sixth Form

28. Sixth form students share the good attitudes and behaviour shown by students in the main school. They enjoy life in their community and find their studies rewarding and demanding. Students' attitudes are characterised by a strong desire to learn, and they are prepared to work hard. They consider that their very good relationships with staff help them to do as well as they can. Students also place a high value on the support they receive, but this can mean that some become too dependent on their teachers and need constant further encouragement to be able to work independently. High levels of mobility have an adverse effect on the retention rate of students on particular courses, as not all students are able to complete their studies. Personal qualities are developed very well. Students are ready to play a part in the life of the main school and have a beneficial impact there.
29. Improvement across the whole school since the last inspection is satisfactory, on balance. The last report also noted that students were late arriving. Attendance statistics show an improvement, though the actual attendance during the inspection did not. Provision for students' spiritual and moral development has improved. Racial harmony continues to be a strength.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess students' work well. Overall, the curriculum provides a good range of opportunities, and a very good range in the sixth form. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation is very good and other resources are good. Standards of care are very good. Students receive very good advice, guidance and support. Arrangements to involve them in the work of the school are very good. Links with parents are good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess students' work well in the main school. Their assessment is satisfactory in the sixth form.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective in all years.
- Very good relationships lead to good learning. Students are usually keen to learn and to make progress.
- Teachers assess students' work well in the main school, but in some areas they could make better use of the very good data they receive.

### Commentary

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 160 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (1%)	33 (21%)	68 (42%)	51 (32%)	6(4%)	0	0

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

30. Overall, teaching is good, so that students learn well and make good progress in their work. This leads to the improved results the school has obtained and the considerable extra value it adds to students' attainment over the GCSE years.

31. Teaching and learning are very good in physical education. In most other subjects, teaching and learning are good, though satisfactory in mathematics, religious education and art. In no subject were teaching and learning unsatisfactory.
32. Teaching and learning, have many strengths and there are no overall weaknesses. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. Most are already adept at exploiting the new technology of the whiteboards, now in every classroom. For example, their use in French has had a marked effect on students' progress and interest in the language. Teachers have good expectations of what their students will do. Because relationships are very good and teachers encourage students very well, students are keen to learn and make good progress. Students generally respond to their teachers' very good attitudes towards them with good behaviour and a willingness to master the work. They acquire knowledge and understanding well. Teachers give everyone an excellent opportunity to achieve well, so that students from every background make equally confident progress. This is particularly true in Years 10 to 11, when most students have been in the school long enough to have acquired good attitudes to work and benefit from the focus which examination work brings.
33. The teaching of students with SEN is good and as a result, the many students on the SEN register make very good progress. Support from experienced SEN teachers and teaching assistants is very good. Very good joint planning between them and with teachers provides effective ways of giving individuals the specific help they need. Individual education plans (IEPs) are well planned and identify the right targets. Gifted and talented students are well taught in the special club for these students in Years 7 to 8, and teachers provide a very good range of extra activities for them. In mainstream lessons, teachers provide well for these students overall, as for all others. However, planning and providing more specific material for them are areas for further development.
34. Teaching of EAL and of minority ethnic and Traveller children is good overall, and these students learn well. Teachers' assessment of EAL students is good. Students generally know the level they are working at, but are less clear about what they must do to improve it. The best lessons have clear learning objectives, and a strong focus on techniques to improve literacy. The intended outcomes are well understood by students. In these lessons, there is excellent use of ICT and tasks are well designed for the linguistic attainments of the students. Not all lessons are of this calibre. Some made little or no use of data on the attainment and targets of individuals and there was too little challenge for abler students. Where support teachers and assistants are present in mainstream lessons, they contribute effectively to the achievement of these students. When there is no in-class support, teachers do not always help students enough, but in physical education such help is very good. The quality of specialist EAL lessons is good. A very positive feature is the booster classes for students considered unlikely to attain at least Level 5 in English in their national tests at the end of Year 9.
35. Overall, teachers in all subjects assess students' work well, though standards vary between departments and individual teachers. For example, assessment has very good features in science, where teachers generally mark work regularly, often with helpful comments on how to improve. However, more consistency is needed among teachers and classes. In mathematics, assessment is satisfactory overall, but has some unsatisfactory features in day-to-day marking and in how assessment helps students to improve their performance. Assessment is very good in physical education, where teachers use data very well to plan relevant and challenging lessons, involving students in good self-assessment of their performance. It is unsatisfactory in art, where data are not well used for such purposes.
36. A strength of assessment is the very good provision of data by senior staff. Teachers have a wealth of data to help them plan the most relevant lessons for their individual students. Though teachers' assessment is good overall, with generally good marking, use of homework and use of testing to challenge students and confirm progress, their use of data is patchy at

present. Teaching can be further improved by the continued development of the use of data. The school has made good progress already in this area.

## **Sixth Form**

37. Teaching is good and students learn well. Teachers' good command of their subjects allows them to teach with good pace and encourage students very well. Teachers have very good relationships with their students and provide them all with very good opportunities to make the most of their education.
38. Teaching and learning are good in five of the seven subjects inspected in detail, and are satisfactory in mathematics, and design and technology. Teaching in several subjects has very good features. For example, teachers and students use whiteboards very well in English. In some biology lessons, teachers drive students hard and so give them a clear idea of the A2-level standards they need to reach. Teachers of ICT have very good knowledge of their subject, which helps students learn rapidly and economically. Students on the intermediate level course in leisure and tourism listen attentively to well organised teaching; they learn independently and well. Several lessons in business studies were very good. Relationships were excellent and teachers gave endless time to students with EAL, who benefited greatly as a result. Teachers and assistants support students with SEN well – the school continues to give very good support to the 32 sixth form students on the school's register of SEN.
39. Students regularly join the sixth form from other countries, often after lengthy periods of interrupted education and emotional disruption. As well as ensuring that coursework and examination requirements are met, teachers willingly take on the task of providing English and special help to these students. In this work, they are doing a lot more than simply helping young adults to a qualification. Part of teachers' professional concern in this school is to give a new start to those who need it. The teaching process achieves this very well. The high proportion going into further and higher education is proof of how effective teachers are in this role.
40. Teachers' assessment of students' work is satisfactory in the sixth form. The quality of assessment has not been developed as positively as in the main school, though in science, for example, the subject leaders have given a good lead and have ensured that assessment is well documented. Most subjects are not assessing students' work at this level as rigorously as in the lower years. Mathematics and art are subjects where further improvement, particularly in the use of assessment data, is needed.
41. Improvement across the whole school since the last inspection is good. The proportion of very good teaching has much increased and unsatisfactory teaching has been greatly reduced. Improved results in tests and examinations have followed this improved teaching.

## **The curriculum**

Overall, the curriculum provides a good range of opportunities, and a very good range in the sixth form. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation is very good and other resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides very good opportunities for the great range of different students in the school. Provision for SEN is very good.
- The provision of after-school activities, including extra help in subjects and the very extensive sports programmes, is a strength of the curriculum.
- Time for PSHE and citizenship is too limited, especially in Years 10 to 11. The curriculum in citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- The sixth form curriculum has a very good range of courses for the needs of these students.

- Accommodation is very good and resources for the curriculum are good.
- Students' preparation for the next stage of their education or careers is very good.

## Commentary

42. Overall, the curriculum is good in the main school. It has many strengths, especially the very good opportunities it gives to the great range of students from different backgrounds. The range of subjects for students in Years 7-11 is appropriate, with all required subjects provided. The introduction of a vocational course in ICT in Years 10 to 11 is a good development. A GCSE course in business studies is also provided. This is a well established and popular course of good quality, and makes a very positive contribution to the curriculum and the links between GCSE and A-level work. In other respects, the school has not greatly developed the 14 to 19 curriculum, though the ICT and business studies courses are a good indication of the potential for this.
43. Provision for students with SEN is very good. The school operates a very successful policy of inclusion, enabling these students to gain full access to all areas of the curriculum. They take an active part in after school clubs and are given the opportunity to represent the school in sporting activities and the performing arts. The school is very well adapted and resourced to enable all students, including its 10 students with physical disabilities, to benefit from its curriculum.
44. Overall provision for gifted and talented students is good. The provision made by the school's coordinator is very good. Attainment data are closely analysed, to select the most suitable students, whose progress is then well monitored. The school's extended learning project has identified a significant number of students of above average ability, while the range of provision for their needs is very wide. This includes the 'space project', a venture linked with the Kennedy Space Centre, USA, which offers an exciting range of extension activities for students in Years 7 to 8, in a range of subjects. Those with disabilities are strongly included, for example the group of wheelchair students, one of whom plays for the UK in the National Wheelchair Basketball Championships. The school is investigating the use of an IEP for gifted students. Provision for gifted and talented students in mainstream lessons is satisfactory overall. Not all subjects have yet included specific work for their abler students in their regular schemes of work.
45. The curriculum for students with EAL is very good. The school selects faculties in rotation to concentrate on providing EAL support, so that all subject areas can gain this expertise. There is a special course for students with EAL or SEN, or both, in Years 10 to 11. There are induction classes for sixth form students at very early stages of learning EAL and certificate classes for more advanced learners. There is an after-school drop-in surgery for staff. The EAL department has a positive influence on the curriculum by helping staff to look at preferred learning styles, and helping students to become more flexible learners. Staff are trained to understand the potential of EAL students and so to provide an appropriate level of challenge in the curriculum. The school provides its EAL students with every chance to make progress, with staff available in different areas and activities from pre-school breakfast through to after-school sessions. Opportunities are so plentiful that some are not greatly made use of by these students.
46. The school provides some significant initiatives for students from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds. Sports College status has provided an incentive for a number of students to join the school, especially Black boys. To raise ethnic minority achievement and reduce exclusions, the school has used its Bedford Centre to give personal support through its mentoring initiatives, well devised behaviour improvement plans and particular initiatives such as the challenging Boyz2Men programme.
47. Support for every student for learning outside normal lessons is very good. Teachers provide a good range of extra tuition in subjects, through lunchtime and after-schools groups, clubs, and generous individual help wherever it is needed. For example, the mathematics faculty

helps its abler students take part in the University of Middlesex Maths Challenge. The SEN and EAL departments provide a great deal of support outside normal lessons. Participation in sport is excellent. The school has a very good list of team fixtures and there are Football Academy fixtures every night. There are many visits to theatres and museums, and many expeditions abroad. Drama and music productions take place regularly, particularly to celebrate the religious festivals of the various ethnic and religious groups in the school.

48. Accommodation is very good and resources for the curriculum are good. Teachers are well matched to the curriculum. A notable feature is the number of newly trained or unqualified teachers who join the school. Training for these teachers, for example through the Graduate Training Programme, is very good, and enables them to perform well in this demanding school, in a very short time. Support staff are effective and work well with teachers. Resources for learning are good. A very good feature is the number and quality of computers now available for students. Another is the recent introduction of whiteboards in every classroom; these are already well used and are making a huge and positive difference to the lessons. Accommodation is very good. Rooms are light, well proportioned and well presented. Subjects are all taught in suites and there are no temporary buildings. The learning resource centre is spacious and well used. The hall is decked with the flags of all the nations represented in the school – an impressive and proud sight. Accommodation for drama and ICT is very good. The EAL, SEN and Bedford Centre areas are well presented, spacious and welcoming.
49. Students' preparation for the next stage of their education or careers is very good. Details of this can be seen in the section on work-related learning.
50. The main school curriculum has only one weak area. Because education for careers is so extensive, this tends to dominate in the time available and too little time is left for the necessary PSHE and citizenship education, particularly in Years 10 to 11. This is one of the factors which make the curriculum in citizenship unsatisfactory, though provision in PSHE is satisfactory. However, a well established course in RE throughout Years 7 to 11 is a good feature of this area of the curriculum.

## **Sixth Form**

51. The sixth form curriculum has a very good range of courses for the needs of these students. Appropriately, there is a wide range of vocational courses in Year 12, at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Business studies, ICT, science, and leisure and tourism all have courses at more than one level. The school provides a good range of 14 AS and A2-level courses. Numbers in some classes are low, but the effect of this relatively wide provision for the modest number taking the AS-A2 route is to retain a growing number of students in the school. Providing AS and A2 courses in Farsi and Urdu is an appropriate and generous arrangement for these students, who repay the school with some very good results. Spanish is available by a link with a nearby school.
52. As well as the main subjects, there is a full range of key skills courses, and GCSE in English and mathematics is also available. Classes are provided for those at an early stage in learning English, as several students join the sixth form directly from overseas. The school intends to provide for students at any level of educational development, as long as they want to learn, and succeeds in getting a very high proportion into courses of higher or further education. It is particularly good at developing talents in such areas as art and design, and fashion. The careers service gives very good support, drawing out students' individual talents and helping them to take steps towards interesting employment. This is a huge achievement in view of the slender education with which many first joined the school.
53. As in the main school, there is a very good range of activities, particularly in sport. Links with two local schools enable students to attend lectures there. There are master classes in several universities within London. There is work experience for all and the chance to

volunteer for social duties, for example in mentoring younger students or helping with particular activities.

54. As reported above, teachers are well matched to the curriculum and resources are good. Accommodation is very good. There is a separate sixth form common room and adequate space for private study.
55. Improvement across the whole school since the last inspection is good. The improvements asked for in the last report have been made and the range of sixth form courses has expanded considerably.

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

Standards of care are very good. Students receive very good advice, guidance and support. Arrangements to involve them in the work of the school are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Arrangements for the welfare of students are very good.
- The personal support and guidance that students from all backgrounds receive are compassionate and sensitive.

### **Commentary**

56. Standards of care are very good overall. The school regards the welfare of its students as a very important part of its role, given their diverse backgrounds and circumstances. It aims to look after all students with kindness and compassion. And it succeeds. The pastoral teams – especially the heads of year - make sure they know their students well so they can help and encourage them. The counselling service now available to students as a result of the Full Service Extended School (FSES) funding helps to provide confidential support. Appropriate child protection procedures and safety routines are in place. No health and safety concerns were noted. All students receive health education as part of the PSHE programme, even in Years 10 and 11, where the time allocation for this course is short.
57. Advice, support and guidance for students are also very good. Their personal and academic progress is recorded and monitored. Personal support and guidance are stronger than academic, because assessment data are not used well by all teachers. But, given the make-up of the student body, the successful provision of strong personal support outweighs the effect of inconsistencies in support for academic progress. Support given to those groups of students needing extra help, for example in study skills or for behaviour, is particularly good. Mentors and support systems such as that provided in the Bedford Centre help such students. This inclusive approach is a strength of the school. Some of this extra help is provided through the work of the FSES. There are good systems for the induction of students new to the school. Most settle in quickly, whether they join in Year 7 or later. Students receive helpful advice on further study and career opportunities at all stages of their time in the school.
58. Students are very well involved in the work and development of the school. Their views are sought regularly through surveys and questionnaires and the results are shared with them. Students are also involved through the school and year councils. Sixth form students have recently been trained to play a greater role in running these.
59. The care and support for students with SEN is very good. There is a good ethos of acceptance for SEN students. They feel secure and valued within the learning support department and in the welcome they get there, for example at break and lunchtimes. Good links exist with external agencies and guidance is sought appropriately.



## Sixth Form

60. Standards of care are very good. Students receive very good support and guidance during their time in the sixth form. Arrangements to involve them in the life of the school are very good.
61. Students are very well prepared before they join the sixth form. Information about sixth form courses is very good. Sixth formers get very good help with their studies and any personal problems. Monitoring arrangements are thorough, effective and much valued by students. Students receive regular, sensitive and practical advice on their work, which helps them to achieve well. The quality of advice and guidance on opportunities for work and for further study has gained from the appointment of a mentor attached to the sixth form. It is now very good. Students are very well involved in the work of the school through the activities of their own committee and the main council.
62. Across the whole school since the last inspection, high standards of welfare and pastoral care have been well maintained.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sporting links with other schools and the community are excellent.
- The new FSES provision brings many benefits for students and their parents.
- Annual reports need more precise detail on what students can do and how they can improve.

### Commentary

63. The school has developed a good partnership with parents. It provides them with an extensive range of general information about the school. This is well produced and of high quality. However, the information on progress that parents receive could be improved. Although the interim progress reports show students' levels clearly, the full reports concentrate more on the course content and on students' attitudes and organisation. Parents are not told enough about what their children can do and what progress they have made. The targets set for students vary in their usefulness and their practical application. Parents support the work of the school and are pleased with what it provides for their children. However, their active involvement is still limited, as it was at the time of the previous report. Through the FSES, the school has recently started to provide a greater range of support classes for parents, which will enable them to give greater help to their children. Examples include language lessons for parents who have little English, and classes in mathematics and basic ICT. Early indications are that these initiatives will be successful.
64. There are good links with parents of students with SEN. Their opinions are regularly sought, and they are kept informed of their children's progress. A strong sense of partnership exists, and parents feel that the school provides for special needs very well. Visits are made to feeder primary schools to assist a smooth and effective transition for SEN students. Other agencies are well used. The school uses a parent partnership officer to offer guidance and support to parents.
65. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are very good, and those involving sport are excellent. The school uses its sports college status astutely to link with a range of other schools, including special schools, and gives them assistance with sports lessons and other sporting activities. Sporting links with the community are of equally high calibre. A leading example of these links is the active and successful gym club, *One Small*

*Step*, held jointly for Whitefield pupils with disabilities and their friends, and for pupils at the neighbouring special school. Whitefield teachers run this inclusive and popular club, which has now expanded to two sessions per week. There are also strong links with the local business community. These links help sixth form students with their studies, for example in learning about marketing and human resources in business.

66. The extra services provided for students, their parents and the local community through the FSES are very helpful and are beginning to make an impact. Many students use the learning resource centre before school starts as well as homework clubs at the end of the day. Saturday activities are popular. The school's provision for the extensive community which has arrived relatively recently in England is very good. Community groups value the ability to meet at the school. Advice sessions are well attended. Extra classes for parents in English have attracted good initial support. The Barnet Refugee Service holds a monthly drop-in service on site. The Citizens' Advice Bureau holds weekly sessions at the school. The Somali Iftiin Club has a termly parents' meeting at the school.
67. Improvement across the whole school since the last inspection is good. The strong partnerships noted in the previous report continue, and new initiatives are developing strongly, especially with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are very good. Leadership from all key staff is very good and management is good. Governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors lead the school well. However, there are two areas in which they have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements.
- The headteacher has an excellent vision and sense of purpose for the school. He and the senior team lead the school very well.
- Leaders give everyone an excellent chance to benefit from the many opportunities the school provides.

### **Commentary**

68. Governors lead the school well. They know and care for their school very well, taking a close interest in its standards and the welfare of its students. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They work well with the school's senior staff in governors' committees and in reviewing the development plan. However, they have not ensured that statutory requirements are met, in two respects. The school is not providing a daily act of collective worship, as required. Governors consider that the present arrangements, with two assemblies each week for every year, work well, and that the present spiritual and moral content of these assemblies is appropriate for this multi-faith school. Governors have not provided a course of religious education in the sixth form, though the present arrangements for visits to places of worship could well be developed into such a course.
69. The headteacher gives an excellent sense of inclusiveness and purpose to the school. His concern for the best opportunity for people from every cultural and educational background is first rate. He knows everyone – students and parents – and ensures that the school is a humane and civilised place for them all. When a high proportion of students says that the school is a good place to be at, students are reflecting the strong sense of purpose which their headteacher gives them.
70. These qualities are shared by the senior team, which with the headteacher leads the school very well. Strategic leadership at this level is very good. The development plan concentrates on the most significant areas, including the further improvement of teaching, learning and

assessment. Its structure ensures that all other essential aspects remain in focus and that priorities are well reflected in faculty plans. Leadership of self-evaluation is very good, and the school welcomes external assessment, for example the very useful work commissioned by the local authority on the performance of Black students. The quality of leadership in departments is good overall, but varies from very good to unsatisfactory. It is very good in English, ICT and physical education, but unsatisfactory in art and religious education.

71. The good standard of education provided by the school comes from this very good leadership. This is a very challenging school to run, and a high quality of leadership is needed to produce the good teaching, behaviour and achievement which the school provides. With some 50 per cent of students joining the school after their normal starting time in Year 7 and with around half the staff arriving without the usual British teaching qualifications, providing a good quality of education is a high achievement. This comes from the headteacher's excellent sense of purpose, which is calm, compassionate and highly supportive. The senior team shares this humane and inclusive vision. Their encouragement of good relationships is excellent, so that students (often with very interrupted educational backgrounds) behave well and remain purposeful and positive. Senior staff provide very good training and support for teachers, and this leads directly to the good quality of teaching, learning and behaviour seen.
72. Management by senior staff of faculties and years is good overall. Some aspects are very good, for example the analysis and provision of data on examination and individual performance and the careful, thorough systems for staff recruitment, training and development. Systems for the evaluation of performance are very good, and their use in faculties and other areas good. Heads of year manage their teams of tutors and the welfare of students very well. Management by heads of faculty and subject is good overall. Planning of the curriculum in individual subjects is good. Monitoring of teaching is very good from the headteacher and senior team and good from heads of faculty. Management of behaviour is good, but that of attendance and punctuality, by staff overall, was unsatisfactory during the inspection.
73. Leaders are strongly committed to making sure that all students are well included in all the school has to offer and that all have equal opportunities to benefit from the education it gives. Teachers are very good role models, showing courtesy and kindness to students. They are very good at helping individuals make good progress. Harmony and very good relationships between students of all backgrounds are marked features of the school.
74. Leadership and management of SEN are very good. The oversight of SEN by the assistant head teacher for inclusion is exceptional. She has a very clear vision of how an inclusive school should develop. The Code of Practice is being followed, and all SEN staff fulfil their duties within this. The Bedford Centre is also very well led and managed by the teacher in charge. He very effectively manages a team of mentors who provide a wide range of appropriate support.
75. Leadership and management of EAL are good. The department successfully provides a very good range of courses for these students and looks after their interests well. The department and school monitor the examination performance of groups from different ethnic backgrounds. The department is well equipped, maintains good records, and manages the work of its team of teachers and assistants well.
76. Leadership and management of the school's programmes for minority ethnic students are good, and very good for Traveller students. The school has eleven Traveller students on roll. All are deemed to be settled, but they nevertheless travel. An assistant headteacher is the designated teacher for Traveller students. He is aware of which students are Travellers, monitors their progress and liaises with Traveller families. Working closely with the local education authority, the school draws up agreements to support particular students in lessons and to give any other encouragement to get these students into school, such as financial help with purchasing uniform. Particular care is taken to achieve a successful transfer from primary school. Staff training has been given on the lifestyle and culture of Traveller students and their needs.

77. Financial management is good. Governors are well involved in budgetary planning and receive regular reports on the financial position. The bursar maintains accounts and records well, and the most recent audit report confirms that systems are sound and effective. Summaries of the considerable funds received in special grants are clear and informative. In the last financial year, over £500,000 was received in such grants, for example for initiatives which funded the learning mentors and gifted and talented programmes, the further development of leadership and the development of the specialist sports college status of the school. Very good use has been made of grants to encourage students to consider higher education. A large sum has been spent on ICT provision, to very good effect. Governors rightly appreciate the headteacher's acumen in securing this high level of special funding for his school, which allows it to provide very good support in areas of particular need. Management by the school office staff is very good – efficient, courteous and positive. Parents remarked on the very good service and first impression these staff provide. The school is clean and well kept.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3078837	Balance from previous year	164343
Total expenditure	3094691	Balance carried forward to the next	148489
Expenditure per student	3922		

## Sixth Form

78. The governance and leadership of the sixth form are good and its management by the head of sixth is very good. Governors have encouraged the growth of the sixth form, particularly in their decision to extend the range of AS and A2-level courses, and the outcome has been an increase in numbers and better results. The head of sixth is a member of the senior team, which leads this important area of the school well. Her management is very good – meticulous, detailed, very thorough and careful. Thanks to her command of detail, teachers and tutors have a close knowledge of the progress made by each student. The head of sixth is dedicated to the welfare and progress of each student and has great sensitivity and concern for them all. Sixth formers, often making their way in a new country, are more than fortunate to have such a champion.
79. The daily management of attendance requires more attention. Attendance in lessons during the inspection was often unsatisfactory, though overall attendance figures for the sixth form are satisfactory. During the inspection, teachers were not paying careful enough attention to absence from lessons, establishing why individuals were absent, and making sure that attendance has a high priority in the minds of all students.
80. As in the main school, staff are excellent in including every student in the opportunities provided. This is particularly seen in the curriculum, for example the immediate help given to newcomers without English and the very effective teaching for those with an aptitude for pursuing their home language. Management intends sixth formers to play a positive role in the school as a whole. This is seen, for example, in their valuable involvement in mentoring younger students.
81. Financial management of the sixth form is good. The school has decided to invest in its growth and currently spends slightly more than it receives for the sixth form. Though classes are sometimes small, the overall budget is well calculated and spent. The returns are

considerable, with virtually everyone going into further or higher education on leaving the sixth form.

82. Improvement across the whole school since the last inspection is good. Good standards of leadership and management have been maintained and have been further developed.

## **WORK RELATED LEARNING (WRL)**

The provision for work-related learning is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve a very good understanding of work.
- All elements of WRL are covered thoroughly.
- The co-ordinating team has made sure that WRL is securely embedded in both the pastoral and academic work of the school.
- Monitoring of WRL is now taking place and the co-ordinator expects to review provision in due course.

### **Commentary**

83. Students learn and achieve very well in their work-related learning because the school starts its programme of careers education in Year 7 and then provides many opportunities for direct experiences and background study. A key strength of the WRL provision is the care taken to tailor the experiences of work to the abilities of the students, so that all students can achieve. Successful arrangements apply to students with EAL, higher-attaining students, students with physical difficulties, those who are close to losing contact with education, and others.
84. All students in Year 10 undertake two weeks of work experience. The preparation and debrief phases of this provision are effective so that students gain a good understanding of what they must contribute and what they will gain. Heads of year and tutors make sure that Year 10 students achieve a lot during their work experience placement. In each of Years 9 to 11, all students experience major day-long events. For example, Year 11 have conference days, led by employers, which allow students to learn about the skills and attitudes that are valued in work. Careers education and guidance is a thoroughly planned programme for all year groups starting in Year 7. It includes learning about work practices and skills. Students in Years 10 and 11 are achieving well in the vocational course for ICT. There is a broad range of successful vocational courses in the sixth form.
85. The provision for WRL is successfully embedded in school practice. Statutory requirements are met. WRL is very well led and co-ordinated. There is a clear policy and a thorough scheme of work, which covers all elements recommended for best practice in WRL. The school makes very effective use of employers via the local education-business partnership. Connexions advisors play an important and expanding role. Much of the provision was well established in the school before the statutory requirement came into force in September 2004. Since then, the school has made sure that each subject includes specific planned provision for WRL for Years 10 and 11. Time has been set aside for subject teams to plan how they will do this. The co-ordinator is starting to monitor how well subjects undertake this new work.

## **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 **very good**.

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

- Consistently good and sometimes very good teaching leads to very good achievement.
- The department is very well led and works well as a team.
- Teachers track students' progress well to create good programmes of work for different groups.
- Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and provide clear guidelines for improvement.

##### **Commentary**

86. Students enter the school with results that are well below the national average. In the 2004 tests taken at the end of Year 9, however, results in English were only a little below the average for the country as a whole and were high in comparison to similar schools. Within the school, results were considerably higher in English than in most other subjects, including mathematics and science. GCSE results have been rising steadily since the time of the last inspection and in 2004 were only slightly below the national average, and high in comparison to similar schools. This represents very good achievement, given that a high proportion of students have English as an additional language and that many students join the school after Year 7. As is usual, girls gained higher A\* to C grades. However, boys came closer to girls' attainment than in the country as a whole, reflecting the close attention paid to their needs.
87. Standards of work seen in the inspection were below nationally expected levels in Years 7 to 9, but rose to these levels in Years 10 and 11. This improvement is largely due to consistently good teaching and to the close emphasis on improving students' basic literacy. The progress of students with SEN and of those for whom English is an additional language is carefully tracked and appropriate work is provided within the classroom. Students are set written homework regularly, which improves the fluency of their writing, and are challenged through discussion of their work to improve their oral fluency. Another factor in raising achievement is the close attention paid to meeting exact criteria for examination success. As a result of all this careful encouragement, students achieve very well, from entry to the school through to GCSE.
88. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations of their students, who repay their confidence by learning attentively and willingly. Lessons are well planned and students are clear about what is to be accomplished within the time available. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly, providing clear targets and guidelines for improvement. Students know the level at which they are working and what they need to do to raise their grades. Interactive whiteboards are very well used, not just by teachers but by students, enabling them to share what they have learned with the class. Teachers encourage students to use computers to undertake research. The good programme of extra-curricular events and booster classes stimulates the desire to learn.
89. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has forged a committed and hard-working team and leads by example. New teachers and those in training are very well supported. The head of department has an accurate understanding of his department and has a clear vision for its future. He is ambitious for each student to do as well as possible. The management of the department is good. Schemes of work are flexible,

enabling individual teachers to follow their enthusiasms within an orderly structure. Statistics are used well to provide appropriate work for different groups of students.

90. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The quality of teaching has improved, as has the achievement of students with SEN. Leadership and management are now very good overall, whereas they were good in the last report.

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

91. Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is good. At the time of the last inspection, a literacy working group, including teachers from other departments, was formed to tackle the problem of below-average literacy skills. Since then, there has been a high level of awareness of the need to develop students' basic literacy, together with improving their reading skills. Teachers recognise that the high turnover of students and the very high proportion of students for whom English is an additional language pose particular challenges.
92. Over the past two years, the member of the senior management team with responsibility for co-ordinating language and literacy across the curriculum has instigated some excellent initiatives to raise students' awareness of spelling, paragraphing and sentence structure and to provide a standardised marking scheme.
93. Most departments have accepted the need to continue promoting literacy. Important subject-specific words are displayed in most classrooms and teachers ensure that students understand them. There are examples of very good practice in French, where students are taught important phrases effectively and memorably, and in ICT, where puzzles and word-searches promote written skills and discussion develops oral skills. In English the use of writing frames and questions to prompt full answers develops students' fluency. However, not all subjects ensure that language skills are continually reinforced. This is especially noticeable in mathematics, art and religious education. Not all teachers mark the technical accuracy of students' work.
94. The learning resources centre is an important focus for promoting reading. It is inviting, well stocked with books and periodicals, and run efficiently, with very good access for students wishing to undertake research or use it for private study. Students are encouraged to use the library through induction schemes in Year 7. Some class tutors go out of their way to collect books for private reading during tutorials, and this good practice could well be copied by others.

### **French**

Provision in French is **very good**.

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

- GCSE results have improved consistently.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- A small amount of teaching and learning lacks pace and focus.

#### **Commentary**

95. In 2004 GCSE results in French were above the national average. This represents very good achievement and is an extension of improved results over the last four years. French has been an option subject in Years 10 and 11 for around a quarter of the year group since 2001.
96. Standards in the current Year 9 are below average. Students achieve well, but the higher attainers in the mixed-ability Year 8 and 9 classes make slower progress than expected,

especially in developing extended writing skills. This is because they are not always fully challenged. Students enjoy their lessons, listen carefully and behave very well.

97. Around a third of the current Year 10 students have chosen to continue with French. They are set in two groups of similar ability. Students achieve very well and make very good progress over the two-year course. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average overall. The prime reasons for the successful achievement are the very good, and even excellent, focused teaching, the careful assessment of students' learning and the stimulating use of interactive resources.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In Years 10 and 11, it is mostly very good. Several excellent lessons were seen. Nearly all teachers are very aware of how students learn languages. The teachers fully respect and understand the particular needs of the high proportion of students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, who have EAL. In all years students with SEN are provided for well and make good progress. Teachers have a very good command of the French language and most use it very effectively to develop students' speaking and listening skills. In the space of a few weeks before the inspection, most teachers rapidly acquired considerable expertise in using PowerPoint interactive presentations throughout their lessons. Students respond very positively to the enhanced colour and stimulation of these new resources, and teachers readily impart their enthusiasm for them. Lessons are nearly always very closely planned and structured, with regular assessment of performance and feedback. However, this high quality of teaching was not apparent in a small number of lessons, where the teaching was only satisfactory and where students did not learn as much as they might. Teachers are still developing a broader range of tasks to meet the needs of all students in the mixed ability classes in Years 8 and 9.
99. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has led the team successfully in raising standards, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Schemes of work have been revised fully to implement the school's focus on assessment for learning, and on the careful interpretation of data on students' attainment. The annual Paris visit is of considerable social and cultural value. Sharing of the best practice in teaching and an insistence on its application are areas for further development.
100. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. GCSE results have improved considerably, as have teaching and students' behaviour and attitudes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Year 9 test results are well below average, but improving. GCSE results are also rising, but also remain below national figures.
- Gifted students achieve well over their time in the school.
- Relationships are very good. Teachers are committed to helping their students do well.

### **Commentary**

101. Standards in mathematics are improving but remain below nationally expected levels. Students' attainment in mathematics when they enter the school is well below average. Results in the national tests for Year 9 have been well below the national average over several years. In 2004, results improved again but remained well below average. Because of the high number of entrants other than at the usual time, valid comparisons with similar schools are not possible, but the school's own data indicates that students overall made satisfactory progress. Standards in GCSE mathematics examinations in 2004 also improved, but remained below the national average. Boys achieved better examination results than girls, but more girls than



boys took GCSE examinations. Examination entry is sometimes affected by incomplete coursework. Students for whom English is an additional language, many of whom join the school other than in Year 7, generally achieve well, as do those with SEN. Gifted students make faster progress than other groups of students.

102. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in lessons reached by Year 9 are below the expected level. Progress in lessons is mostly satisfactory but work in some students' exercise books reflects underachievement over time, with poor presentation and drawing skills, sometimes the impact of staffing turnover. Numerical skills are often close to average, but students find difficulty in using and applying these skills to problems and interpreting graphical and numerical information. Standards are below expected levels in Year 11, but students achieve well from their starting points at the beginning of Year 9. However, many students find difficulty in giving reasons for answers and in explaining generalisations in coursework.
103. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Working relationships are very good and all teachers are committed to helping students achieve their best. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of the students' attitudes and work, and challenge the students' mathematical thinking through good questioning and well-considered tasks. In the less effective lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently precise learning outcomes, and activities are not always well enough matched to what students have learned earlier. This is particularly so where there is a very wide range of attainment in the group. Teaching does not routinely meet the language needs of students, either through activities or resources. The department has good systems to track students' achievements over time, but within lessons too little emphasis is put on assessing students' immediate understanding. Marking across the department is too variable and does not always ensure that students follow up errors and misunderstandings.
104. Students learn soundly in lessons because they are well managed. The gap between satisfactory learning in lessons and achievement over time arises because students have a number of difficulties. Often, their knowledge of English is insufficient for them to cope with the vocabulary of the mathematics papers; some students have limited previous experience of some areas of school mathematics; few have strong independent learning skills.
105. The day-to-day management of mathematics is smooth. The head of department has encouraged a committed team approach among the many new as well as established teachers. This good teamwork is helping to promote a positive view of mathematics among students.
106. Since the last inspection, progress has been satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation of work are now regular. Standards have risen gradually and the department is now well served with ICT resources.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

107. Provision within mathematics to develop students' numeracy skills is good. At whole-school level, there is a comprehensive numeracy policy and there has been training for staff in some departments on how to use and enhance students' skills. Guidance on methods of calculation and pictorial representation has not yet become formal policy, but there is frequent dialogue between subject areas and the co-ordinator.
108. Students have good chances to use these skills in other subjects. For example, students' mathematical competence helps their work in geography with graphs and simple statistical methods. Music provides good opportunities to experience patterns and sequences in an alternative context. For younger classes, occasions for using mathematics are limited, but older students make appropriate use of formulae and substitution. Students' calculation skills, however, are not always adequate to support their work in physical education, where work on fitness requires good number skills. There are missed opportunities in design and technology for students to use mathematical skills in practical situations. Overall provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory, but is not yet fully planned and co-ordinated.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests and examinations are below average, but are improving faster than the national trend.
- Very good use of ICT makes lessons more interesting and helps students to learn.
- Effective teaching with high expectations results in good progress in Years 10 and 11.
- Good classroom relationships and management of students' behaviour helps them learn well.
- The double science curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is inappropriate for lower attaining groups.
- Good marking and assessment help students to improve, but teachers' practice is not consistent enough.

### Commentary

109. In 2004, test results at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average and they were below those for English and mathematics. Boys and girls attained equally. In 2004, GCSE results were below average but were above those for students' other subjects. Boys' results were a little above those of girls, the reverse of the national picture. Over recent years, GCSE and Year 9 test results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend.
110. Year 7 students enter the school with standards well below average. Standards seen in Year 9 are well below average, but represent satisfactory achievement. There is a good emphasis on learning through practical work, which students enjoy. They carry out experiments safely and can describe their work and present the results. In Years 10 and 11, teachers' expectations are higher and achievement is good. There is a wide range of attainment, but it is broadly below average. Higher attaining groups reach standards above average, for example in a Year 11 biology lesson on the structure and function of kidneys. For lower attaining groups, the double science curriculum does not match students' capabilities. Though achievement is satisfactory, standards for these students are well below average. Students with SEN and EAL achieve equally with others.
111. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are better in Years 10 and 11 because teachers expect more of students and challenge them more consistently to improve standards. Planning is very effective, with every lesson having a good range of learning activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. It is used well to explain more difficult concepts, but opportunities to challenge students are sometimes missed. A notable strength is the very effective use of the ICT resources; these are of high quality, and all teachers have a high level of skill and confidence in using them. Teachers manage students' behaviour well so that classroom relationships are good. Marking and assessment are often very thorough, but not consistently so in all classes. The wealth of assessment data is used well to track progress. Students with SEN and EAL receive very good classroom support. There is also very good support for learning outside the classroom, including the 'space project' activities for gifted and talented students.
112. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong team commitment to improvement and the newly qualified teachers are well supported. Performance management of staff is well established and determines training needs. Schemes of work are well planned and detailed. The department makes a strong contribution to the cultural diversity of the school, for example with safety notices in a wide variety of community languages and publicity about scientists from ethnic minorities.

113. Teaching resources are good. The laboratories are of a good standard and the laboratory technicians provide an efficient and safe service. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Standards achieved and the use of ICT have both improved substantially.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and most students achieve well in timetabled ICT lessons.
- Standards are improving from well below average to below average overall.
- All students now have timetabled lessons from Years 7 to 11.
- Students of all ethnic groups have good attitudes and behave well in lessons.
- Computers and interactive whiteboards have greatly increased, although they are not yet used enough in all other subjects.
- National Curriculum requirements are not yet fully met in some subjects such as mathematics and art.

### **Commentary**

114. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that, although standards were below average, there was an improving trend from previous years. As students' ICT standards are well below average when they enter the school this represents good achievement. They improve low literacy skills through good teaching, and develop competence in using software to handle and communicate information. They use equipment safely, show good attitudes to work, and behave well. They produce creative coursework projects in Year 9, developing text and images for later GNVQ work. By the end of Year 11, standards were slightly below average overall, but were near the national average in the newly introduced GNVQ examination in 2004. Girls' coursework was of higher quality than boys'. Students achieved very well overall, a significant improvement from previous years in GCSE, which is being discontinued. Most well motivated students prefer to take GNVQ, as it counts for four GCSEs.
115. Current standards of attainment by Year 11 in ICT are below nationally expected levels. However, standards are steadily improving, due to good teaching by a strong team of specialist staff, lessons in ICT for all students, and much new equipment. Work shows good achievement overall and very good in GNVQ lessons. Year 9 students develop satisfactory skills in presenting information using desktop publishing. Higher-attaining students model mobile 'phone prices well on spreadsheets, and display appropriate formulae. This work reaches nationally expected levels for literacy and numeracy. In Years 10 and 11, students achieve very well in GNVQ lessons. Their achievement in ICT by the end of Year 11 is good overall.
116. Teaching and learning are good in timetabled ICT lessons. Very good features seen included teachers' very supportive relationships with students. These led to good attitudes and behaviour in lessons from students from all ethnic backgrounds. Teachers' planning was effective, so that time was used well. Tasks were well structured, in small steps. Good subject expertise was used to support and guide students, especially those with SEN. Work was marked regularly and constructively. Learning support staff helped students with special needs make good progress. Higher-attaining students find projects challenging and interesting, but would benefit from more short-term targets in lessons. Targets to improve students' literacy, particularly for students with EAL, are not yet part of lesson plans.
117. Leadership and management are very good. Despite several staff changes, there is now a good specialist teaching team. Staff monitor and assess students' work well within timetabled ICT lessons, but not yet enough in most other curriculum subjects. There are now more ICT lessons and many more new computers and interactive whiteboards. Staff are implementing

the National Curriculum well. Improvement since the last inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory, is very good overall.

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

118. Students have sound ICT skills, sufficient to meet the curricular needs of most subjects from Years 7 to 11. Significant improvement in accommodation and equipment since the last inspection is helping to improve students' ICT attainment and achievement in several subjects. Some subjects, such as English, music, languages and physical education, use computing facilities well in lessons. Several teachers make very imaginative and creative use of new interactive whiteboards.
119. Students use the Internet well for independent research in several subjects. Students have less secure skills of data logging and control technology. They do not use ICT enough to solve practical problems in mathematics, design and technology, humanities subjects, business and art. In some of these subjects, computers are not readily available. There are plans to use new wireless laptops in lessons. Further staff training is planned to ensure that all subjects make full use of recently installed interactive whiteboards.
120. Achievement is only satisfactory in several subjects, and unsatisfactory in mathematics, art and humanities, which do not yet fully meet statutory requirements. Recent staff changes are helping these areas improve.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- Experienced teachers collaborate well and are good at meeting students' individual needs.
- Support staff help students to learn effectively.
- Students of higher ability are not challenged enough.
- Students' use of ICT is limited.

#### **Commentary**

121. The majority of students enter the school at a standard well below the nationally expected level. By the end of Year 9, the attainment of most students is below the level expected at this stage, confirming that good progress has been made over these years. GCSE results for 2004 were below the national average, though close to the school average, and have improved three-fold since 2001. GCSE results indicate that students' achievement has been satisfactory over Years 10 to 11.
122. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 were below those expected nationally. Students' work showed some good attention to detail and volume, and good continuity of knowledge from one topic to another. Presentation was always satisfactory and much of it was good, with some good use of relevant maps, diagrams and graphs. Scrutiny of work in Years 10 to 11 reveals standards below the expected level, and the work of some students is impeded by absence.
123. Teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. Lessons are characterised by good planning, and well delivered according to the school's four-part model. The best teaching, some of which had excellent features, was characterised by very good use of interactive whiteboards, combined with very good knowledge of the learning capabilities and needs of individual students. All work is regularly marked and assessed. The best marking is very encouraging and gives valuable diagnostic feedback.

124. Learning is satisfactory overall. Some students, who arrive with very low levels of knowledge and with linguistic difficulties, learn very well; they want to learn, and students with SEN receive very good support, wherever resources allow. Literacy skills are well developed in those with greatest need. Students do not have sufficient exposure to ICT skills, and, partly because of this, their numeracy skills are poor. Students of higher ability are capable of responding to greater challenge from teachers. Sometimes they are eager to be able to make more detailed and constructive contributions to lessons.
125. Leadership is satisfactory. The recent improvements in GCSE results are directly attributable to very good strategic planning in 2001. Management is good because the department is organised efficiently on a daily basis and works with a high degree of collaboration. It has rapidly exploited the introduction of new teaching technologies.
126. Improvement has been good since the last inspection. The department has consolidated its position, GCSE results have improved and teachers have enthusiastically adopted new technologies.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of good teaching by subject specialists.
- Good leadership and management are effective in improving standards.
- Very good relationships and positive attitudes to learning ensure that students make good progress.
- The lack of ICT, visual aids and historical visits reduces learning opportunities.

### Commentary

127. Recent GCSE results have fluctuated but have generally been well below average. However, there is an improving trend and in 2004 most students met or exceeded their predicted grades. Students performed close to the average of their other subjects.
128. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 9. Achievement over Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. However, there is too great a variation in the quality and amount of work produced in different classes. By the end of Year 9, students have a sound grounding in historical skills. Most have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of events and the main people of the periods studied. However, few realise their significance within the overall context of study. Knowledge of chronology is good. Higher attainers, including gifted and talented students, progress well. Average and low attainers' writing skills, despite some good structured writing, are not high enough. Students with SEN make good progress when provided with learning support, as do EAL students generally. When EAL students are provided with specialist support, which is often of excellent quality, they make very good progress. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Black Afro-Caribbean boys often achieve better than students of other ethnic groups.
129. Standards of work are below the average at the end of Year 11, but most students achieve well. Higher attainers achieve very well due to the challenging work provided. The best GCSE course work is good. Absenteeism is a major hindrance to better results. Standards of work in Year 10, where there is greater pace and productivity, are broadly average and students progress very well.
130. Teaching and learning are good overall, and range from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers provide good guidance and have very good relationships that provide a good foundation for

learning. Lessons are most effective when they are carefully planned and are underpinned by detailed knowledge and understanding of the topics taught. The best teaching, by subject specialists, is enthusiastic, lively, and purposeful and has brisk pace and high expectations. In these lessons questioning is skillfully used. When teaching was unsatisfactory it was due to the lesson content, materials and tasks being unsuitable for the range of ability so that students underachieved. At times, learning is not as high in quality as teaching, because language difficulties reduce pace and productivity. Resources are well prepared, but there is not enough use of visual aids such as film and video. There is scope for more group and project work. Tasks for EAL and SEN students need to be simplified to meet the needs of these students.

131. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum planning is sound and assessment good. Marking is overall good, and there is some very good practice, with students provided with clear targets of how they can further improve their work. The lack of a coherent ICT programme and of visits to places of relevant historical interest restricts opportunities for learning. There are insufficient video and film materials. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards and achievement in Years 10 -11 have improved greatly in recent years and are being maintained.
- The lack of a subject leader restricts developments in the planning of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- In Years 7 to 9, there is no assessment programme and students do not know what they need to do to improve.
- Students show high levels of respect for the beliefs and values of others.

### **Commentary**

132. Standards in the first year of GCSE examination entry in 2004 were well below national averages, but close to school averages for A\*-C and A\*-G grades. Previously there was no structured course for all students. Partly because of the improved curriculum in Years 10 to 11, standards and achievement in these years have improved greatly. Despite the absence of a head of subject, these standards are being maintained and developed by good, dedicated teaching and students who are keen to learn.

133. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average. Students grasp key religious ideas quickly but have difficulty explaining and evaluating issues. Orally, students show a sound knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, particularly in Christianity and Islam. They have weaknesses in explaining ideas, using the correct terminology and expressing their responses in writing.

134. Achievement overall is satisfactory. It is best in Years 10 and 11, where it is mainly good. In lessons, boys achieve as well as girls and are often better in oral work. The achievement of the highest attaining students is good in Years 10 and 11, where there is the greatest challenge. Students with EAL and those with SEN make satisfactory progress overall. Support staff make a significant contribution to the progress of these students, who nevertheless are often given tasks not well suited to their individual needs.

135. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 it is mainly good. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of resources and approaches, which helps all students. This is not the case in all lessons, especially in Years 7 to 9. High levels of respect

for the beliefs and values of others are shown by students and this has a positive effect on how they learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain clearly and use questioning effectively. In Years 7 to 9, there are no clear schemes of work to support the supply and unqualified staff who teach the subject. There is no assessment programme to measure progress and help students know what they have to do to improve.

136. Leadership is unsatisfactory. There is no subject leader to move the subject forward and in the absence of such a leader there are no current schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 to help teachers plan as well as they wish. The school has tried, unsuccessfully, to fill this position. Management is satisfactory. The two main staff teaching the programme are working very hard to maintain the curriculum with the support of the faculty leader.
137. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because the introduction of the GCSE course for all students has greatly improved the curriculum and the impact made by this subject. This has mitigated the effects of the current absence of subject leadership.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and Technology**

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

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

- Lessons are well planned. Students are given good help and advice in lessons.
- Students' attitudes are generally positive and most are keen to learn.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and the needs of students.
- Students perform better in resistant materials than in other aspects of the subject.

#### **Commentary**

138. Standards on entry to Year 7 are well below the nationally expected level. About a third of students has not studied the subject before entering the school. When students reach the end of Year 9, standards remain well below the expected level, with only a fifth of students reaching the expected national standard. Achievement is satisfactory over this stage. Students with SEN, are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and, as a result, they also make satisfactory progress.
139. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Students learn to design and make, using a good range of materials – fabric, food, metal, plastic and wood. The use of simple mechanisms is taught well. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and the needs of students. Lessons are planned well and topics introduced satisfactorily. Teachers use electronic whiteboards effectively. There is good emphasis on key words and some students are helped to make notes on their work. As a result, students' attitudes are positive and most are keen to work. In a minority of lessons, the pace is too slow and a few students are allowed to cause minor disruption. Some students' work is not accurate enough. Insufficient use is made of ICT.
140. Nearly all students take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2004, the combined GCSE examination result was below the national average with over a quarter of students obtaining A\*-C grades and nearly all A\*-G grades. Most students were entered for the examinations. Students performed much better in resistant materials than in food and textile technologies. As a consequence, the more able boys performed significantly better than the more able girls. Standards in lessons are below average. Overall achievement is good.
141. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is good and sometimes very good. Students are given very effective help and advice on how to improve their coursework.

Students are aware of their target GCSE grades and are keen to improve their work. The pace of lessons is good. Students' attitudes are generally positive and relationships very good. ICT is not used enough to improve presentation.

142. Leadership and management are both good. The head of the faculty has done well to maintain the subject's momentum during the recent period of high turnover of staff. His new team works well together and is keen to improve standards. Accommodation is good and teaching resources adequate. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards and progress have been maintained and students' attitudes have improved.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Teachers have developed good working relationships with students.
- Results at GCSE in 2004 were very poor with many students underachieving.
- The subject is less successful than at the time of the last inspection.
- Students come to art and design lessons with mostly positive attitudes.
- There are inadequacies in the planned curriculum for Years 7 to 9.

#### **Commentary**

143. Students begin Year 7 with a very limited experience of art, but standards are still well below average by the end of Year 9, with inconsistencies across the department. These standards are not as high as those suggested by the teacher assessments reported to parents in recent years. There has been an improving trend in GCSE attainment since 2001, but this was reversed in 2004 when results were far below national averages and much lower than those achieved by the same students in other subjects. This represented underachievement for most of these students, particularly the boys. Standards seen in lessons in Years 10 and 11 are below national averages.
144. In Years 7 to 9, students develop a range of practical skills and develop their understanding of the formal elements of art. Much of this work is well supported through links with other artists' work, and progress in drawing skills is given a high priority. In these areas, their achievement is satisfactory, but in the more creative areas of investigation and development of ideas their work is not so strong and this particularly affects the potential achievement of more able students. The use of sketchbooks is not established in Years 7 to 9 and students do not have a collecting point for work that would support their creativity. The curriculum time available in Years 7 to 9 is very limited. The achievement of older students is satisfactory and more consistent, with some students making better progress with the development of their ideas. Students are mostly positive and well behaved in lessons, but on occasions some students' interest and application are not as they should be.
145. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory, with more variation in Years 7 to 9. More effective teaching builds successfully on the good working relationships and teachers use praise and encouragement well. Lessons are mostly well structured, but are often not planned in sufficient detail. As a result, learning objectives are not sufficiently precise and expectations are not always high enough or well matched to students' abilities, learning needs and interests. In some lessons the range of strategies used is too limited and teaching does not always capitalise fully on students' positive attitudes.
146. The department runs well but the strategic leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The head of department's vision is not supported by clear development plans to secure



improvement. As a result, the information from monitoring and the analysis of results are not put to best use to move the subject forward. Schemes of work to realise curriculum requirements and to support teaching across the age range are not complete and there are inadequacies, including the significant under-use of the ICT equipment available in the department. The art club sessions after school make a good contribution to students' interest and achievement and some effective links have been made with major London art galleries.

147. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen across the age range and the quality of teaching and learning are lower than when reported in 1999. The kilns remain out of use and ICT is still under-developed.

## **Drama**

Provision in drama is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students are prepared well for the GCSE examination.
- All students are included and take part in dramatic activities equally.
- The joint heads of department share values and a vision for the future of the subject.
- A strong programme of dramatic performances and clubs stimulates students' interest in the subject.
- Though the drama studios are spacious and inviting, the lack of soundproofing leads to high noise levels.

### **Commentary**

148. Drama has developed strongly since its introduction as an examination subject in 2003. In that year, the proportion of students gaining grades A\* to C was below the national average, but by 2004 it had risen to the exact national average. This result was among the highest in the school. Though no student gained A\* or A grades in either year, a higher proportion of students in 2004 gained grades B and C than in the country as a whole. In each year, boys gained a higher proportion of A\* to C grades than their national counterparts.

149. Standards of work seen in the inspection were below average in Years 7 to 9, and average in Years 10 and 11. This represents good achievement over time. By Year 11, students have acquired a good understanding of theatrical history and have mastered dramatic techniques through the coherent development of students' skills from Year 7 onwards. Students with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well, because they are fully included and given very good support.

150. Teaching and learning are good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, though in some lessons for students in Years 7 to 9 the pace of learning was a little slow. Students in Years 10 and 11 are well prepared for the examination by teachers who are knowledgeable about examination criteria. Homework is regularly set and this enhances students' attainment. Students' learning is also enriched by a strong programme of extra-curricular dramatic events, such as drama clubs and performances, some of which support other subjects, such as English. For the most part, students are willing to learn and are quiet and attentive when tasks are explained to them. The spaciousness of the drama studios enables good movement and group work to take place. However, high noise levels from the inadequately soundproofed partition between the two drama studios are sometimes a hindrance.

151. The leadership and management of the department are good. The two teachers responsible for leading the subject collaborate well and share the same values. They have a clear vision for extending the subject into the sixth form. Their plans for the future development of the subject show good self-awareness and include plans for strengthening the tracking and assessment of students in Years 7 to 9.

152. Since the time of the last inspection, drama has been established as a separate department in accordance with recommendations made at the time. This represents good improvement.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average.
- Teachers make excellent use of interactive whiteboards and music computer technology.
- Good provision is made for developing students' knowledge of music of different styles and times.
- The school is aware of the need to increase the number of computers in the department.

### **Commentary**

153. GCSE results for A\*-C grades were well below average in 2004. Results were even lower in 2003. There is a good take-up rate for the subject in Years 10 and 11.

154. For current students, standards in Years 9 and 11 are below the nationally expected levels. However, students enter school with well below average musical abilities and so their achievement is good. Students with SEN and those with EAL make the same progress as other students. This is due to the good support they receive in lessons. More musically able students make good progress in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.

155. By Year 9, many students show satisfactory rhythmic and vocal skills. Most students can play a melody on the keyboard and a few can add a simple accompaniment. There are some students, however, who have less well developed skills and lack fluency when playing. Students are occasionally slow at reading basic music notation.

156. By Year 11, many students show skills in performing and are competent in using music technology to devise and refine their compositions. Students' skills in listening and commenting on music are not so well developed. Some students show a limited understanding of key musical terms and make infrequent reference to these when answering questions.

157. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good teaching. Teachers use their own music computer technology skills to help students learn. This was evident in a Year 9 lesson, when the teacher gave an interactive whiteboard presentation about the style of composing found in classical music. As a result, students increased their knowledge of the style and sound of the music from that time. Teachers are good at developing students' knowledge of musical styles and of the music of different times. Teachers' positive relationships in lessons promote good attitudes and behaviour among students. The teaching of music technology is very good. The provision for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills is good. A range of extra-curricular activities is available. Opportunity is provided for students to perform in concerts, both in and out of school. Over 30 students receive instrumental lessons from peripatetic staff.

158. Leadership and management are good. There have been some staff changes since the last inspection, but staffing is now stable. The head of department has built up the department and is concentrating on raising students' achievement. Assessment procedures are good and are used well to track students' progress. Although resources are good, there is a shortage of computers. Teachers are currently having to work without the support of an identified technician. Accommodation is very good and is well maintained.

159. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Although standards have remained the same, the overall quality of teaching has improved. Any weaknesses previously identified in teaching have been remedied. However, the supply of computers is still inadequate.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- By Year 11, boys achieve very well and girls achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Most students respond enthusiastically to very good teaching.
- The faculty meets the needs of students of all abilities and needs excellently.
- There is a very successful programme of extracurricular sport.
- There are excellent community and inter-school links.

### **Commentary**

160. The 2004 teacher assessments showed that boys' standards in Year 9 were close to the national average, but girls' standards were below average. The 2004 GCSE results at A\*-C were well below the national average. The trend in GCSE results has been erratic, reflecting significant changes in the entry cohort. Current standards in Year 9 are below average overall, although many boys attain above average standards in games, and some girls' standards in dance are close to average. Only one Year 11 lesson was seen during the inspection, but standards in Year 10 are below average, although boys' standards are higher than those of girls. Boys throughout the school achieve very well, and girls achieve well, mainly in response to very good teaching. A particular strength is the effort to ensure that all students share equally in this achievement, including those with SEN and those with EAL. Gifted and talented students achieve very well, for example through the specialist coaching for able footballers. A minority of students, principally girls, achieve less well because they are less motivated.

161. Teaching and learning are very good. Strengths are the high expectations of teachers, well paced and progressive skill practices, and in particular the frequent assessment of, and feedback to, students. Students respond very well to this and make rapid progress, as seen for example in a Year 8 table tennis lesson. Teachers ensure that those students less adept at English play a full part in lessons, for example when Year 8 students led warm-up sessions in languages other than English. In a minority of lessons, activities are not matched sufficiently to the range of abilities.

162. Leadership and management are very good. The faculty operates as a team, and manages the development of sport within this specialist college very effectively. The quality of monitoring, review and evaluation is impressive.

163. Excellent community and inter-school links contribute to the vibrant nature of the provision. For example, disabled students from both within and outside this sports college receive excellent support. There is a high participation rate in the excellent programme of extracurricular sport. The school has a good record of success with both individuals and teams. Resources, including ICT, are very good and used very effectively. Staffing is very good.

164. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Although standards still vary between activities, teaching is now of a consistently higher quality, and students now benefit greatly from increased curriculum time and other resources.

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

The focus was on citizenship. PSHE, which also includes careers and citizenship, was sampled. Lessons were seen in Year 9 only. No lessons for Years 7, 10 or 11 took place during the inspection. Year 8 lessons were in citizenship. Lessons are generally well planned. The teaching in lessons sampled in PSHE was good. The programme of visiting specialist speakers is well chosen and makes a useful contribution to students' personal development.

## Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school curriculum has been audited to check on the current teaching of citizenship, but monitoring is not rigorous enough.
- The amount of time for the teaching of citizenship is limited.
- Several aspects of the citizenship curriculum have developed well.
- Subject departments do not make it clear to students when they are focussing on citizenship.

### Commentary

165. Many aspects of citizenship are present in the school's life and work and a significant amount of work has been done to incorporate these areas of learning into the curriculum. However, the amount of time allocated to citizenship is limited. In Years 7 to 9, citizenship is taught in PSHE time. In Years 10 and 11, citizenship is taught, along with careers, on three days a year when the main curriculum is suspended. During the inspection, it was only possible to see citizenship in three Year 8 PSHE lessons, in which students were introduced to a topic on careers, which was to include aspects of citizenship.

166. Areas of citizenship, to which subject departments are expected to make a significant contribution, have been identified in an audit carried out by the head of the citizenship department. These areas contain the more factually based aspects of the citizenship curriculum. In religious education, history and geography, for example, students are expected to cover topics such as the diverse nature of today's society and some aspects of parliamentary government. In English, students learn about the significance of the media in society. However, even though these learning topics are present in departmental schemes of work, there is no specific requirement that subject teachers should make the links with citizenship clear. There are no schemes of work for religious education in Years 7 to 9, but topics dealing with social harmony and prejudice are taught. The planning of these topics does not include mention of the relevance of their content to citizenship, nor of the need to make this clear to students.

167. Monitoring of the implementation of the current scheme of work for citizenship and the recommendations made on the basis of the audit are not rigorous enough. There is no training in citizenship for teachers new to the school and, in some cases, the country as well. Such training would help to raise their awareness of the issues involved.

168. Because of the limited evidence available, it is not possible to evaluate students' attainment and achievement fully. However, the evidence that was available suggests that standards are well below average. Students do not achieve satisfactorily, partly because of the limited time allocated to the subject. In the lessons seen, students were introduced to a topic on career choices in society. Teachers' approaches varied, some stressing a clear link to the concept of citizenship and some making no mention of it. The quality of enquiry and profitable communication created by the lessons ranged from good to unsatisfactory. However, teachers report that in the later stages of Year 8, when students are involved in a role-play reality game, students can gain a good idea of the workings and significance of local democracy and government.

169. Some aspects of citizenship that encourage participation have developed satisfactorily. Local police and community workers lead activities in which students participate and gain real understanding of the consequences of crime in society. The school council has recently been re-formed so that it can play a more important part in student life, and demonstrate a democratic structure in practice. Citizenship provision is enhanced by several residential visits, including one to Paris, offered to students from Year 7 to 10, but not all students are in a position to take part in these activities.
170. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Currently, citizenship is better developed in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. A system of assessment and reporting to parents has yet to be introduced. Some good work has been done to establish citizenship education in the school, but there is much still to do.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004, which is the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

### *Level 3 GCE AS level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	4	75.0	78.3	0.0	21.6	22.5	28.5
Biology	2	100.0	63.5	0.0	10.4	30.0	19.8
Chemistry	7	28.6	70.3	14.3	13.2	11.4	23.0
English literature	6	83.3	86.2	0.0	17.4	21.7	29.7
History	5	20.0	82.2	0.0	20.8	6.0	29.2
Mathematics	13	61.5	59.9	0.0	14.1	13.1	20.5
Other Languages	4	75.0	82.5	50.0	47.7	32.5	37.8
Law	9	100.0	67.8	22.2	15.1	36.7	23.2

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	3	100.0	96.6	0.0	40.0	46.7	79.3
Chemistry	1	100.0	97.7	0.0	50.0	60.0	85.7
English Literature	3	100.0	99.4	0.0	44.9	80.0	85.5
French	1	100.0	53.1	100.0	99.0	100.0	88.9
Mathematics	2	50.0	96.8	0.0	56.6	30.0	89.5
Other Languages	2	100.0	66.7	100.0	97.3	100.0	95.6
Physics	3	100.0	96.7	0.0	45.3	46.7	82.6
Business	9	100.0	91.6	0.0	24.1	55.6	67.9

Information Technology VQ	19	73.0	88.3	13.5	26.9	55.6	68.8
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### Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Intermediate Business	8	37	n/a	40	n/a	13	n/a

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was inspected at AS and A2-levels, and is reported on below. French was sampled: teaching and learning were very good and achievement was good. One lesson was seen in each of Urdu and Farsi. In the Year 12 Urdu lesson, teaching and learning were satisfactory and achievement was good. In the Year 13 Farsi lesson, teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory.

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory.
- Texts for study are well chosen.
- Students at an early stage of learning English are taught well.
- Students are not always set enough essays to enable them to gain fluency in writing.

#### Commentary

171. Students taking English literature as an academic subject in the sixth form begin the course with lower than average GCSE grades and gain below average grades overall in the examinations taken at the end of Years 12 and 13, though some individual students exceed the grades expected of them. This represents satisfactory progress. Students retaking the GCSE examination and those studying for key skills Level 1 and 2 tests achieve well, especially in view of the fact that very high numbers of students on these courses are at an early stage of learning English. These courses are not primarily intended for language acquisition.
172. Standards of work seen during the inspection, including oral responses and written work, were below average in the examination courses in Years 12 and 13. Teachers are aware of the need to focus closely on basic literacy and to remedy gaps in students' knowledge. Considerable attention is paid to enhancing students' understanding of the set texts and of the background knowledge needed to put the texts in context. However, students, especially those in Year 12, are set too few essays to enable them to gain fluency and to take sufficient responsibility for undertaking their own research.
173. Teaching is consistently good and there are examples of very good teaching, especially in cases where teachers use a variety of means, including carefully prepared lesson notes on the interactive whiteboard, to introduce students to new skills and concepts. Though too little written work is set, essays are marked thoroughly according to examination criteria, and



students are provided with clear guidelines for improvement. Students generally learn well, but there was a high level of absence in some lessons and students sometimes forget to bring the right books and folders to lessons.

174. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The complex needs of the differing sixth form students are very well met through an effectively managed programme of courses in English literature, GCSE retakes and key skills tests in English. The head of department has high expectations of his students and, with the active co-operation of the team, ensures that texts are chosen for the academic courses which provide a good basis for the study of literature.
175. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved overall but a lower proportion of students gains higher grades.

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

176. Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is good. The large number of students in Year 12 for whom English is an additional language are well provided for through key skills tests and GCSE English retake courses. These courses are delivered through the English department and, though not primarily intended to be used for language acquisition, are well taught and contribute well to students' fluency in writing and speaking. Students in most other subjects are encouraged to discuss and to answer questions in class. Very good examples of the promotion of literacy are found in history, where vocabulary is a focus; in French, where students develop analytical and critical skills; and in business education, where students are taught good report writing and presentation skills and where the use of rôle-play in pairs develops students' confidence in speaking. Science, however, does not offer students sufficient practice in speaking and writing. The well-stocked learning resources centre provides students with an inviting area for private study and for research on computers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics was inspected and is reported on below. The inspection covered the AS and A2 examination courses offered by the school. Lessons in mechanics were seen, but it was not possible to see teaching in statistics or pure mathematics. Lessons for GCSE mathematics and the key skills (application of number) course were also sampled and are reported on below.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Numbers studying A2 mathematics are too small to compare with national results.
- Results overall in AS mathematics courses improved in 2004 but no student gained more than a D grade. Students achieve better in pure mathematics and statistics than in mechanics.
- Good working relationships help students learn.
- Many students need help to bridge the gap between GCSE and AS-level courses. Too few students continue to take the A2-level course.

### **Commentary**

177. Of the two students completing A2 mathematics in 2004, one gained a pass grade that matched the student's starting point. The advanced supplementary results for the same year showed an improvement on those of 2003, but remained below national figures. Over half of the 13 students were successful, with grades in line with students' starting points, some of which were low because of limited mastery of English. Students achieved least well in mechanics and were most successful in pure mathematics.

178. The standards of work seen in lessons were below the nationally expected level, but indicate satisfactory progress in applied mathematics in Year 12. Students' work in other modules was not available for inspection. Few students continue with mathematics beyond AS-level. There is a single student studying A2 mathematics, for which there is a generous time allocation within the school day. Teachers also give generously of their time outside lessons to work with the students. In discussion, students reported a high level of support from teachers and a high level of satisfaction with the attention to their needs. Some students face difficulties in the transition from GCSE mathematics to AS-level work without the aid of a bridging course. Year 12 students noted the challenges in building on Year 11 work and in using readily the technical vocabulary and extended processes needed for advanced mathematical skills.
179. Post-16 students benefit from a GCSE mathematics course. This provision covers the needs of students new to the school as well as those retaking the examination. From the available results, too few students improve grades enough, partly because of erratic attendance, timetable clashes and insufficient attention to improving coursework. Other Year 12 students follow a key skills course, the application of number. However, from the sample lesson and the students' work, this provision did not meet their needs well.
180. The teaching sampled was satisfactory overall, but good in advanced courses. Students' learning is satisfactory. All teachers have a good command of mathematics and understand clearly the requirements of the examination specifications. However, teaching pays too much attention to the content to be covered rather than to the students' learning, so that students spend much time in lessons as passive listeners or on routine exercises. The marking and assessment of the AS-level students' work is shared between two teachers, and as a result not all independent work is carefully and regularly marked. Nevertheless, students report significant individual help and support from their teachers and working relationships are very good.
181. The mathematics department's provision for post-16 mathematics is managed well, particularly given the need for staff to devote much additional time to individual guidance. While steady leadership provides a supportive ethos for students, it has yet to develop the most appropriate routes and courses to serve the best interests of all students. The previous inspection gave little prominence to post-16 mathematics. Standards, however, are improving although the number of students studying mathematics remains very small. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, but there is further to go in enriching the post-16 mathematics curriculum.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

182. Development of students' mathematical skill is made through a key skills course that includes the application of number. Students have limited success in this course, as many are at the early stages of learning English. The school recognises the need to provide alternative mathematics accreditation for these students. Although there are some opportunities within subjects such as music, modern foreign languages and ICT to use mathematical skills, there is little explicit planning to enhance these skills in many curricular areas. Students of business in Year 13 lack the necessary skills to use graphs well to model information on supply and demand. Cross-curricular provision for numeracy is unsatisfactory.

## **SCIENCE**

The focus of the inspection was on biology, which is reported on below. Lessons in all other science subjects were sampled. Two physics lessons were sampled: teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory in the Year 12 lesson and good in the Year 13 lesson. Two chemistry lessons were sampled: teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory in the Year 12 lesson and very good in the Year 13 lesson. A single lesson was sampled for the intermediate level vocational course, in which teaching, learning and achievement were good.

## **Biology**

Provision in biology is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The viability and quality of provision in biology have improved over the last two years.
- Students achieve well because they respond well to expert teaching.
- Teachers are not consistent enough, especially about planning and aspects of assessment.
- Leadership and management are effective.

## **Commentary**

183. Standards have improved since the re-launch of A2-level biology in 2002. Standards remain below national averages for both AS and A2 level courses. Group sizes for both courses are now strong. All three of the first A2-level cohort attained pass grades in 2003. Currently, the seven students in Year 13 have sufficient skills and understanding, at least to succeed in their A2-level examinations. Standards have been low in AS-level examinations; too many students have attained ungraded results, with girls achieving less well than boys. However, both students passed in 2004 with good grades and current attainment at AS-level is better than in the past, though not yet secure for all. Generally, as numbers on courses are now good, and results improving, the subject is gaining a firm position in the sixth form.

184. Achievement is good because attainment is better than expected, based on students' starting points from Year 11. The confident and effective use of advanced scientific language by students with EAL is impressive and often very good. Some students are studying well whilst enduring very difficult circumstances in their life beyond school. The school supports such students very well, and this has a marked effect on their achievement.

185. Teaching and learning are good. Students respond very well in lessons by working hard and making a strong effort to grasp new and difficult ideas. Teachers have expert knowledge about science and examination procedures. At times, they drive students' thinking and work levels hard, and broaden topics very well to raise achievement toward the top levels needed for work at advanced level. These skills are not used consistently enough. Sometimes the objectives for a lesson are not precise, or not enough is done to check that students have understood the full detail. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. There is an effective system for target setting, used very well to promote achievement for all. However, some marking does not give enough guidance to students.

186. Other factors positively affect standards. Biology is one option in a well-balanced and broad offer for post-16 science. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good. Leadership and management are both good, seen for example in the successful re-launch of biology at advanced level. Review and monitoring procedures are effective. Students value the advanced course and their teachers highly. They use the good facilities for independent study very well.

187. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The main inspection focus was the advanced vocational A-level (AVCE) course. The one-year intermediate general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and key skills courses were also sampled. Both courses are reported on below.

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The AVCE course is well matched to students' capabilities and enables them to achieve well.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan well and have a very good knowledge of the subject.
- Students' attitudes are good and they have above-average independent learning skills.

- Very good monitoring and assessment means that students know how to improve their work.
- The very good range of courses available meets the needs of all sixth form students.

## **Commentary**

188. In 2004, results in the AVCE examination were overall below the national average, but results for girls were above average. Students enter the sixth form with standards well below average. During the inspection, the standards of work seen in Years 12 and 13 showed a wide spread but were broadly below average. This represents good achievement for both years.
189. The one-year GNVQ course enables students to develop their skills beyond the foundation level. A strength is that the course caters for students from a very wide range of backgrounds, including those with SEN and many for whom English is an additional language. In the very good lesson sampled, students were testing web pages which they had designed earlier. Students show good independent learning skills, but are well supported by the teacher. The work is closely monitored and students also maintain a personal log of what they have learned.
190. AVCE teaching is shared between two teachers and is never less than good, with some very good lessons. Much of students' progress is achieved through independent learning tasks. Good planning by teachers makes the learning objectives and assessment criteria clear, so students achieve well. Teachers use their very strong knowledge of the subject and the course requirements to support students and indicate how they can improve their work. Classroom relationships are very good. Students contribute willingly in class and support each other well. Discussion showed that they have confidence in their teachers. They appreciate the regular and detailed feedback on assignments and the one-to-one support sessions with teachers. Only a small minority wishes to pursue a career in ICT while others see it as a useful asset. All students feel that the course meets their needs well. The transition in learning styles from GCSE is well managed. There is excellent support for learning outside the classroom.
191. Leadership and management are very good. The four specialist teachers work very well together as a highly effective team committed to high standards. The head of department is a very good role model and provides very good support for the two newly qualified teachers. Accommodation is of high quality and teaching resources contribute significantly to the very good learning atmosphere in lessons.
192. There has been very good progress since the last inspection. Curriculum provision, standards and resources have all improved significantly. There is good capacity for further improvement.

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

193. All other sixth form students take a key skills course at a level appropriate to their experience. In the good lesson sampled, students from a wide variety of backgrounds, including some with SEN and many for whom English is an additional language, were keenly developing their skills with spreadsheets via a well-planned series of tasks. Students use ICT with confidence for assignments. In some subjects, such as business studies and leisure and tourism, it is an integral part of the course.

## **HUMANITIES**

194. Lessons were sampled in history, psychology and law. In history, two lessons were seen. In the lesson in Year 12, teaching and learning were good and achievement very good; in the lesson in Year 13, teaching was satisfactory and learning and achievement good. In law, teaching, learning and achievement were good. In psychology, teaching was very good and learning and achievement good.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

Courses in design and technology were inspected and are reported on below.

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Examination results are low compared with the national average.
- The limited appeal of the curriculum, poor attendance and unsatisfactory timetable arrangements are disincentives to learning.
- The majority of students fails to complete the course.

#### **Commentary**

195. Ten Year 12 students entered the AS-level course at the start of the year. Their GCSE grades were well below the national average. Many of these students have difficult histories and study problems. Because of a lack of motivation and commitment, the majority has discontinued the course. Students leave either to concentrate on other subjects or attend other schools. In 2004, no student was entered for the A2-level examination. In 2003, one student was entered and obtained a C grade. Standards in lessons are well below the national average. Achievement of most students is poor.

196. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is satisfactory overall. Teachers are well qualified and plan lessons well. They give good help and advice to students on how to improve their work. When students attend regularly, they make good progress and produce good work. In 2003, one of the students won the first prize at the semi-finals of the Audi Young Designer of the Year competition for her work on an escape lift for disabled people in wheelchairs. The attendance of the majority of students is poor and, as a result, they fail to complete the coursework. Some lessons are cancelled because no student attends. Teachers are unable to motivate students sufficiently, despite their willingness to work with them outside normal school hours. The curriculum has limited appeal and students are unwilling to sustain their commitment and effort. As a result, morale is low.

197. Leadership is unsatisfactory. There is lack of clarity over the type of course provision that is best suited to the needs of students. This problem has existed for many years. The time allocated to the subject is below the national average and the timetable is fragmented in order to fit in with other subjects. The management of day-to-day activities is good. Accommodation is good and resources adequate. Changes since the last inspection have been unsatisfactory. Students' progress and enthusiasm have fallen since the GNVQ course in manufacturing was discontinued.

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

198. Art and performing arts lessons were sampled. Teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory in art and good in performing arts. Both subjects provide a good range of activities outside the school day.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Courses in leisure and tourism at GNVQ Intermediate and Foundation levels were inspected and are reported on below.

### Leisure and tourism

Provision in leisure and tourism is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is good.
- Good academic guidance and support helps students learn independently.
- Good relationships between students and teachers form the basis for productive learning.
- A study skills induction course and more visits to relevant local businesses would improve the quality of provision.

#### Commentary

199. Recent results on the Foundation level course have been above the national average, with a number of students attaining merit grades. Results in the Intermediate level course are below average in most years. A deteriorating trend in these results is linked with low student motivation, although the drop-out rate on both courses is low.
200. Standards on the current Foundation level course are well below average. As standards at entry were very low, this indicates good achievement. Students begin the course with very limited background knowledge and understanding of the topics studied, and many have very weak literacy skills. Over Year 12, they work with increasing confidence and steadily collect information from a variety of sources and form sound judgements. However, higher attainers are not challenged sufficiently.
201. Standards on the Intermediate level course are below average. Achievement is good, due to students' positive attitudes and the good academic guidance and support they receive. Students show sound knowledge and understanding of topics taught, seen for example in their study on a local recreation centre. Presentations of coursework tasks are word processed to a good standard. Students develop ICT skills quite competently to support their course assignments, but do not question the accuracy and reliability of the data downloaded.
202. Teaching overall is good. It is better on the Intermediate level course than the Foundation level course. Good relationships between student and teacher form the basis of productive learning. The emphasis in lessons is properly placed on independent learning; this is much more successful on the Intermediate level course, where students have fewer language limitations. A study skills induction course would benefit students on both courses. Students listen attentively in class and find the courses relevant and interesting. At times, lessons are too teacher-led and do not use video and other visual material sufficiently. Students do not contribute meaningfully to discussions, often because they do not prepare themselves well enough for lessons. The frequent absence of students hinders progress and reduces the pace and productivity of lessons. This results in satisfactory rather than good learning.
203. Day-to-day management is good and leadership is satisfactory. Good professional guidance is provided, but more rigorous monitoring of coursework would help, to ensure that deadlines are met and students do not underachieve. Learning resources are satisfactory and ICT facilities good. Students benefit greatly from visits to leisure and recreation activities and centres. However, development of work-related learning is needed, with extended links with the workplace and the establishment of a programme of visiting speakers to enrich the curriculum.

## **BUSINESS**

Courses in business studies at the AVCE and GNVQ levels were inspected and are reported on below.

### **Business studies**

Overall, provision in business studies is **very good**.

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

- Teaching and learning are good, and often very good, helping students to achieve well.
- Very well managed courses have very good links to local businesses and other schools.
- Standards at GNVQ intermediate and AVCE advanced levels are improving.
- There are limited opportunities for students to develop key skills of ICT and numeracy in lessons.
- Many students enter courses with low levels of language skill but make very good progress on the path to higher education.

#### **Commentary**

204. Standards on the advanced level (AVCE) business course are slightly below average overall, but improving. They are average on the intermediate GNVQ course. In 2004, the ten AVCE business students entered gained grades slightly below the national average. All passed, but none gained A or B grades. Standards improved significantly from 2003. Intermediate results in 2004 were in line with the national average, with five of the eight students gaining merit grades, showing an upward trend from previous years. As students enter courses from a level well below average, overall achievement is good, and often very good. Most attend regularly; very few drop out, due to the high quality of teaching and individual care.
205. Current students achieve well. Standards attained by students on GNVQ and AVCE courses are at or slightly below the nationally expected level. Year 13 AVCE students have developed a sound understanding of firms' business objectives. They shared ideas from a recent visit to a large multinational company very constructively, but did not develop numeracy skills by analysing comparative profit figures in enough depth. Coursework seen showed that students used material from visits to local companies well to describe business functions, but evaluation was limited. Students make good use of ICT to present coursework, though computers are not currently available in lessons. GNVQ students showed a good ability to take part in role-play about customer complaints, developing good literacy and communication skills.
206. Teaching and learning are good overall, and in several lessons were very good. Teachers developed excellent relationships with students, many with EAL, to whom they gave time tirelessly, during and after school. They showed good subject expertise, and used up-to-date business examples, orally and from the Internet, using the new interactive whiteboard well. Teachers marked students' work frequently and gave detailed suggestions to help them improve. This helped them achieve well, often well above predictions, and gain very good attitudes to work.
207. Teachers' very good guidance to individual students from different ethnic groups and their creation of a good working ethos reflects very good leadership and management. The very committed staff track students' progress well and encourage self-assessment. There are very good links with local businesses, and video conferencing is planned with a nearby school. Students make good use of short local work experience placements. The subject was not inspected previously. Points for further improvement are to increase the availability and use of computers in lessons, and to develop students' numeracy and spreadsheet modelling skills.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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