

INSPECTION REPORT

EPSOM AND EWELL HIGH SCHOOL

West Ewell, Epsom

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125305

Headteacher: Mr P Hutchinson

Lead inspector: Terry Cook

Dates of inspection: 17th - 21st January 2005

Inspection number: 272617

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,004
School address:	Ruxley Lane West Ewell Epsom Surrey
Postcode:	KT19 9JW
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Ricketts
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Epsom and Ewell High School is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school situated in northeast Surrey and on the southwest edge of Greater London. The area served by the school is close to the national average in socio-economic terms, but some parts are relatively disadvantaged. Within the area many pupils are educated privately and there are selective grammar schools. Although the ability of the intake is improving, pupils come into the school with standards of attainment that are below the national figures for the end of Year 6. A fifth of the school's population comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which 4.5 per cent do not have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with statements of special education needs and the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs are well above the national average. These needs include speech and communication difficulties, dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and social and behavioural problems. In addition there are nine pupils within the hearing impairment unit. There are 1,004 pupils on roll, with slightly more girls than boys. Years 9 (207 pupils) and 10 (206 pupils) have significantly more pupils in each of these year groups than in other year groups. There are 852 pupils in Years 7 - 11 and 152 in Years 12 - 13. Pupil mobility at the school is high and the most recent figures place the school in the upper quartile of all secondary schools nationally. The sixth form is smaller than the average for sixth forms nationally. Entry to the sixth form is open to all, which means it caters for a wide range of ability across the sixth form. In 2003 the school gained the Sports Charter Mark and FA Charter Mark. Currently it is applying for joint specialist status in sport and information and communication technology (ICT). A twinning arrangement is organised with the DfES, which enables staff and pupils to gain an insight into government.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2398	Terry Cook	Lead inspector	
9736	John Brasier	Lay inspector	
8198	Yvonne Barclay	Team inspector	Citizenship Work-related learning
30206	John Spradbery	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)
32192	David Jones	Team inspector	English English (sixth form)
15050	Robin Ings	Team inspector	Mathematics
31385	Neil Gillespie	Team inspector	Science Biology (sixth form)
10792	Tony Payne	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
20747	Maureen Hanke	Team inspector	Music
22849	Ronald Catlow	Team inspector	Geography Geography (sixth form) History
23418	Roger Yates	Team inspector	Art and design
24709	John Cutler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
30198	Reginald Chick	Team inspector	Physical education
34144	Anthea Peers	Team inspector	Religious education
25377	Lorna Brown	Team inspector	Special educational needs
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology (sixth form)
18125	Vanessa Rowe	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form)
34521	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Epsom and Ewell High School is an inclusive school and **provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money**. Pupils enter the school with standards below the average expected at the end of Year 6 and few have obtained the highest levels in primary school. Once in the school, pupils make **satisfactory progress** and are close to the national average by the end of Year 11. 2003 results at the end of Year 9 were slightly below national averages but for 2004 are expected to meet national averages. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Almost all teaching is at least satisfactory, with over half good or better. **Leadership is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory**. Sixth form provision is **satisfactory**.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but standards are still not high enough. They have risen at the school, but not as fast as those nationally. However, many departments have experienced at least satisfactory or good improvement since the last inspection, for example, science and modern foreign languages. There has been progress in addressing some of the key issues identified at the time of last inspection. Others have not been tackled effectively enough, for example, in improving attendance rates and standards within music.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Inclusion and the vertical family tutor system (house system) are good.
- Specialist support for special educational needs and the hearing impaired is good.
- Good school ethos; it is a strong community, an equitable and harmonious place of learning.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good and the number of exclusions is low.
- Enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities are good and pupil participation is positive.
- The school is good at acknowledging and seeking pupils' views.
- Links with parents, the community, support services and other schools are good.
- Provision is good for physical education, religious education, art and design, food technology, graphic products, drama and modern foreign languages. Provision for music is unsatisfactory.
- Management is inconsistent. Whilst most areas are well managed, others suffer from unsatisfactory and poor practice. Therefore, across the school, management is unsatisfactory.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
- The collection, analysis and use of information about pupils' performance is inconsistent and data is not used to improve their learning.
- Gifted and talented pupils and boys do not always achieve as highly as they could.
- Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and citizenship are not met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	D	C	E

Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	D	E	
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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 pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Pupils make **satisfactory** progress. By the end of Year 9, in 2003, the school's combined results for English, mathematics and science were below national averages. In 2004, results, in particular in English, improved and it is likely they will match those attained nationally. At the end of Year 11 in 2004, standards are close to the national average. Pupils' achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is **satisfactory** in relation to their previous attainment and is **good** by students in the sixth form. There is some underachievement amongst boys and high-ability pupils. However, pupils achieve especially well in modern foreign languages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve to their abilities and those from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other pupils. Standards are affected adversely by low attendance and the high number of pupils who enter and leave the school at times other than the start of Year 7 and end of Year 11. Also, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs statements is above and those with special educational needs is well above the national average, which also affects results.

The attitudes, behaviour and values of the majority of pupils and students are **good**. In Years 7 to 11 there is some low-level disruption in classes that has an adverse impact on the quality of learning of others. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **satisfactory**. Social and cultural development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is satisfactory. There is much good and very good teaching, with nearly 60 per cent being good or better and 12 per cent very good. However, there is little excellent teaching and eight per cent is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching is distributed across Years 7 to 11. There is no unsatisfactory sixth form teaching. The quality of learning very nearly reflects that of the teaching. Curricular provision is satisfactory overall but not all statutory requirements are met. Provision is good in science, modern foreign languages, PE, religious education and for the hearing impaired. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities and enrichment outside the taught curriculum are good. Accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. Partnership between the parents and the school, and links with the community, support services, the local college and other schools, are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Whilst leadership is **satisfactory**, management is **unsatisfactory**. The headteacher provides a strong role model to the school community and shares his vision for creating an inclusive school which is an equitable, harmonious place of learning, where all pupils, irrespective of background or ability, are equally valued. The governors are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school and help to set the school's strategic objectives, but as yet do not hold the school to account with sufficient rigour. Some statutory requirements are not met. The school's leadership team effectively supports the headteacher's vision, but has not addressed the raising of standards with sufficient vigour. The quality of middle management varies between departments, as does the ability of teaching staff to consistently fulfil their management responsibilities and apply policies. School administration is efficient and finances are managed well on a day-to-day basis.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are mostly positive about the school. They are particularly pleased with the strong community links, the fact that pupils are expected to work hard and the fact that pupils like the school. Areas for improvement include some communications with parents. Pupils feel they are expected to work hard, are trusted and it is a good school to attend. However, pupils and parents express concerns about low-level disruption occurring in a minority of lessons. Inspection evidence supports this view. Although they recognise that bullying occurs, they feel it is relatively minor and is dealt with well by the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- eliminate unsatisfactory practice where it exists in management;
- be more consistent in the collection, analysis and use of information on pupils' performance to raise standards;
- raise the standards achieved by boys and the gifted and talented;
- raise standards and strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in music;
- raise attendance rates.

And, to meet statutory requirements, ensure that there is:

- full coverage of the subject of citizenship according to the National Curriculum; and
- provision for a daily act of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT EPSOM AND EWELL HIGH SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory sixth form** which gives satisfactory value for money. Students' attitudes to learning are **good** and they are taught well. A-level results are below average, but this indicates good achievement by students from their starting point on entry to the sixth form. The school takes students into the sixth form with lower GCSE grades than in most sixth forms.

Main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students willingly take responsibility for the guidance and support of younger pupils through, for example, 'Talking in Confidence', mentoring and leading school productions.
- All sixth form students sign the Code of Conduct, but not all of them keep to it.
- Teaching and learning are good in 70 per cent of lessons.
- In those lessons that are less than good, teachers do not plan lessons to target students of different abilities in the class, in particular the more able and boys.
- The capacity of students to work on their own is not well developed.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
- The school is failing to meet the guidance within the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education, nor does it yet fully comply with the need to provide a daily act of collective worship.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision is satisfactory . Standards are in line with national averages, but with yearly fluctuations. Achievement and teaching are satisfactory. Teachers need to further develop the students' ability to work independently.

Mathematics	Provision is good . Standards are good. Mathematics is taught well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate this well to students who are highly motivated and make good progress and achieve well.
Biology	Provision is good . Standards are in line with national averages. Students achieve well because teaching is good. The department is proud of the success of their students who have gone on to study biological sciences at university.
Information and communication technology	Provision is good . Teaching and learning are good, standards are the same as those nationally and are improving. Students achieve well. This is a popular subject chosen by a large number of students.
Geography	Provision is good . Teaching and learning are good because of good teacher knowledge. Achievement is satisfactory. The use of data is beginning to allow the tracking of student performance.
Psychology	Provision is good . Standards are above average and students achieve well. Teaching is good, enthusiastic, varied and inclusive of the less able. Very good use of assessment to promote achievement.

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'.

Business, drama, sociology, law, modern foreign languages, art and design and philosophy were sampled. Standards in English, sociology, GCSE law, AS and intermediate business GNVQ are average and in all these subjects, achievement, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In AS philosophy, modern foreign languages and art and design, standards are above average and achievement, teaching and learning are good. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Provision for support, advice and guidance is satisfactory. Students are given good pastoral support by their tutors, but do not receive enough guidance on their academic progress. There are no limits on who can attend the sixth form, which sometimes means that too many students do not complete their courses because they are unsuited for the course and do not receive the right advice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Overall, leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The day-to-day management of the sixth form is good. The subject leadership of courses taught in the sixth form is good overall. However, there are issues that need to be addressed within the management of the sixth form as a whole, particularly inconsistencies in the:

- quality of strategic planning and monitoring;
- use of a range of data to set challenging targets; and
- in the marking and systematic monitoring of students' academic progress so that they know what they need to do to improve.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good. The effective Sixth Form Council plays a significant role in representing the views of students. These views are taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. Students enjoy being in the sixth form and they consider that the sixth form is well run and enables them to do well. They appreciate that they are taught well by teachers who are experts in their subject. Some students consider that they do not have good advice on what they should study on leaving school, but inspectors found that such

advice is readily available. Sixth form students overwhelmingly feel that their views are listened to and they are treated fairly and with respect. All agreed that teachers are accessible and helpful if they have difficulties with their schoolwork.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils make satisfactory progress, reaching standards by Years 9 and 11 that are around the national average and in the sixth form are below national averages. Achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is satisfactory in relation to their previous attainment and is good in the sixth form. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make progress that is commensurate with their ability and pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as their peers and make satisfactory progress. However, higher-ability pupils and boys in particular do not always achieve or make as much progress as they could.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The trend in the results at all stages has been one of improvement in recent years.
- Standards attained in modern foreign languages are above average.
- Progress in science is currently faster than in English and mathematics.
- Provision for and the progress of the highest achievers (top three per cent) is good but for the rest of the highest achievers (top ten per cent) it is unsatisfactory.
- Girls' results are generally higher than boys' and there is some underachievement amongst boys.

Commentary

1. Pupils come into the school with standards of attainment below the national figures for the end of Year 6 in terms of the average points they score for their combined results in English, mathematics and science. This means the school receives fewer pupils of higher ability and more of middle ability and with special educational needs. Validated national data comparisons are available for the end of Year 11 for 2004 but were not available for the end of Year 9 at the time of the inspection. Comparisons can therefore be made with national data on the school's 2004 results for the end of Year 11 but are made on 2003 results for the end of Year 9. However, as the school has its own 2004 data for the end of Year 9, judgements can be made in relation to the progress it is making.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (33.1)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	34.6 (34.1)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.0 (33.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 130 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	48 (50)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	87 (85)	89 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (95)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	36.5 (33.1)	40.7 (34.7)

There were 179 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. By the end of Year 9, in 2003, the school's combined results for English, mathematics and science were below the national standards. This was due to the poor results in English, as results for mathematics and science were close to the national averages. In 2004 the school had a significant increase in its English results, and mathematics and science standards were maintained. It is likely the overall results for 2004 will match those achieved nationally. The end-of-Year 11 results in 2004 were close to the national average for 5+ A*-C, 5+A*-G and 1+ A*-G results in the GCSE exams. The school has shown a general rise in standards since the last inspection. However, the trend in the average points scored in all subjects at the end of Year 11 has been below the national trend over the last six years. The amount of value added in terms of standards attained from Year 6 to Year 9 in 2003 was low, and from Year 9 to Year 11 in 2004 was the same as the national trends. The comparisons with similar schools and all schools nationally are much the same as at the time of the last inspection. To some extent, boys and gifted and talented pupils underachieve.
3. However, the school does achieve well in modern foreign languages and in particular it has had remarkable GCSE results in German. Despite a number of serious staffing issues in English, standards have at least been maintained and increased significantly at the end of Year 9 in 2004.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make progress that is commensurate with their ability. Their standards on entry are well below average and their literacy skills are limited, with significant numbers of pupils in Year 7 working at levels expected in the primary years. However, all achieve well and many make significant improvements in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with hearing impairment enter school with lower levels of literacy skills but make good progress and achieve well. In special needs groups, boys achieve as well as girls.
5. Most pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress through the early stages of learning English. Year 11 examination results of pupils with English as an additional language are the same as national averages and just above the standards for other pupils in the school at both 5+ A*-C and 5+ A*-G levels.
6. There are differences, however, between the achievement of boys and girls. Generally, girls achieve more highly than boys but this is not the case in all subjects; for example, in science boys and girls achieve equally well. The more able and gifted and talented pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could. However, good provision is made for a small group of pupils identified as high achievers in Years 8 and 9. This group receives valuable curriculum enrichment activities to enhance their learning as well as being able to take an additional GCSE in classical civilisation, at the end of Year 10.
7. The standard of pupils' work seen in classes is mostly higher than some previous test and examination results indicate. Where this is the case it is due to improved lesson planning and the enthusiasm and good subject knowledge of the teachers. Within individual subjects, in music, history and geography, the standards seen were below those expected nationally. In science, art and design (in Years 7 to 9), design and technology (in Years 10 and 11) and religious education (in Years 10 and 11), the standards attained were above those expected nationally and in art and design in Years 10 and 11 they were well above. In terms of achievement and the progress the pupils are making in relation to their capabilities in mathematics, science, art and design (in Years 7 to 9), design and technology, geography (in Years 10 and 11), physical education and religious education (in Years 10 and 11), it is good and in art and design in Years 10 and 11, it is very good.
8. Overall, the contribution made by academic subjects and the house system to the pupils' language and literacy skills is satisfactory. There are examples of good

practice, for example, with special educational needs, modern foreign languages, history, geography, mathematics, art and design and ICT. However, more consistency of approach is required to ensure that progress and developments are consolidated. This same consistency of approach is required in relation to the development of pupils' mathematical competence. Currently standards are satisfactory but could be better and make a more substantial contribution to achievement throughout the school.

9. Standards are affected adversely by poor attendance and the high number of pupils who enter and leave the school at times other than the start of Year 7 and end of Year 11. For example, in the last year group to take GCSEs in 2004, only 70 per cent of the pupils had been at the school for their entire secondary school career.
10. The school exceeded its academic targets last year but they were not challenging enough. Much more challenging and realistic whole-school targets have now been set and the school is making progress towards achieving these. Although the school has a system and has been setting targets for individual pupils, this is not rigorous, has not been systematic and has been inconsistent in its impact on bringing about improvement. A tracking system has also been developed and introduced but again this is being inconsistently managed and applied across the school. Although the school has been developing strategies to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils, as with other data systems it operates, there is an inconsistency within both the management and implementation at all levels. As a result, the school's systems and procedures are not as effective as they could be in aiding the raising of pupils' achievement.

Sixth form

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	91.0 (94.5)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	18.5 (26.5)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	197.6 (201.9)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form standards

11. The school takes a larger proportion of students into the sixth form with lower GCSE grades than in most sixth forms and provides appropriately for them. A-level results in 2003 were below average but this indicates good achievement by students with below-average previous attainment. Girls' results are the same as national averages, indicating good achievement. However, boys do not do so well as girls, and their results are well below boys' results nationally. As there are small numbers of students in most subjects, comparison from year to year should be treated with caution. Although four of the nine students gained a grade A in mathematics in 2004, overall, few students gain the top grades A and B. A small number of students with low achievement at GCSE study vocational business and all gained a pass at intermediate level.
12. In 2003, A-level results in German, ICT, mathematics and sociology were below average, but in English and geography they were well below average. However, when taking into account the prior attainment of these students, they invariably achieved their expected grades. In biology, results were the same as nationally. Results in psychology were well above average, with students achieving very good grades given their prior attainment. All students studying biology, mathematics, geography, German and psychology gained a pass at A-level.

13. In 2004, A-level results improved in English, biology, French, mathematics and ICT. All students gained a pass in biology, business studies, chemistry, drama, English, French, psychology, sociology and vocational business. Standards of work seen are average in English, mathematics and ICT, but below average in geography. They are above average in biology and mathematics, where boys and girls do equally well, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds. The students with SEN studying vocational business achieve as well as others in the class.
14. In lessons students achieve well in mathematics, biology and psychology. Achievement is satisfactory in English, geography and ICT. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, nor of those for whom English is an additional language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes, behaviour and values of the majority of the pupils and students are good. These contribute significantly to the creation of a harmonious place of learning, where all pupils, irrespective of background or ability, are equally valued. However, there is a minority who on occasions cause low-level disruption in classes. This mainly takes the form of excessive and loud chatter but it does have an adverse impact on the quality of learning for others. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. However, punctuality is good. The school does stress and promote positive attitudes, values and personal qualities within pupils and as a result, integrity and mutual respect between pupils and staff are a strong feature of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Epsom and Ewell is an inclusive school and the very effective vertical family tutor system (house system) is a key strength.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mainly good.
- Pupils play a full and active part in school life and participation rates and enthusiasm for extra-curricular and enrichment programmes are good.
- There is very little bullying or racist behaviour; when they occur, they are dealt with effectively.
- A small minority of pupils cause low-level disruption and adversely affect the learning of others.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Attendance

15. The school has not improved its attendance record since the last inspection. This was an unsatisfactory element last time and as such formed one of the key issues. Within the school improvement plan 2004/05, attendance forms only a small part of the overall priorities and does not have a high enough profile in the actions for school development. So far the school has concentrated on trying to address the global issue of non-attendance rather than identifying the key causes, reasons and groups of pupils involved. As a consequence, the school's action to promote good attendance has been unsatisfactory.
16. Good collaborative working has been established with Education Welfare Officers who support the school; telephone calls home are made on the first day of absence if there

has been no explanation, and there are some rewards for good attendance. There is also some good work going on, such as the confidential survey to find out why pupils really stay away. However, there has been a lack of management focus until very recently. Attendance data has not been analysed in sufficient detail and there is no published data on house, form or class performance to encourage peer pressure to bring pupils to school. The school lacks sophisticated analysis and a rigorous and consistent approach to improving attendance. The combination of poor attendance, some low-level disruption and high pupil mobility has an adverse impact on standards achieved. However, exclusion rates are very low in comparison with national data.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.6	School data	1.6
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	853	95	2
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	34	11	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	15	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	3	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	15	3	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	9	0	0
Chinese	9	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	2	0

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

- Epsom and Ewell is an inclusive school. Pupils are positive about the school and contribute well to the success it achieves. A key element in the creation of the

harmonious and positive climate achieved within the school is the vertical house system. This is an example of good practice having a positive impact. In addition, the school council and PSCE (Personal, Social and Cultural Education) programme are major contributors to the positive attitudes, values and personal qualities being developed. These help create an inclusive school where pupils with hearing impairment, having statements of special educational needs or working in the Learning Opportunities Centre are well catered for in terms of additional monitoring and support.

18. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, have a good attitude to school and appreciate the support they receive. Those with more complex needs and physical disabilities particularly appreciate the sensitivity and care which they receive from all their teachers and also have a very good attitude to school, to their teachers and to other pupils.
19. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have very positive attitudes towards the school and value the support which they receive from their teachers. This is evident from the way they speak confidently about their work and life in school.
20. In its prospectus the school outlines its aims within a 'seven pillars' vision statement. The achievement of this vision makes Epsom and Ewell an inclusive school. It stresses that integrity is valued and respect is mutual. The school meets these aims. In addition, it is proud of its twinning with the DfES, which enables staff from the school and government department to converse and share experiences. It also enables staff and pupils to visit the DfES and vice versa. The personal development of pupils is also enhanced via twinning and educational visits and exchanges, participation in 'World Challenge', sporting fixtures, music and drama productions.
21. The pupils' views of the school are very positive, as they expressed in their discussions with inspectors, questionnaire returns and in the school prospectus. These views were shown to be accurate during the period of the inspection. Year 7 pupils stress the friendly atmosphere and house system as particular points for praise. This is a strong feature of the school. They are also quite rightly positive in relation to the induction programme, quality of teaching and extra-curricular and enrichment programmes on offer. In support of these views, the Year 9 pupils are also positive about the house system, the ability to take some GCSEs early and the extra-curricular and enrichment programmes provided. Year 11 pupils are particularly positive about being able to take some GCSEs early and the free Easter revision programme. Many are also keen to stay on into the sixth form and feel they have benefited from the responsibility offered by being a prefect. Again, as with the other year groups, they are most positive about the house system. Sixth form students are keen to stress not only the quality of teaching and support provided but also the caring, friendly and very sociable aspect of Epsom and Ewell. Inspection evidence supports the views of the pupils and students.
22. The school is not complacent in this area and recognises it can still do more, for example, in expanding extra-curricular and lunchtime activities, addressing the litter problem and continually monitoring to ensure there are few racist incidents. Also, the school recognises that some low-level disruption occurs in lessons but is now developing the mechanisms to address the issue. The attitudes and standards of behaviour of the majority of pupils are good. Movement around the school before and after school, at break and lunchtimes is orderly.

23. A particular area for success has been the creation of a culture within which the vast majority of pupils feel safe and free from bullying. On the few occasions when bullying happens, it tends to be verbal rather than physically aggressive. Both the pupils and parents are confident that if any form of bullying does occur, it is dealt with quickly, sensitively and well by the school. There are very few racist incidents; the school fully adheres to regulations if any do occur, and pupils show respect for the beliefs and values of others.
24. The pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Although there are a number of subjects where there are strong elements, for example, religious education, this is not normally the case. As a result, a consistent approach to enable pupils to develop fully their ability to be reflective and spiritually aware has not been achieved. However, the house system and school council do develop within the pupils a sense of self-confidence and worth. House assemblies contribute strongly to the pupils' awareness but not all form tutors follow this up in a consistent way, so pupils are not fully supported to develop their ability to be reflective and spiritually aware. When offered the opportunity, pupils respond positively, for example, their response to the period of silence and reflection for the victims of the tsunami disaster. Also, the awareness programmes held on hearing impairment contribute to the spirituality and sensitivity of those with good hearing towards others less fortunate, and are evident in their attitudes towards them.
25. Provision for moral development is satisfactory. Most pupils have a clear understanding and recognition of the difference between right and wrong. However, there is still a minority of pupils whose poor behaviour disrupts the learning of others. Through the house system and other aspects of school life the pupils have numerous opportunities to think about and show their concern for others, for example, their response to the peer mentoring and counselling systems operating in the school.
26. Pupils' social development is good. In particular, the School Council and PSCE programme are major contributors to the positive attitudes, values and personal qualities being developed. Practical examples include when pupils congregate in communal areas and behave well, the respect and care they show for each other, and in particular for the hearing impaired pupils, and respect for personal property and the school. Their attitudes are good when they participate in activities outside of the classroom and in the range of community activities that take place.
27. The provision for cultural awareness and development is good. Pupils are well provided and catered for with a range of trips and activities that help them explore the cultures of others, for example, an annual French exchange and participation in biennial 'World Challenges', most recently to Costa Rica, Belize and Uganda and soon to Thailand. Parents are particularly positive about this aspect of the school's work and the skill and care shown by staff in organising and running such trips and activities.

Sixth form

Attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships are **good**. Personal development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sixth form students have good leadership qualities and are good role models for others.
- Good attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships between students and with teachers.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

28. Behaviour and relationships are good. All students make a positive choice to attend and are enthusiastic about learning. A Code of Conduct is signed by all students and this sets out the commitment to “attend all lessons, tutorial periods, assemblies and other directed sessions and use study periods and spare time wisely in order to achieve to my full potential”. Not all students are adhering to this. Many students use the library well for private study, but most of the students using the sixth form study area are not using their time appropriately. Although students are punctual, their attendance is unsatisfactory. To address this issue a swipe card system is used and is backed up by records collected by tutors, who discuss attendance records with their students, all of whom have committed themselves to 95 per cent attendance. This has not yet been achieved.
29. Students are good role models and willingly take responsibility, for example, they are listening to the concerns of younger pupils through ‘Talking in Confidence’. Students are self-confident and demonstrate good leadership qualities, for example, through running the School Council and supporting form tutors as reading mentors. Although there is little focus upon spiritual development, other aspects of personal development are good and help to develop students into mature young people. Students display a good understanding of racial harmony, tolerance and respect for others. For example, students have raised the funds to travel to Uganda to assist in the building of a school. Relationships between students and their teachers are positive.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-11 and good in Years 12 and 13. Assessment is just satisfactory overall across the school, but there are weaknesses in the use of data and full implementation of Assessment for Learning, and in the breadth of curricular opportunities and accommodation and resources. The opportunities presented by the school for enrichment and extra-curricular activities for pupils are good. The quality of care and guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory. Within this area the school is good at involving pupils by seeking, valuing and acting upon their views. A particular strength of the school is the good links it establishes with parents and other schools and colleges. Also, it has established very good relations with the community and other educational services, for example, with provision for the hearing impaired and the school nurse.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, in Years 7-11 and good in Years 12 and 13, but there are some areas for improvement. Assessment overall is satisfactory, but the process of gathering information and its use is inconsistent and does not always promote effective learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematics (in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form), science, art and design, design and technology, geography (Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form), ICT (sixth form), modern foreign languages, PE, religious education and psychology (sixth form) is good.
- Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Unsatisfactory teaching and learning in music.

- Examples of good assessment techniques in art and design, particularly one-to-one feedback; PE, well structured summative assessments; religious education, good use of target grades.
- Assessment of pupils with special educational needs and hearing impairment is very good.
- Inconsistent planning in some lessons leads to a lack of clear learning outcomes and suitable strategies to challenge and engage all pupils.
- Analysis of a range of performance data and its use is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

30. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as it was in the last inspection. This time there is a higher proportion of good and better teaching: nearly 60 per cent of lessons. Whilst there is little difference in the overall quality of teaching and learning between Years 7-9 and Years 10-11, the most consistent teaching is in Years 8, 9 and 10. However, it is in the sixth form that the best teaching is seen. Assessment is satisfactory. Since the academic year 2003/04 the school has had an improved reporting system. This is linked to the better support provided by the House monitoring process. However, its full impact is prevented by inconsistent use by middle managers and class teachers. Also, the school needs to further develop its analysis of a range of performance data and ensure all staff understand and are clear about what the data is telling the school and how to use the findings to raise standards.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 155 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (0.65%)	17 (11%)	69 (44.5%)	55 (35.5%)	12 (7.7%)	1 (0.65%)	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.

31. There are mostly good and very good teachers. However, there still remain a few concerns about the quality of some teaching. This is for a variety of reasons, some of which are beyond the immediate control of the school. For example, a relatively high turnover in teaching staff (mainly leaving for career progression and enhancement) and long-term illness has led to the need to employ temporary staff. This means some pupils are experiencing a lack of stable contact with teachers in particular curriculum areas. As a result, this does lead to an inconsistency of approach in some areas of the school and negatively affects the progress some pupils make and the standards they achieve. However, the school has worked hard to overcome these issues and has been successful recently in addressing a number of short-notice staffing problems, for example, within English. Some issues raised at the time of the last inspection remain, for example, music, but the strengths identified also continue, for example, modern foreign languages.
32. In those subjects where there is a more consistent approach to the teaching, learning and assessment strategies employed, the benefits of such developments can be seen. For example, assessment of pupils with SEN and hearing impairment is very good. There is testing to assess the pupils' starting points and progress is monitored and tracked regularly. In science, good progress has been made since the last inspection and both internal school and external moderation and evaluation have acknowledged this. In art and design, despite some shortcomings in lesson planning, teaching is good. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all, there is consistent class management across the department and very good teaching of observational drawing

ensures that skills are taught systematically. As a result, lessons are very productive with many pupils making rapid progress. In PE, learning is good owing to the pace and productivity achieved as a result of good subject knowledge, class management and teaching methodologies employed by the teachers. Religious education provides good teaching and learning opportunities for pupils. This is because good planning leads to an effective structure for lessons, with the pupils being made fully aware of their target grades. In modern foreign languages, some teaching is very good as a result of the effective use of the target language, excellent resources, well planned lessons and high expectations in terms of pupil behaviour and standards of work expected.

33. Teaching and learning of pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactory. The support from the specialist teachers is good and enables pupils to learn language quickly and access the curriculum. Year 11 pupils enter a good range of examination subjects even though some of them may not have been in the school over the full secondary period. There is no targeted support from teaching assistants to work directly with pupils who have English as an additional language. Some subject teachers make good provision in their lessons to support the language needs of pupils with English as an additional language, but this is not done consistently across the school. The school's lesson planning format does not include pupils with English as an additional language as a particular group to be planned for.
34. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good overall. They are satisfactory in mainstream lessons, where teachers accept responsibility for all pupils and give additional care and support to pupils with special educational needs. They adapt learning materials and differentiate language to enable even those with considerable hearing loss to understand every part of the lesson. For instance, in science, a profoundly deaf pupil is able to dispense with signed support because her teacher makes the work so clear. In other lessons, learning support assistants use sign language to help pupils to understand, as, for instance, when a Year 9 pupil learned about endangered species in a geography lesson.
35. Teaching in small groups to pupils with hearing loss or with special educational needs is very good and pupils learn very well. Programmes in literacy and numeracy are individually designed with appropriate and realistic targets so that pupils can return to mainstream teaching as soon as they are able to progress sufficiently to access mainstream lessons. Difficult abstract concepts such as 'poignancy' are taught to deaf Year 9 pupils through signing, and pupils also learn to sequence and sign Biblical stories using a video camera to help to improve body language and facial expression.
36. Pupils with special educational needs are taught to become self-reliant and independent learners by taking responsibility for their equipment, such as radio communication aids, and for their learning strategies.
37. Since the last inspection the school has been putting much more effort into addressing the strategies and classroom practice required to improve teaching, learning and assessment. It has developed a new teaching and learning committee, which recently has been extended to include staff from other schools. This group addresses such priorities as continuing professional development, minimum teaching standards, differentiation, literacy across the curriculum and the Key Stage Three strategy. Some of the strategies developed have been well thought through and imaginative, for example, a staff mentoring system to support teachers teaching a second subject. In addition, a range of professional development activities has supported the implementation of these strategies. As a result, they have had some positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning provided and on the achievement of a number of pupils.

38. However, the overall impact has been limited because of inconsistencies in management and implementation by individual teachers. For example, the school has instigated a programme to enable the closer monitoring of teaching and learning. At the present time the implementation of this programme is inconsistent and as a result it is not producing the benefits that it should be. The school has also developed a set of minimum teaching standards to be used throughout school and these are based on a three-part lesson format. In practice, inconsistent planning in some lessons leads to a lack of clear learning outcomes and suitable strategies to challenge and engage pupils of all abilities, in particular, the most able and boys. Although the school has developed a potentially effective Assessment for Learning Strategy, it is not consistently applied. As a consequence, pupils' academic progress is not monitored regularly and teachers do not make enough use of evidence in guiding teaching to ensure that each pupil knows what s/he needs to do to improve.
39. The school has been making some positive progress in including all pupils in lessons through the development of work designed to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and use of teaching assistants. All of this is still in the development stage and is not as yet used consistently, for example, in the use of teaching assistants throughout the school. There is a model of good practice to follow within the hearing impaired unit, where the use of teaching assistants is most effective. Also, learning support assistants who are assigned to individual pupils with statements of special educational needs provide good support and enable pupils to learn well, particularly when their role is planned. However, when they are not involved in the planning process or are not clear about their role, then they are not effectively deployed and opportunities for them to enhance learning are missed. Many teachers having a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in their class have no support and this is when pupils do not make as good progress as they could.

Sixth form

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- In the best lessons, skilful questioning supports and extends understanding and learning well.
- Seventy per cent of teaching is good or better.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve, particularly the more able, are at times low.
- Some lessons are not planned to carefully target the different abilities of students in the class.
- The capacity of students to work on their own is not well developed.
- The use of assessment to enable students to improve their work is inconsistent.

Commentary

40. All teaching is satisfactory or better and, in almost 70 per cent of lessons, it is good or very good, making the teaching in the sixth form the best in the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to give clear explanations, particularly when introducing difficult concepts. They identify learning objectives in their lesson plans, but invariably these are activities rather than learning outcomes. In the best lessons, skilful questioning supports and extends students' understanding and learning well.
41. Unusually for a sixth form, there is only a small proportion of lessons that are very good or excellent. In the excellent Year 13 pure mathematics lesson the teacher spoke eloquently

about the beauty of proof and read to the students from 'the Music of the Primes'. Students were spellbound and then quietly and seriously carried out a very difficult mathematical investigation. The teacher's gentle approach masked the depth of challenge and pace of her demands on students as mathematical scholars. As a consequence, all the students, irrespective of their ability and background, gained a great deal from the lesson.

42. At times teaching is mundane, with over-domination by the teacher. As a consequence students are too often attentive but passive, answering questions when asked and completing the tasks required of them. In these lessons, teachers do not change their expectations to make additional demands on the more able students. Some teaching groups are small; as a result, for example, in English, students are not able to engage in lively debate. Too often teachers have low expectations of what students can achieve because students are content to be led in their learning by their teacher and the very able are not fully stretched. Because of this their capacity to work independently is not well developed and scholarship is not effectively encouraged.
43. Sixth form students can study in either the library or in the sixth form study area when not in lessons. Students, particularly girls, speak of their preference to study in the library where it is quiet. The sixth form study area is not conducive to independent study and as a consequence is used as a second sixth form common room.
44. The assessment of student progress and marking is inconsistent. In some subjects, assessment accurately informs students how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Assessment is good when students' progress is systematically checked, for example, in psychology. However, not all students know how well they are doing and what they need to do, in particular to achieve the top grades. Additionally, routine marking is not consistently of the same standard and does not guide the student about what they need to do to improve their understanding and to achieve the most marks.

The curriculum

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures coverage of the National Curriculum in most subjects and a number of well-devised optional courses for older pupils. It is not meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and citizenship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Large number of optional courses in Years 10-13.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities.
- Poor timetabling, resulting in some split teaching groups.
- Poor use of performance data and unsatisfactory target setting.
- Statutory requirements are not completely met.

Commentary

45. In Years 7-9, pupils study English, French or German, mathematics and science in groups that are set according to ability; PE and technology in blocks that enable a rotation of activities; and ICT, history, geography, art and design, drama, music and religious education in mixed ability groups. Additionally, pupils receive some personal health and social education in tutor time and on days when the normal curriculum is suspended.

46. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils study English, mathematics, ICT, science, religious education and PE. These are taught in sets according to pupils' ability. In addition, pupils can choose four further subjects from a wide range of options that include drama, food technology, French, German, Spanish, art and design, history, geography, resistant materials, sports studies, graphic products, dance, art and design, media studies and child development, all of which can be taken in the GCSE examinations. Health and social care, business studies and leisure and tourism are also available at GNVQ Intermediate level. In Years 9 and 10, classical civilisation is studied as an after-school GCSE that is part of a limited programme for a group of pupils who have been identified as being gifted and talented.
47. The range of choices is wide and is broadened by the provision of work-related learning and college-based courses for those students for whom they are more appropriate than the more formal school curriculum.
48. In spite of the large number of courses on offer, and the flexible nature of the options presented to students, there is currently little coherence in the school's 14 -19 provision. Governors and senior managers are beginning to think about ways of addressing this by providing more vocational courses that start in Year 10 at foundation level and continue into the sixth form at intermediate or higher level.
49. The school provides good curriculum support for pupils with special educational needs and for those with impaired hearing. The Learning Opportunities Centre offers help with anger management, building self-esteem and reintegration after extended absence and, unusually for a school, bereavement counselling. The learning support provision is good.
50. Although curriculum provision is broad, it suffers from a number of weaknesses. These include a failure to report on citizenship; poor timetabling, resulting in a number of classes being split between two teachers; some teaching by non-specialists; and a teaching week that is shorter than that recommended. All of these adversely affect pupils' learning.
51. The management of the curriculum is not sufficiently strategic in that it has not yet begun to address a number of ongoing weaknesses. Boys' attainment is low compared with that of girls; music teaching and learning remain poor in spite of being highlighted in the previous inspection report; personal and social education is overly dependent on the quality of the staff who have to deliver it; and there is little adaptation of work set to match pupils' individual abilities.
52. School managers do not make good use of the range of performance data that is available to them and teachers receive only limited information about their pupils. The setting of targets is unsophisticated (and in some cases misleading, particularly for able students for whom English is an additional language) and the tracking of pupils' progress towards targets is too infrequent and is not co-ordinated across the school. As a result, pupils in all years are not sufficiently challenged and have little idea of their capabilities. Under-achievement in more than one subject cannot be spotted soon enough and academic support by form tutors is haphazard. Assessments are not widely used to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
53. Extra-curricular provision for pupils of all ages is good. The school offers a wide range of sporting and curriculum enrichment activities. These include the opportunity to play

competitively against other schools in several different sports, to take part in musical and dramatic productions and to visit other countries to learn more about history, geography and languages. A number of subject departments, including science, art and design, languages and mathematics, run extra lessons and lunchtime clubs. In contrast to the generally good extra-curricular provision, there is little opportunity for pupils to develop their musical talents either by way of additional lessons or by playing in small groups, ensembles and orchestras. This reflects the poor curricular provision for music, which is not taught well.

54. The school's accommodation is adequate, as are classroom resources. The day-to-day maintenance of the school's buildings has not been a priority in recent years and many areas of the school are drab.

Sixth form

The sixth form curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of courses meets the needs and aspirations of most students well.
- The time for religious education as set out as guidance in the Surrey Agreed Syllabus is not met, nor does the school yet fully comply with the need to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

55. Entry procedures are 'open access', meaning that a wide range of abilities is catered for. Students can combine academic and vocational courses with GCSEs. Students have an impressive range of options from which to choose. There are no fewer than 42 different courses on offer. Most are Advanced Level GCEs (AS and full A-levels) but there are also a small number of vocational courses and GCSEs in mathematics, English, law, art and design and science.
56. This range meets the preferences of most students well and matches their choice for further study and work. The one-year foundation route provides a gradual introduction into advanced level for the less able and provides additional GCSE courses for those studying advanced courses as well as for those wishing to improve their grades. Students appreciate the range of courses available to them, as well as the opportunity, for example, to extend their leadership and listening skills in helping younger pupils. However, the timetable has not been well thought through. As a result, some students have to choose between two lessons, both of which they need to attend and, as a result, they lose valuable learning time, for example, those studying law. Additionally, although there is a large proportion of students with special needs in the main school, there are no clear pathways for them to study in the sixth form. The school is appropriately planning to introduce more vocational courses to meet the needs of all students.
57. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a day focused upon the theme of 'religious response to evil' involving speakers from four different religions, to meet the requirements for religious education. However, this is inadequate in providing the provision set out as guidance in the LEA Agreed Syllabus for sixth form religious education. Although there are sixth form assemblies, tutor times do not meet the requirements for the daily act of collective worship.

Care, guidance and support

Intrinsically this is a very caring school with pupils' welfare high on the list of priorities for management, but there are important gaps in the provision that result overall in only satisfactory care and support. Pupils' and students' views are well represented to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vertical house system is effective in providing good pastoral care.
- The school is good at acknowledging and seeking pupils' views.
- Tutors are inadequately involved in encouraging academic progress.
- Very good care arrangement for insecure pupils.
- Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs, including the hearing impaired, are very good.
- A number of departments do not have risk assessments.
- There are good induction arrangements for new pupils.
- Child protection procedures are good, but training of adults is not comprehensive.

Commentary

58. At the time of the last inspection the school was judged as at least satisfactory and at times good in relation to pupil care, guidance and support. Since that time the school has consolidated and in a number of instances improved. In particular, the house system, school council, prefect system and extra-curricular and curriculum enrichment programmes have added strength to the school. Pupil participation rates in and support for activities is good.
59. However, it is the vertical family tutor system (House system) developed by the school that is the key strength. It is the cornerstone of Epsom and Ewell's success in becoming an inclusive school and one that operates in a climate and culture of a caring and harmonious environment for pupils. Tutors are based in houses and each tutor group has approximately six pupils from each year. Pupils are allocated to houses to ensure an even spread of skills and strengths. Competition between houses is healthy and strong and house members are loyal to each other, with older pupils supporting younger ones when necessary. Since the last inspection the house system has improved relationships throughout the school and it enables tutors to concentrate on particular years at appropriate times. For instance, tutors visit pupils on work experience and concentrate on Year 7 in the first few days after they first start at the school. Tutors have some information on the academic progress of their pupils, but guidance is not consistent or frequent enough.
60. The unit for the hearing impaired is effective in raising the confidence of pupils and enlarging their horizons. The Learning Opportunities Centre provides a rich range of support, ranging from anger management counselling to 'Boost' sessions to improve self-esteem.
61. Pupils who have English as an additional language are particularly appreciative of the extra support which they receive from individual teachers and members of the support staff outside of their usual lesson time. When pupils have sought help if experiencing difficulties with other pupils as a result of their language difference or ethnicity, staff from the school have acted quickly and effectively to resolve the difficulties and prevent them from happening again.
62. Care, support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs, including the hearing impaired, are very good. All staff are given training and support in the management of the pupils' needs through training sessions and information booklets.
63. The Premises Manager effectively looks after day-to-day health and safety and undertakes routine safety checks with governors. The recently appointed Health and

Safety Governor has taken the lead in working out a health and safety policy, is currently working on procedures and has helped some departments with their risk assessments. A number of departments are still without risk assessments, including PE. Risk assessments for outside visits are effectively managed by one of the assistant headteachers.

64. The majority of pupils and parents feel they are part of an improving school. Most parents are positive about the school's treatment of their children and the settling in arrangements upon transfer from the primary phase. These views are also supported by the majority of pupils. New pupils are made to feel welcome and there are good procedures for gathering information about them, allocating them to classes and houses, and giving them good support on arrival.
65. The nominated manager for child protection knows the local agencies and procedures well and has been well trained. Not all staff have been trained or reminded of the warning signs of child abuse and how to respond if a child starts to divulge details of an abuse, for example, newly qualified teachers.
66. The general view of parents is that their child is happy and that the school is welcoming. Although they attribute much of this to the recently introduced vertical tutor system, they acknowledge this is also due to the stable 'core' of dedicated staff and the very welcoming office staff. However, they acknowledge there has been a considerable turnover of other staff at the school and this does lead to a lack of consistent practice.
67. Another successful feature identified by both parents and pupils that contributes to the positive view of the school is the development of the School Council. The School Council is fully integrated, with form councils that are democratically elected. It takes guidance from two sixth formers who currently act as chairmen. Its voice is heard well and it has a good number of achievements to its credit. It is through the School Council and the house tutor system that the school seeks the views of pupils and students. Governors have also conducted a survey of pupils' views to inform their strategic planning. It is widely acknowledged by pupils and students that the school listens and responds to their views.

SIXTH FORM

Provision for support, advice and guidance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are given good pastoral support.
- The sixth form council is effective.
- Course completion rate by students is relatively low because the sixth form has an open entry policy.

Commentary

68. Students are given good pastoral support by their tutors, but they do not receive sufficient guidance on their academic progress. The course completion rate by students is relatively low because there are no limitations on examination entry. The school is revising the examination entry policy so that a student is not entered for an examination they will not pass. Preparation for the sixth form is by a one-day course on study skills. More pre-sixth form help in this area is needed. Students had some criticisms of course selection in Year 11, but these problems have been addressed. They are happy with the advice they are receiving on study beyond the sixth form. Students who fail to meet their A-level requirements for university entry are given help in finding alternatives or arranging further courses of study for retakes. Events are organised to give pupils an understanding of what universities are like and they are given

an understanding of the financial problems they will encounter. Support is underpinned by good relationships between staff and students.

69. There is an effective sixth form council that organises collections for charities, social events and represents student views to the management. For example, it recently drew attention to some inefficient teaching and action was taken. The sixth form is given the opportunity to build their communication skills by taking part in 'Talk in Confidence', a counselling service to younger pupils, and in guiding the School Council, as well as participating in a number of opportunities within the community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents and with schools and colleges. Links with the community and support services are **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Parents are provided with very good information.
- Parents give the school good support.
- There is a wide range of links with the community.
- There are good links with junior schools, colleges and universities.
- The hearing impaired unit provides very good support.

Commentary

70. The school's newsletters, annual report from governors and prospectus are all of high quality. Parents are also positive about the value of the annual parent and teacher meetings to discuss their child's progress. The child being present aids the quality of these. However, parents were critical of the previous system of pupil reports. These were described as bland and not personalised enough to enable parents to gain a true picture of their child. The school has recently changed its reporting system on pupils' progress. The new system is viewed as being much improved. There is an interim report on pupils' progress and once a year there is a full report. Although there are some small inefficiencies to be rectified, the new format full reports are seen as potentially being very good. They give a clear indication of progress and any weaknesses become very apparent.
71. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are closely involved with the education of their children both through annual reviews and curriculum nights, which are arranged to help parents to assist their children's learning. Parents are invited to discuss individual education plans and pupil support plans where these are provided. The school also offers to parents access to courses on parenting.
72. Parents give excellent support to school functions such as musical events, plays, the dance show and gym display. They attend and give much support at sports events. Parents come into school to hear readers and help with record keeping. They provide gifts and the parent staff association raises valuable finance. One parent has joined the healthy schools committee. These are valuable contributions to the life of the school. The level of parental attendance of pupils who have English as an additional language at meetings is similar to that of other parents. The department makes use of translators when required, and is beginning to translate some key documents for parents.
73. Support for the community is very strong, both local and international, and has been rewarded by a bursary for community service from the Lions Club for four consecutive years. Of special note is the participation in World Challenge every two years. Last

year they built a schoolroom in Uganda and one of the houses is raising money to dig a well there. Another house has raised money for a school in Soweto. Survivors of the Holocaust come in to talk to Year 11 every year. Closer to home, clearing a waterway, helping at a day centre, taking part in a hedgehog survey and writing poems for a local residents' magazine are examples of the many activities undertaken. Many local people come in to support personal, social and citizenship studies.

74. Links with other schools are also numerous. Pupils from a special school join in with PE lessons and one pupil took part in the Dance Display organised by the school. Primary schools come in for science lessons and pupils act as instructors. Pupils help junior schools with their Sports Days. Colleges also provide much help, for example, with work-related learning, and there are good links with Kingston University. A Teaching and Learning Network with selected local secondary schools is in the process of development, with the aim of passing on best practice.
75. The hearing impaired unit is the only secondary unit in Surrey that has signing and therefore brings in pupils from a large area. Assistance in class often consists of signing, but sometimes consists of ensuring that pupils have understood what is happening through lip reading. The unit's strength lies in helping pupils to become independent and join in activities. Signing lessons are given to the main school pupils to help friendships to flourish and reduce isolation.
76. There are very good links with a number of support services, including those for the hearing impaired. In addition, the school has effective links and developments with health services via the school nurse; wider advice and support via the Connexions Service and LEA and national strategies for support in relation to Travellers and in improving attendance.

Sixth form

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information for parents is very good.
- Students play a significant role in supporting younger pupils and within the community.
- The sixth form has strong links with local universities.

Commentary

77. Information for parents is very good, with an excellent brochure and comprehensive reports once a year for each subject studied. Parents are much involved, often by telephone.
78. Approximately 60 students help younger pupils learn to read and 13 act as consultants to the rest of the school whenever they have problems to discuss. In the community, one student was elected as the member of the UK Youth Parliament to represent the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. Students from the school help regularly at the Mayor's Charity Ball. Each year a group of students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and assist the local Youth Co-ordinator to interest pupils in local democracy.
79. Educational links are largely with universities. The University of Surrey provides a day course on study skills, research techniques, finance and making personal statements of achievement. Their admissions officer also comes to talk to students, and all students go to experience university life for a day. Links are also established with

other universities as students go to attend open days, and finance is arranged where appropriate.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is energetic and focused on creating a harmonious ethos but management is not always effective in improving standards of learning further.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Strong vision for creating a caring, harmonious and inclusive school.
- Leadership and management of hearing impaired provision and special educational needs are very good.
- Finances are managed well on a day-to-day basis, and the school ensures best value when making major spending decisions.
- Raising standards, particularly for boys and the most able, is not addressed with sufficient vigour.
- Development planning lacks sufficient detail.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not consistent.
- The school has a large budget deficit.

Commentary

80. The governing body is well organised with five committees that are managed in a business-like manner and which are beginning to appreciate the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the constraints that it faces. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school and most are linked to a subject department, about which they are becoming increasingly knowledgeable. Some, such as the governors responsible for premises and the curriculum, are both well informed and pro-active, acting as critical friends to the school.
81. Governors receive good information about the school's strengths and have a fair understanding of how its performance compares with other schools nationally. They help to set the school's strategic objectives but, as yet, do not hold the school to account with sufficient rigour. They receive little information about how much progress pupils make through the key stages. Although the school's governors and senior managers recognise the relative under-achievement of boys, they have not addressed this issue at a strategic level. They have, however, introduced a cycle of departmental reviews that enables them to understand the strengths of each department. The quality of these reviews is variable, with some being vague about what the department needs to do to improve.
82. The school produces annual development plans, which are drawn up by governors and senior managers. These address raising attainment through better teaching, improving the quality of life for all members of the school community, improving facilities, securing finances and improving the school's image. Governors monitor the progress of the plan at their termly meetings. The plan is not sufficiently clear about who carries responsibility for each of the actions on the plan, nor are the success criteria specific enough.
83. Governors are not meeting their statutory responsibility to ensure that with regard to citizenship they report attainment to parents or that a daily act of collective worship is provided for all pupils, including those in the sixth form.
84. The headteacher provides a strong role model to the school community and actively promotes his vision for creating an equitable, harmonious place of learning, where all pupils, irrespective of background or ability, are equally valued.

85. Members of the senior management team (SMT) share the headteacher's vision and carry individual responsibilities for different aspects of the management of the school. They each have line management responsibilities for a small number of departments. In spite of the clear roles assigned to members of the SMT, the team lacks consistency, with some members being more effective line managers than others. Some subjects would welcome more support; other subject leaders appreciate the leadership they are given. As a result, the quality of the performance review of teachers varies from department to department, as does the quality of the departmental reviews.
86. The school's leadership team has created a caring, harmonious and inclusive school but has not addressed the raising of standards with sufficient vigour. The setting of targets for individual pupils is unsophisticated, the tracking of pupils' performance across subjects is inconsistent and the analysis of value added at the ends of the key stages is not understood by the majority of teachers. The team has not yet set in place effective routines to improve boys' learning, or do they monitor carefully enough the progress that is made by the different groups of pupils within the school, including the most able.
87. THE QUALITY OF MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOL VARIES BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, SCIENCE, MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, ART AND DESIGN AND MATHEMATICS ARE WELL MANAGED. THE MANAGEMENT OF ENGLISH, ICT AND GEOGRAPHY IS SATISFACTORY, WHILST IT IS UNSATISFACTORY IN DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, HISTORY AND MUSIC.
88. Leadership and management of English as an additional language are satisfactory. Good support is provided by the local authority, but is limited to one day a week. Raising attainment of pupils with English as an additional language is referenced in the school's improvement plan but there is no specific action plan which outlines how that will be done. The initial assessment of pupils with English as an additional language is thorough and good information is fed through to teachers. Examination data is recorded by ethnicity, but is not used within departments as part of monitoring and evaluation practice. Although some sixth form students have English as an additional language, they are not included on the register and do not receive additional support.
89. Leadership of the hearing impaired unit and for special educational needs is very good. A shared vision encourages pupils' independence and ability to take responsibility. The unit works closely with therapists and others to benefit pupils. Teachers and support assistants are highly trained with skills in signing. Very good links exist with primary schools and post-16 providers to ensure continuity.
90. Special educational needs is very well led and the team have a shared vision. Performance management and professional development ensure that the very complex needs of the many pupils are understood and there is an awareness of the needs for the restructuring of the workforce. The management of special educational needs and the hearing impaired unit is good. Budgets are well spent but there are insufficient support assistants in both areas for the needs of the pupils to be met adequately, particularly when they are in mainstream classes.
91. A number of teachers teach outside their specialist area. In some subjects, this arrangement works well but in English and mathematics, it is having a negative effect on the continuity of learning.
92. THE SCHOOL WORKS HARD TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN WELL-QUALIFIED AND COMMITTED TEACHERS. TO A LARGE EXTENT IT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN VERY HIGH TEACHER TURNOVER IN SOME SUBJECTS, INCLUDING MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH. THE SCHOOL'S INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS DOES MUCH TO

MAKE THEM FEEL CONFIDENT AND SECURE IN THEIR FIRST TEACHING POST. TEACHERS NEW TO THE SCHOOL WOULD BENEFIT FROM RECEIVING MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR CLASSES SOONER, SO THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO PLAN THEIR LESSONS IN MORE DETAIL, AND ABOUT PROCEDURES FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF BEHAVIOUR. THE SCHOOL MAINTAINS A PROGRAMME OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH, ALTHOUGH REDUCED BECAUSE OF BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS, CONTINUES TO HELP TEACHERS TO DEVELOP THEIR TEACHING SKILLS IN IMPORTANT AREAS, INCLUDING WORKING WITHIN THE NATIONAL KEY STAGE 3 STRATEGY.

93. The school's finances are managed well on a day-to-day basis, and the school ensures best value when making major spending decisions. Accommodation and classroom resources are adequate. The school is expecting to carry forward a budget deficit of about £340,000 at the end of the current financial year as a result of lower-than-expected numbers of pupils attending the school, and is planning to make considerable savings in order to bring expenditure into line with income. Funds allocated to the school through various government initiatives are used for their intended purpose. The school spends a higher proportion of its budget on staffing than most schools and has spent less on routine maintenance of the school environment due to the possibility of a rebuilding programme in the near future. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money, with per pupil income broadly in line with the national average. Although the school has a budget deficit, there are clear recovery plans in place.
94. Accommodation and resources in the hearing impaired unit are barely satisfactory and limit further development. The one classroom contains a teaching space, office space, area for teaching assistants, base for speech therapists and confidential counselling space but does not allow privacy for either pupils or staff. Accommodation for special educational needs is barely satisfactory, with some small groups being taught in the corridor. Resources are satisfactory, although underpowered computers do not allow access to the school's management system or the department's data to be easily logged or retrieved.
95. Leadership and management were judged to be unsatisfactory in the last inspection and, although there has been much improvement in leadership, insufficient progress has been made in improving management. Middle managers are still not monitoring the curriculum and teaching with sufficient rigour; some senior managers have ineffective links with middle managers; the attendance of pupils remains low; and the school development plan lacks strategic targets that are monitored and linked to the budget. By way of contrast, governors find it less difficult to check the quality of what the school does well and the effect on learning.

Sixth form

Overall, leadership and management are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The day-to-day management of the sixth form is good.
- Subject leadership in biology, mathematics, psychology and ICT is good.
- The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.
- There are weaknesses in strategic planning and monitoring.
- The use of performance data and monitoring of students' academic progress are not systematic enough.
- Some statutory requirements are not fully met.

Commentary

96. Day-to-day management of the sixth form by the Head of Sixth Form is good. He has a good understanding of the priorities for improvement: the underachievement of some boys and more able students; independent learning; curriculum development and the revision of examination entry policy. However, these are his priorities and are not systematically shared with heads of departments/subjects who then contribute to a development plan for the sixth form. There are examples of good practice, for example, in assessing student progress in psychology, but these are not routinely shared to provide a consistent approach across the sixth form.
97. Across the sixth form there are individual strengths in the subjects. The subject leadership of courses taught in the sixth form is good overall. However, the leadership and management of post-16 as a whole are fragmented:
- The staff teaching in the sixth form do so independently, and not as a team.
 - Insufficient attention is given to systematically monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and assessment.
 - Performance data is not used consistently across the sixth form to identify underachievement and set challenging targets.
 - Strategic planning is not based upon the best practice evident within subjects.
 - Provision, as set out as guidance in the LEA Agreed Syllabus, for sixth form religious education is not fully met.
98. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money, although a small amount of sixth form income is used to subsidise the main school. This subsidy is being reduced.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,636,238	Balance from previous year	- 97,329
Total expenditure	3,785,360	Balance carried forward to the next year	- 246,451
Expenditure per pupil	3,770		

OTHER SPECIFIED AREAS

Work-related learning

The provision for work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work-related learning is well managed and supervised.
- A significant number of pupils have opportunities to attend local colleges.
- The number of pupils benefiting from work-related programmes is limited.

Commentary

99. The effectiveness of the programme for work-related learning is satisfactory. However, the number of pupils benefiting from these programmes is limited. The school has a well thought-out programme of opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding about work and to develop the skills and attitudes needed in the work place. This programme is well managed and supervised.
100. Thirty pupils attend the local college of further education to study courses to develop their skills in, for example, construction. Pupils are carefully selected for these

courses by their heads of house, in consultation with form tutors. Many pupils show an interest in attending these courses and those attending are carefully selected using clear criteria relating to improvements in attitude, attendance and how well pupils will apply their experiences in college to the rest of their work in school. Course attendance and work experience for these pupils are well managed through the Learning Opportunities Centre. This programme has been successful in preventing the exclusion of pupils. Additionally, because a few boys were able to attend a local community centre each week, they became more interested in school. Evaluation of work-related learning is carried out systematically by the Learning Opportunities Centre and the heads of house.

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

Overall, provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teaching is very well planned, has good pace and purpose and offers pupils a range of productive learning opportunities.
- Pupils' attainment levels have risen in some areas, such as GCSE English literature and end of Year 9.
- Relationships between pupils and with almost all staff are good.
- There is still considerable scope to improve on current levels of attainment, especially that of boys, matched against national and school levels, in Years 7-9 and 10 and 11.
- High staff turnover and absence levels hinder some pupils' learning and progress.
- Inconsistent implementation of policies and of the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Not all pupils are aware of the level at which they are working, target levels to aim for and precise steps needed to meet or exceed those targets.

Commentary

101. Standards in English are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry is below national expectations. Attainment in the end-of-Year 9 national tests in 2003 was low by national standards and lower still in comparison with similar schools. In 2004 there was much improvement and results matched those achieved nationally and were slightly higher than the school test results in mathematics and science. Between Years 7 and 9, most pupils' speaking and listening skills show improvement, though many fail to use more formal language when tasks require it. Weaker pupils in this age range, especially boys, have underdeveloped writing skills, particularly in their choice of vocabulary and formation of grammatical sentences. With the exception of that produced by the more able, much written work suffers from inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation. Similarly, although pupils make progress in reading, many less capable readers lack fluency and confidence when they read.
102. Attainment in GCSE examinations in Year 11 has been below national expectations for A* to C grades in recent years, although there was a small improvement in 2004. Achievement of the highest grades has improved to national levels over the past two years. Girls' performance in GCSE continues to far outstrip that of boys. In English literature, GCSE results have been much better, comfortably exceeding national standards, although there was small decline between 2003 and 2004. GCSE A*-G grades over the past two years have been just above the national percentage for Language and just below in Literature. Most pupils build on the progress made in reading in earlier years, reading with greater confidence by Year 11. Likewise, speaking and listening shows improvement by this stage, although in a small number of less well managed lessons, low-level disruption and incidental chatter mean that not all of pupils' spoken contributions are fully heeded. Pupils of average and above-average ability make steady progress in their writing across Years 10 and 11 but

weaker learners find it difficult to write at any length or with a reasonable degree of mechanical accuracy.

103. Pupils' work shows achievement is satisfactory in all years. In particular, there is evidence of good strides being made by some less able pupils and those with special educational needs. This is particularly so in Year 7 and in some GCSE coursework, which shows good progress in confidence and accuracy. In the best lessons pupils are able to take advantage of the learning opportunities provided by productive class discussions. In less effective classes, especially in Years 8 and 10, achievement is limited by indifferent classroom control and pupils often not on task.
104. Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory across Years 7-11. They are slightly better in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, teaching is well planned and paced, with pupils learning well because they are motivated and feel that the lesson has purpose and relevance. They are challenged to give of their best in these classes, as in a Year 7 lesson where a good variety of tasks on contemporary drama maintained pupils' interest and all were engaged through good use of teacher questions. Where teaching and learning are less successful, it is the result of too much teacher talk at the expense of opportunities for pupils to be more actively engaged in their own learning. This is the case in some lessons in Years 7-9 when pupils' concentration levels are diminished because of insufficient opportunities for them to develop their own insights into the texts being studied.
105. In a small minority of lessons, learning is poor because of weak classroom control by teachers leading to inattention and noisy behaviour, by some boys in particular, to the detriment of others in the class. In the case of some weaker lessons, teachers are handicapped as they are new appointments and have not had sufficient support on classroom management and teaching and learning expectations. Most teachers have good subject knowledge but a minority of classes are taught by non-specialists. Some of these have insufficient confidence to have a major impact on pupils' developing skills in writing and speaking. As a consequence, teachers require support and training to ensure a higher proportion of lessons are good or better.
106. With the exception of a small minority of classes, relationships between pupils and with staff are good. Pupil's work shows little evidence of the use of ICT beyond some word-processed coursework and occasional material downloaded from the Internet.
107. Leadership and management are satisfactory although a number of challenges face the newly appointed Head of English. The department has been through a difficult time, with a high staff turnover leading to a lack of continuity in the learning of pupils and some policies not being consistently put into practice. However, there are a number of key challenges ahead, for example, improved collection and analysis of pupil performance data to better prioritise departmental resources and planning activities. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, particularly to ensure consistency of practice, is also a priority. For example, the assessment policy has too much inconsistency of practice between classes and teachers. Accommodation and resources are adequate, although teaching rooms are scattered across the school. Access to computer rooms is far from ideal. Overall, the department is a little better placed than previously to face these challenges as it is fully staffed and has greater capacity to move forward.
108. Since the last inspection, improvement in English has been satisfactory. Although a number of challenges remain, there has been some progress in standards of work and in the breadth of the curriculum.

Language and literacy across the curriculum Years 7 to 13

109. Provision for literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory, with pockets of good practice in some areas of the school. However, there is scope for better co-ordination and drive in improving the quality of literacy across the whole school. Staff training took place in 2003 but there is still no school policy or a re-visiting of the issues raised then. The current priorities are related to the promotion of accurate punctuation, as expressed in the Literacy 'pillars' displayed around the school. Although some of this work is effective, the school recognises that progress tends to be sporadic and inconsistent across the school.
110. There is a range of worthwhile developments, however. For example, a successful and well-organised summer school for Year 6 pupils was run in 2004. Effective literacy development work was also seen in sessions for pupils with special educational needs, with particular emphasis on writing for different purposes and audiences. A number of subjects, such as modern foreign languages, history, geography, PE and mathematics, place good emphasis on the use of key words and technical language appropriate to the subject. Good assessment practice with a stress on literacy is also evident in subjects such as art and design and ICT. The development of more confident speaking and listening skills is a feature of lessons in English, art and PE. Within the house system, group tutorials undertake a useful weekly quiz with a literacy emphasis.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above the national average in the past two years.
- Teaching is mostly good; some is very good, with no unsatisfactory teaching.
- Relationships are good; pupils' attitudes and behaviour are positive.
- The modern foreign language department is well led and managed; teachers work well as a team with consistent policies and procedures.
- Nearly all pupils study a foreign language to the end of Year 11.
- Pupils do not sufficiently use the target language in lessons.
- The more able linguists are not stretched to achieve their full potential.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

111. GCSE results in German in 2003 and in French in 2004 were well above the national average. This is a praiseworthy achievement in view of the fact that a large number of pupils are entered for the examination. These very good results compare favourably with those in other subjects in the school and represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection. At the end of Year 9, more than three-quarters of pupils achieve well in terms of national standards. Standards of work in lessons are at least in line with national expectations, and in a third are above expectations; for example, some less able pupils in Year 8 make use of the *passé composé* in oral work.
112. Teaching is good overall and learning is satisfactory. No lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Some teaching is very good; for example, in one German lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to use the target language by providing them with an excellent range of resources which she had

prepared, making consistent use of German, and using humour and drama to motivate. All teachers are experienced, well qualified and hard working, and communicate great enthusiasm for their subject. They make consistent use of the target language, which provides an excellent opportunity to develop pupils' listening skills. Lessons are always well planned with a variety of activities and good pace, and teachers prepare stimulating and attractive resources.

113. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and pupils respond in a mature way to the tasks set. A very good feature of teaching is that no pupils are allowed to opt out of work. On two occasions it was made clear to pupils who exhibited a negative attitude that they have to participate. Teachers were firm but expertly avoided confrontation. The correction of pupils' errors takes place in a supportive and non-threatening way. No incidents of poor behaviour were seen.
114. The written work in pupils' GCSE coursework files shows evidence of a wide range of attainment in a variety of tasks. The quality of marking in books and files is consistently good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection; some comments give pupils advice on how to improve their work, while others set targets and give encouragement. Often pupils are told what National Curriculum levels they have reached. The standard of work in lessons is never less than average, and occasionally above average. It is helped by the businesslike atmosphere which prevails. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls or between different ethnic groups.
115. However, when pupils are required to use the target language in games, role play and presentations, their responses are mostly minimal; for example, too often they give only one- or two-word answers when they could easily produce more. Although pupils occasionally use the target language to communicate in class; for example, "Je peux enlever ma veste?" and "Excusez-moi! Je suis en retard," they rarely produce extended speech in the target language or create new language. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Their pronunciation and intonation are generally not corrected and vary considerably. In many lessons pupils are given few opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Although all teachers work very hard throughout lessons, they do not always demand the same effort from pupils. Sometimes little attempt is made to stretch the more able pupils, as teaching is generally aimed to cater for the whole class without taking into account the needs and capabilities of the good linguists.
116. All teachers prepare their own stimulating resources. However, although some pupils have lessons in the computer suite and there are examples of word-processed written tasks, not enough use is made of ICT as a tool to increase motivation and enhance teaching.
117. Leadership and management are good. All language lessons take place in designated rooms which contain a brightly displayed range of words and phrases as a useful reference for pupils. A large department office enables teachers to work as a team and meet frequently. There is an excellent departmental handbook, and the work of teachers is well co-ordinated, which assists new staff; for example, the policy on the monitoring of pupils' exercise books results in a high standard of presentation. Documentation and records of pupils' progress are efficient and clear. Policies and procedures are agreed and followed consistently and the development plan is comprehensive and sensibly based upon an analysis of needs.

118. The accommodation is satisfactory and the department is fortunate to have the services of French and German assistants, who provide small-group oral practice. Staff have enhanced the curriculum by arranging recent trips to France and Germany, and there is a lunchtime Spanish club which provides those who attend with a deeper insight into Spanish language and culture. Improvement since the last inspection in modern foreign languages has been good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The high turnover of teachers has meant a lack of continuity for many pupils.
- Guidance for marking, feedback and use of targets to raise standards is inconsistently applied.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities and the resources to ensure all pupils experience a broad range of teaching and learning activities, including the use of ICT.

Commentary

119. Standards of attainment in mathematics in Years 7-11 are broadly in line with national averages. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have shown a gradual and steady improvement over recent years. In 2003, results matched those attained nationally. In 2004 they were close to the national average. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 have also shown an improving trend. In 2003 the school matched the national average of pupils attaining A* to C in GCSE mathematics. In 2004 the school's A* to C results improved to be slightly above those attained nationally. Almost all pupils entered for GCSE achieve at least grade G. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in the tests for 14-year-olds, but girls' attainment in GCSE is generally better than that of the boys.
120. Pupils enter the school, aged 11, with standards of attainment that are slightly below the national averages. Progress in learning is generally satisfactory, with the best progress in Years 10 and 11 as teachers prepare pupils for their GCSE examinations. Pupils with English as an additional language and those in the hearing impaired unit are well supported by teachers and support assistants and make good progress. The lowest-attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8 generally make good progress in small classes taught by learning support teachers. Achievement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is satisfactory. However, standards in using and applying mathematics within the mathematics curriculum are restricted because there are insufficient planned opportunities for teaching aimed at developing these skills.
121. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with most of their pupils and use this effectively to encourage and engage them in learning. Where teaching is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11, teachers use their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the requirements of the curriculum to plan well structured and purposeful lessons that meet the needs of pupils. They have high expectations for pupils to work hard and behave appropriately. In these lessons, teaching and learning activities are varied and have a good pace. A minority of teachers use ICT effectively to present mathematical ideas and techniques in their teaching but the subject has insufficient access to these resources. Where pupils have positive attitudes, which are better in Years 10 and 11, their achievement is good. Occasionally the behaviour of some pupils disrupts the pace of

teaching and learning. When the teacher does not manage this effectively, the achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory.

122. Schemes of work provide a sound basis for lesson planning but have insufficient detail to ensure pupils experience sufficient variety in teaching and learning. In particular, using and applying mathematics and the use of ICT are not well integrated into the mathematics curriculum. There is a comprehensive system of recording and tracking attainment in tests and assessments but the marking of work, constructive feedback to pupils and the setting of short- and medium-term mathematical targets are inconsistent. Pupils generally do not know the aspects of mathematics they need to be able to do and understand to achieve or exceed their minimum target levels or grades.
123. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. There is a clear sense of purpose and vision that focuses on raising standards and improving the quality of learning and teaching. Procedures for review and subsequent planning for development based upon review are good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for revision and also for pupils identified as gifted and talented. The department has good links with the neighbouring feeder primary schools.
124. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have improved. Review and development planning are secure, but the high turnover of teachers has meant a lack of continuity for many pupils. This has restricted the capacity for significant improvements to be made in mathematics. Teachers in mathematics are hardworking, motivated and form an effective team, but some of the mathematics classrooms are small and have a negative influence on the quality of teaching and learning for some classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

125. Standards in the basic skills of numeracy and the application of number are satisfactory. As yet the school has not addressed the co-ordination of the use and application of mathematics across the curriculum. This results in strategies to ensure that pupils are able to cope with the mathematical demands within the whole curriculum being insufficiently developed to make a significant contribution to their achievements across the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject.
- Lesson activities are matched well to pupils' needs. This leads to higher achievement.
- ICT is under used.
- Teachers and technicians are deployed well.
- Pupils do not get sufficient assistance in their marked work to help them make better progress.

Commentary

126. GCSE results in science in 2004 matched national averages. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. However, there were fewer top grades than were attained nationally. In 2003, standards at the end of Year 9 were average but the attainment of higher-level pupils was well below average. There has been a steady increase in standards since the last inspection.

127. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils' acquisition of scientific knowledge and understanding is good but the application of ICT skills to enhance their scientific knowledge and understanding is unsatisfactory. Their ability to work independently as well as co-operating in paired and group activities is good. Pupils have a basic knowledge of what they need to do to improve. However, the progress of some pupils is limited as they have insufficient understanding of what they must do to achieve the highest levels.
128. Pupils' work and lessons show achievement is good in all year groups. Boys and girls achieve equally well, as do those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and achieve well. Although expectation and challenge are satisfactory, higher-ability pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to extend their learning fully.
129. Teaching is good and this promotes good learning. The teachers have very good command of their subjects and they plan their lessons well, although learning objectives are sometimes unclear. They engage and encourage the pupils well by establishing good relationships. Most teachers have very effective teaching styles that suit the needs of their pupils. Teaching assistants add valuable support to pupils who have specific learning needs such as those with hearing impairment.
130. Homework is used well in some lessons to reinforce and promote learning, but this is not consistent practice. Pupils' acquisition of ICT skills is unsatisfactory; they make little use of spreadsheets and data-logging software, and their teachers do not have the necessary data projection equipment to promote its use. Well-paced and productive lessons make effective use of the 50-minute teaching time. Good resource management minimises organisational time for the pupils, ensuring that as much time as possible is spent engaging in exercises. Pupils work well in small groups and their capacity to learn independently is good.
131. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Most teachers regularly mark pupils' work and grade them well for effort and standards. Although teachers make useful comments about improving pupils' presentational and literacy skills, they lack the targeting of subject-specific advice that would improve pupils' standards in science.
132. Leadership and management are good. The department is well organised and proactive in managing improvements. There are good schemes of work from which teachers can plan their lessons effectively. Teachers are matched well to the lessons they teach. The curriculum suits the needs of most pupils in Years 7-9 through the implementation of national guidelines. The head of department is planning to improve provision for Years 10 and 11 when new examination courses are available. There are regular reviews of the department's performance and effective action is taken to develop further. The team works well and it regularly meets to share ideas for improving the learning experience for children. Responsibilities for running the department are delegated efficiently and all teachers feel valued. There is satisfactory monitoring of pupils' performance in tests. Pupils who are underachieving are identified and effective help is given to enable them to improve.
133. Accommodation is satisfactory. Although the fabric of the laboratories is old, it is adequate for teaching science because teachers have made good use of wall displays and the benches are kept clean and tidy. However, as there are few data projectors or other technical aids, it limits the degree of pace and innovation that can be achieved. Despite the age of most of the laboratory resources, they are satisfactory because they are managed effectively by the highly valued team of competent technicians. Chemical and radiological resources are safe and secure.

134. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Examination pass rates have risen and investigative work is firmly embedded in the curriculum. There are good risk assessments in place. Girls no longer underachieve. However, there is still insufficient guidance on the use of ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT in Years 7 - 11 is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made good progress since the last inspection in ensuring curriculum entitlement for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Opportunities to follow an accredited course in Years 10 and 11 are very good.
- Marking in Years 7 and 8 is often very good.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching which leads to underachievement in some lessons.
- Pupils are not well prepared for the expectations of work in control technology in Year 9.

Commentary

135. Standards in ICT are below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below national expectations. Standards at GCSE are well below the national average, and there has been a downward trend since 2000. Teacher assessment of standards in Year 9 in 2004 matched the national average. The school is still in discussion with the examination board regarding the remarking of some 2004 examination papers, which means that the reported figures may be subject to further upward adjustment.
136. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their well-below-average attainment in ICT on entry to the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing ICT capability in relation to communicating ideas and aspects of finding information. By Year 11 they are able to use desktop-publishing software, a word processor, drawing software, presentation software and the Internet. They make appropriate choices and move between these applications with confidence.
137. There is, however, underachievement in some lessons. Where this occurs in Year 9, it is because of weaknesses in teaching and the planning for the systematic development of skills and techniques associated with 'Control Technology', which is not effective. Pupils reach Year 9 with weak skills in this area. Although planning makes reference to the National Key Stage 3 ICT Strategy, it does not fully embrace it and the strengths of the Strategy are not always reflected in teaching.
138. Some underachievement arises in Year 11 because expectations are not always high enough. This occurs when there is an absence of planning to meet the needs of individuals in lessons, particularly those of the more able and those with special educational needs. However, pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress with the tasks set. Pupils from ethnic minorities make progress comparable to their peers. The school has identified the underachievement of boys as an issue, as reflected in examination results. In lessons, however, boys make progress which is comparable to that of girls.

139. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to good. Overall it is satisfactory. In those lessons where there is unsatisfactory teaching, for example in a Year 9 class when pupils are flowcharting a control process, teaching does not use ongoing assessment or knowledge of what pupils learnt previously to plan effectively. Assessment in lessons is not used to respond effectively to pupils' needs. Pupils' work, however, shows that there are some very effective practices in marking in Year 7 and 8. Work is marked thoroughly and pupils are given suggestions about how they might improve their work. Pupils act upon this advice. This practice is less evident in Year 9. Year 11 pupils spend too long working on tasks where understanding is established quickly. For example, when learning about encryption they spend too much time on coding and decoding text manually and not enough time on the implications for communications technology. Explanation of what they need to do next is not clear. When they work on the implications of ICT for society, their focus is limited to what they already know, rather than researching, identifying and discussing the broader issues.
140. Where teaching is good, the learning objective is clear and understood by the pupils. Teaching helps pupils to reflect on how they might improve their work. The teacher is enthusiastic about the subject and gets a good response from pupils; for example, when designing a graphical interface for a computer application.
141. The attitude and behaviour of pupils is satisfactory. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils become restless.
142. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teaching is monitored and work scrutinised. There is a discrete ICT development plan and progress has been made in relation to the objectives. There is a detailed plan to progress the use of ICT in teaching and learning across the curriculum. Leadership is not complacent about standards and has put in place measures to respond to falling standards at GCSE. However, leadership has been unsatisfactory in identifying weaknesses in teaching and in ensuring a vigorous response to the National Strategy. Despite these weaknesses, the leadership has established a good departmental ethos and has the capacity to make and sustain improvements. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

143. Where ICT is used across the curriculum, it is observed to have a satisfactory impact on teaching and learning. Overall, however, the opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their learning are unsatisfactory. The use of the electronic whiteboards is often unambitious. Art and design is only making limited provision for and the use of ICT. The music department is at the early stages of the implementation of ICT but has been successful in introducing the use of keyboards. Other subjects such as English, modern foreign languages, science, geography, history, design and technology and physical education are under-using the potential of ICT. Progress in developing ICT across the curriculum since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some good or better teaching.

- Attitudes are good and pupils are willing to work.
- Not all lessons challenge and stretch all ability levels.
- Inefficient use is made of ICT.

Commentary

144. Standards are below national averages. In 2004, the number of A* - C grades at GCSE was below the national averages, as were the results for 2003. Results were slightly higher in 2004 although the number taking the examination was small. Boys' results were slightly higher than those of girls, which is the opposite to the previous year.
145. In lessons and from an analysis of pupils' work, standards at the end of Year 9 are seen to be below the national average. Pupils of all abilities achieve equally well and demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the geographical processes and their impact on the environment. Pupils are mainly engaged with activities to support their learning but are hampered by their weak literacy skills at times. Opportunities to improve writing are limited to short sentences, however they are helped by the emphasis at times on the use of key words. Pupils of differing abilities could benefit from work that addresses their individual needs. Pupils are working at below national averages at the end of Year 11. This represents satisfactory achievement when compared with pupil attainment on entry and, for some, relatively weak geographical skills when they enter the school. Pupils make sufficient progress in their geographic knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. They are able to select the appropriate graphs for their fieldwork and gain a sufficient understanding of hurricanes. Pupils generally speak well and listen to their teachers and each other when grouped in pairs.
146. Pupils with special educational needs make sufficient progress but benefit when they have support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress towards their targets. The achievement of girls is higher than that of the boys. Gifted and talented pupils progress is unsatisfactory because of a lack of extension work.
147. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good or better, and learning is satisfactory. While lessons have learning objectives, they are not always sufficient to show how the topic is to be explored. The limited teaching styles employed lead to a similar number of types of activity. Questioning, while encouraging pupils to give extended answers, does not involve all. The use of computers by pupils with research work is underdeveloped but the use of interactive whiteboards by teachers is developing. Assessment for learning is still at an early stage of development and marking does not always help pupils to improve. There are incidents of low level misbehaviour linked to the lack of a clearly structured behaviour strategy.
148. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The new head of department has a clear vision and direction of where the department needs to go after an unsettling period of staff changes. Schemes of work are in place but require review, as does an assessment of the provision of fieldwork. Monitoring is not as extensive as it needs to be to ensure it is effective and good practice is shared. The subject needs to return to the key issues of the last report and, together with those in the present one, construct a development plan for the future. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some of the resources used are good and allow pupils to enhance their thinking.
- Behaviour is generally good, allowing pupils to progress.
- Marking does not give pupils sufficient information to help them improve.
- More challenge and pace are needed to raise standards.
- Teaching and learning strategies lack variety and excitement.
- Leadership is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

149. In 2004, results dipped and, like 2003, were below the level of national averages. The girls' results were better than those of boys.
150. Pupils enter the school with varied historical skills that are at a level below national expectations. Although they maintain sufficient progress as they progress through the school, by the end of Year 9, standards are still below national expectations. Pupil achievement relative to what they have attained previously is satisfactory. Most pupils have sufficient knowledge but are not always fully aware of how events fit in over time. Most pupils can handle source material but evidence of interpretation and bias is not much in evidence. Pupils can analyse sufficiently from the sources they are given and discuss historical issues with their teacher and their peers. Higher-attaining pupils can, when given the opportunity, write well but need the further challenge that extension work brings. Middle- and lower-ability pupils make some progress in their writing. Literacy skills and the use of historical language are also progressing.
151. Pupils are working below the national average by the end of Year 11. Their achievement relative to standards at the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. While pupils can handle source material sufficiently, their understanding of events over time is not so well developed. They have sufficiently developed their note-taking skills, which inform their written work, particularly in extended study work.
152. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching styles, although narrow in range, do have some variety of activities. While the planning of lessons includes appropriate learning objectives, there is little evidence of matching work to the levels of pupils with differing abilities. ICT is little used and marking is more for literacy than historical skills. There are examples of learning independently in pairs but the teachers need to consider whether work and text meet the needs of the different abilities in some groups. Pupils with special educational needs make sufficient progress when supported by teaching assistants. Behaviour is generally good which means there are few interruptions to the lesson.
153. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory and management is satisfactory. Vision and direction are necessary to move the subject forward and increase the numbers who want to study history in Years 10 and 11. A scheme of work is in place and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and GCSE exam board. The history department uses historical visits, i.e. to the First World War battlefields, to extend what is learnt in the classroom but the subject could well consider other extra-curricular activities to further enhance the subject. The use of the school's policy on Assessment for Learning is not well used to track pupil progress. While accommodation is satisfactory opportunities to celebrate pupils' work by displays are not much in evidence. Monitoring is in place but is having limited effect. The subject has dealt with

some of the issues in the last inspection report but there are still others that are ongoing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision.
- Some teaching is very good; well-planned, good pace and a good range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils' engagement with learning is good.
- The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are addressed.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of good teaching.
- Attainment levels have risen over the last four years.
- Standards across different teaching groups in Years 10 and 11 vary too much.

Commentary

154. Standards attained in religious education are average overall. Standards in GCSE examinations were above the national average in 2004. A third of the candidates attained the higher grade A*-A; these results are well above average. There has been a rising trend of results in the subject since 2000. Girls have performed much better than boys overall. Good strategies to raise boys' achievement are not in consistent use across the department. Standards at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory and at the standards that would be expected nationally. At the end of Year 11 they are above average. Pupils' achievement throughout Years 7-11 is satisfactory and in Years 10 and 11 is good.
155. Teaching and learning in religious education are good across Years 7-11. In Years 7-9, pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers and non-specialist teachers are well supported. All lessons are well planned and the best lessons are pacy, with very good choice of teaching strategies and resources. For example, the provision of opportunities for personal thought and reflection not only enhances the development of religious study skills but those in spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC) and citizenship as well. In particular, the good choice by the teacher of sensitive and controversial subject matter helps stimulate high-order thinking about issues related to everyday life and beyond. The pupils are 'expected to be mature' and they rise to the challenge of these high expectations to discuss in a mature way and behave very well. The quality of pupils' learning could be further improved by the more effective and consistent use of assessment to sufficiently inform them about what they should do to improve.
156. In Years 10 and 11, the emphasis on discussion is appropriate and engages pupils in learning. Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations and discuss sensitive and controversial issues in a mature way. For example, photographs of the Holocaust and a video clip about euthanasia provided very good learning opportunities through discussion. The pace and variety of activities in lessons are good, ensuring that learning objectives are met. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good.
157. Leadership of the department is very good and management is good. Management of the department has faced challenges because of the number of new and non-specialist appointments. As a consequence, training and support for new and non-specialist teachers need to continue with a focus on the effective use of the most appropriate specialist subject-focused resources. This involves making sure that wide use is made of the very good features of teaching and learning provided by experienced specialist teachers.

158. Since the previous inspection of the school, provision in religious education has been good. The status of religious education has risen and good progress has been made.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The provision of design and technology in the school is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no head of department to lead and manage design and technology.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average in food technology and graphic products but are very low in resistant materials.
- Resources are poor in graphic products and in resistant materials and pupils often have to supply their own materials.
- Teaching is good in food technology and in graphic products but is unsatisfactory in resistant materials.

Commentary

159. In the 2004 GCSE examination, results were above national averages. Results were well above national averages in food technology and graphic products but were well below average in resistant materials. These results reflect the standards in lessons and work of pupils in Year 11.
160. The 2004 teacher assessments for the end-of-Year 9 performance in design and technology gave levels that were below national averages. Although the assessments of teachers of food technology were above national averages, they were below in resistant materials. This meant that the aggregated levels of all the areas of design and technology were below national averages. Standards seen in the classroom and workshop are overall in line with national expectations.
161. Year 9 pupils are attaining above-average standards in food technology. They enter the school in Year 7 with few skills and little knowledge of this area of the curriculum and so achievement is good. Their booklets give a clear record of the good progress they make through the design process, for example, when they research and develop healthy sandwiches. In the workroom they demonstrate sound practical skills making products for young children. They use sensory analysis and other procedures effectively to research their designs. In resistant materials there is little evidence of progress in pupils' folders. Pupils working in this materials area do not receive a systematic programme of skills development and standards are weak.
162. In Year 11 in food technology, pupils attain above-average standards, for example, evaluating their design ideas against the specifications for their products. Their folders provide effective records of good achievement across the range of knowledge, understanding and skills required by their course.
163. In graphic products, the higher-attaining students make very good use of photographs in their research into the contexts they choose for their projects. This research is well thought out and the findings are well presented. They evaluate their designs well. More use could be made of rough sketching to design.

164. Following severe disruption in teaching and learning caused by high staff turnover, pupils in the Year 11 resistant materials course have made poor progress over their course. Folders are not near completion and project work is unadventurous and of poor quality.
165. Teaching is variable but is good overall. In food technology there is good planning and lessons are purposeful, giving good direction to learning. There is good pace to practical lessons. These are well structured, following the nationally recommended pattern of introduction, main activity and a closing session that recaps on what has been achieved and pointing to next steps. Literacy is well promoted through display and careful use of question and answer and the use of writing frames and guidance, for example, for evaluations. Numeracy is taught well with worksheets, for instance, taking pupils through steps for calculation of costs of their recipes.
166. The best teaching in graphic products makes good use of exemplar materials to share good, achievable practice with pupils. The teacher is an enthusiast who carries his pupils along with him. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy the work and are keen to achieve well. He sets high standards that pupils strive to attain.
167. The teaching of resistant materials is unsatisfactory overall. This is due to the lack of permanent qualified staffing of this area. Although teachers who teach resistant materials work hard to ensure their pupils achieve well, there is no head of department to support them. Unlike the other areas, schemes of work are in outline only and provide no support for teachers. This has led in the past to wastage of materials as successive temporary teachers chop and change the curriculum.
168. The leadership and management of design and technology are unsatisfactory. Food technology and graphic products have produced very good results over several years but there is no head of department to manage all subjects and to monitor and share good practice. There are huge gaps in the provision of schemes of work for resistant materials. Successive temporary teachers and teachers new to the resistant materials area have received little support and guidance. There has been some observation of teaching but this has been of experienced teachers and has neglected teachers who may need expert input to improve their teaching. The lack of a head of department has also led to assessment records being poor for resistant materials. There is no one to plan for the department or to evaluate both existing and potential courses to suit the school's pupils. ICT is underused in folder work and there is no head of department to press for increased facilities.
169. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards have declined and the management of the subject is now unsatisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- The department works well as a team.
- The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is good in the majority of lessons.

- Pupils' behaviour and attitude to the subject are very good.
- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- There is limited provision for and use of ICT.
- There is no planned programme for trips and visits.

Commentary

170. Results at GCSE were well above average in 2004. Current standards at the end of Year 9 are above national expectations and are well above average at the end of Year 11. Overall achievement is very good, with pupils progressing very well from low standards on entry to Year 7. Some pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well. As a result of good teaching there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
171. The majority of pupils show good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of art techniques. A very good balance is achieved between large and small scale work, ceramics, sculpture and painting. In addition, as a result of the systematic teaching of literacy skills, for example, in the use of storyboards, pupils read, write and speak confidently about their work and that of the wide range of artists they study. Practical skills are developed well and pupils enthusiastically take part in lessons. A 15-year-old pupil with special educational needs produced very impressive work based on movement in sport. Pupils with English as an additional language are integrated very well and make good progress. A very good example is the mosaic work produced by a pupil recently arrived from Turkey. Design folders and sketchbooks are very well used and presented with research evidence that contains much first hand material. Because of the high expectations of the staff, presentation skills are of a very good standard, with excellent written support material and annotations. Painting is a strength of the department, although many pupils use clay and modelling materials with confidence and skill. Drawing for making is well taught, mainly because of the very good use made of demonstrations and group work. A Year 10 group attained good results in a portraiture project looking at friends and family. The studios are spacious and bright and well suited to the range of work offered and have a significant effect on the standard and quality of work produced.
172. Although there are some shortcomings in lesson planning, teaching and learning are good. Pupils concentrate well on their work and the pace of lessons is good. Schemes of work are well prepared, although lesson plans are not always clear. Learning objectives are sometimes confused with aims. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and lessons are planned to meet the needs of all pupils with varying levels of attainment, including those who are gifted and talented who are not making sufficient progress. In Years 7 to 9, pupils develop practical skills well and have good design awareness and understand well the range of mediums available. Consistent class management across the department ensures that time is not wasted on maintaining order. Pupils behave and listen well. Very good teaching of observational drawing ensures that skills are taught systematically across all areas, for example, in a Year 8 lesson on the concept of Cubist composition. Lessons are very productive, with many pupils making rapid progress.
173. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This is particularly evident in the giving out and collecting in of materials. Many pupils visit the art rooms at break, lunch and after school to carry on with their work or to take part in the "Mural Club" run by the art technician. The work of the well qualified technician is an asset both to the school and the department. It makes a significant contribution to the relationships between pupils and staff and is a factor in the improving standards in the subject.

174. Leadership and management are good. The head of department runs the department well on a day-to-day basis and has good strategic vision. Joint planning takes place with all the staff, who work very well as a team. Assessment procedures are good, as are the monitoring and tracking of pupils across year groups. Internal standardisation of levels and grades takes place, ensuring that pupils are informed about their progress and levels of attainment. Accommodation is good but resources for ICT are unsatisfactory. All health and safety issues have been addressed.
175. Improvement since last inspection has been good. Although results at GCSE have slightly declined, the number of pupils achieving A* grades has increased. Progress has been made in the teaching of literacy, in line with the Key Stage 3 strategy and new courses have been developed. This is starting to have an effect on teaching and learning. The staff contribute well to the work of other departments, for example in the teaching of graphics in design and technology. It is an improving department where the pupils enjoy their art and do well.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning.
- Positive pupil attitudes towards the subject.
- Achievement is good.

Commentary

176. Standards are above average. Attainment at GCSE grades A* to C exceeds national averages and has improved between 2003 and 2004, although girls perform slightly below average. The percentage of pupils attaining GCSE A*-G grades is above average. In recent years, drama GCSE results are amongst the highest compared with other subjects at the school.
177. Teaching and learning are good. This is because there are clear learning objectives, effective classroom management and frequent use of small group work followed by plenary sessions to establish progress in learning being made by pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy drama and speak with enthusiasm about the active learning opportunities and co-operative working in small groups.
178. Achievement is good and pupils make good progress in their learning in lessons. Significant numbers of pupils proceed to the sixth form to pursue Advanced Level drama and/or Performance Studies. Learning is enhanced by the range of theatre visits, links with a local school for pupils with learning difficulties and regular school productions, where sixth form drama students take a leading role. A well supported lower school drama club, run with help from sixth formers, was established in 2004.
179. The department is led with energy and enthusiasm by joint heads of subject who have clear development priorities and a good appreciation of the department's strengths and weaknesses. Accommodation is good with two specialist drama studios, although one is in need of some refurbishment.

180. The department has made good progress since the last inspection in 1999, particularly with regard to pupil attainment and the range of curriculum on offer.

Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Successful introduction of keyboards as a teaching resource.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

181. In Years 7-9, standards are below national expectations. In Year 7, all pupils start to develop the basic musical skills of rhythm and melody. The majority of pupils can feel the steady beat of an automatic backing track on a keyboard but only a few pupils are able to perform a rhythm pattern in time with the backing track. In Year 8, pupils are introduced to melody writing using three different chords. Some pupils are able to play the keyboard using both hands. Individual higher-achieving pupils can play chords with the left hand and add a very simple melody they have invented in the right hand. Overall in Years 7-9, achievement is unsatisfactory. There is no GCSE music group.
182. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The general learning objectives for each lesson are planned but there is no suitable work provided to support specific groups of pupils, for example, those who find the work difficult and those higher-ability pupils who complete the work ahead of others. The disruptive and negative behaviour of some pupils is poorly managed and, in general, low-level efforts are not challenged. Too many pupils are unmotivated and talk too much throughout music lessons, therefore, too many pupils are making insufficient progress. Pupils are unaware of the standards required in music and have no specific criteria against which they can judge the success of a composition or a performance.
183. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Leadership and management of music in the school remain unsatisfactory. The school has a scheme of work and a good subject handbook. There is a clear line management structure and performance management is in place, but the impact upon departmental monitoring and evaluation has been very limited. Some progress has been made towards an assessment strategy and there is a Year 7 assessment on entry into the school. However, no composing or performing work in Years 7-9 is recorded and the department currently has no musical evidence base to support its monitoring and development of standards.
184. The head of department has a clear vision for ICT which, although in its very early stages of implementation, could become a strong feature of the subject. Part of this has involved the successful implementation of keyboards as a key feature of the curriculum.

185. The department is involved in an annual joint musical production with other departments but offers no other opportunity for curriculum enrichment. Since the previous inspection the department has stopped all such opportunities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in all year groups.
- Attainment in GCSE dance is above average.
- PE is a fully inclusive department – all pupils achieve well and have full access to all activities.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Assessment for learning is good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The use of ICT is under-developed.

Commentary

186. Pupils enter the school with standards that are below the national average. They possess a variety of skill levels on entry, but by the end of Year 9, the vast majority of pupils are working at the levels expected nationally. This represents good achievement. Pupils are applying skills with accuracy, precision and control whilst developing technical and tactical awareness. A few pupils lack co-ordination in performing basic physical skills. Boys attain slightly better than girls.
187. The accurate application of skill and well developed knowledge and understanding of different sports transfers into Years 10 and 11. Standards in statutory PE lessons are slightly above national expectations. This shows good achievement. In GCSE lessons, standards are at the level expected nationally. In 2004, GCSE results were below the national average. However, the figure does reflect the ability and previous achievements of the pupils and still accounted for many pupils' best exam grade. Girls achieved the higher grades. In GCSE dance, results were above average in 2004. This maintains the improving trend in academic and examination success.
188. Throughout Years 7-11, all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and the gifted and talented pupils. This reflects a fully inclusive department. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how different types of exercise can contribute to their fitness and health. Many pupils can perform and lead warm ups and develop a basic understanding of anatomy and physiology.
189. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good features, and learning is good. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and the department has established this by promoting good progress along with enjoyment and success for all pupils. Very good subject knowledge, high expectation and challenge and very good engagement and encouragement of pupils are the main ingredients for making the teaching and learning good. The department adopts teaching styles appropriate to the pupils' levels of attainment and sets challenging tasks. Teachers who are good role models have very good and mutually respectful relationships with their pupils. This produces lessons of very high productivity and pace.

190. Many pupils are able to observe and analyse performance. They are developing independent and enquiring minds, however, the pupils do not have an awareness and understanding of the assessment criteria in order to self assess and set themselves and others targets for improvement. The under-development of ICT is restricting the learning environment, particularly the analysis of skill and movement for GCSE students. Assessment for learning is good. Procedures are thorough, reflect learning objectives and are used well to respond to individual need. This is particularly evident in the marking of GCSE exercise books.
191. Curriculum provision meets statutory requirements, although time allocation is below the national recommendation. A very good programme of intra- and extra-curricular sporting activities, including recreational activities for the sixth form and whole-school performances in dance, takes place. This enhances the pupils' opportunities for participation in sport. A number of pupils go on to gain a range of representative honours, including at county and national level.
192. There is strong leadership and management of the department. Teachers form a committed team and are determined to maintain high standards. They have high aspirations for their pupils. A strong departmental identity has ensured that all issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Improvement overall since the last inspection has been good. The department has the determination and capacity to raise standards further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are given an opportunity to take part in the School Council and the democratic election of its members.
- Sixth form students participate very responsibly in school and community activities.
- Planning for the implementation of citizenship across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- The school cannot ensure pupils in Years 7-11 receive their entitlement.
- The school does not comply with the legal requirement to report attainment to parents.

Commentary

193. Teaching of citizenship is through six 'whole school' days and in subject lessons. One example of good practice, to develop pupils' understanding in challenging injustice and stereotypes, was seen as part of a drama project on being Jewish in Nazi times. This project is undertaken throughout the school. In a Year 10 science lesson, two pupils agreed to be persecuted by their teacher, who made them stand throughout the lesson and told them off for no apparent reason. As a result, all the pupils gained a full understanding of how it felt to be

treated unfairly. Apart from this, no teaching of citizenship was seen. Examination of pupils' books shows that, by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, the standard of work and their progress are below expectations.

194. Many pupils participate in a range of activities which promote their skills of participation and responsible action. Sixth form students provide a range of support to younger pupils, for example, through 'Talking in Confidence' and in assisting with their reading. The School Council gives all pupils an opportunity to take part in an election to understand the importance of voting and the key characteristics of the electoral system. However, the involvement of each pupil is not monitored, nor assessed nor reported to parents. The school has no way of ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the citizenship curriculum. The National Curriculum for citizenship requires teachers to ensure that pupils gain the knowledge to become informed citizens and that pupils are taught to apply their understanding through the development of their skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action.
195. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The head of department has made limited progress in the implementation of national curriculum requirements. However, she has received no training and has insufficient time to fulfil this responsibility. The school's audit has not yet been completed by subject teachers to show an adequate range of opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of citizenship across the school. Very few teachers identify citizenship explicitly in their teaching.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	2	50.0	78.3	0.0	21.6	15.0	28.5
Biology	8	62.5	63.5	0.0	10.4	15.0	19.8
Business studies	2	100.0	75.3	50.0	15.4	45.0	25.7
Chemistry	3	66.7	70.3	0.0	13.2	13.3	33.0
Communication studies	7	85.7	87.2	14.3	24.9	31.4	32.8
Drama	2	100.0	86.6	0.0	19.8	35.0	30.9
English literature	4	75.0	86.2	0.0	17.4	20.0	29.7
French	5	80.0	79.8	0.0	19.4	24.0	28.2
Design and technology	4	75.0	72.6	0.0	13.9	15.0	24.3
Geography	0	n/a	75.5	n/a	20.4	n/a	27.0
German	0	n/a	81.6	n/a	18.8	n/a	28.8
History	0	n/a	82.2	n/a	20.8	n/a	29.2
Information and communication technology	3	100.0	66.6	0.0	8.8	20.0	20.6
Mathematics	1	100.0	59.9	0.0	14.1	20.0	20.5
Other languages	1	100.0	82.5	0.0	47.7	40.0	37.8
Other social studies	5	80.0	67.8	0.0	15.1	26.0	23.2
Physics	3	0.0	66.4	0.0	14.8	0.0	22.4
Religious education	1	100.0	82.2	100.0	26.1	60.0	31.2
Sociology	6	33.3	72.1	0.0	19.6	11.7	25.9
Sports/PE studies	4	25.0	72.2	0.0	11.8	5.0	22.8

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	10	90.0	98.3	40.0	50.2	78.0	87.1
Biology	6	100.0	96.6	50.0	40.0	76.7	79.3
Business studies	10	100.0	98.9	10.0	39.4	72.0	81.8
Chemistry	4	100.0	97.7	25.0	50.0	70.0	85.7
Communication studies	6	66.7	99.2	0.0	40.4	43.3	83.5
Drama	9	100.0	99.6	11.1	42.8	71.1	85.1
English literature	15	100.0	99.4	3.3	44.9	77.3	85.5
French	5	100.0	99.0	60.0	53.1	100.0	88.9
Design and technology	4	75.0	97.8	0.0	35.0	50.0	77.9
Geography	9	66.7	98.8	11.1	46.4	48.9	85.2
German	0	n/a	98.6	n/a	49.6	n/a	86.3
History	0	n/a	99.0	n/a	45.6	n/a	85.1
Information and communication technology	18	94.4	96.3	5.6	95.7	64.4	71.1
Mathematics	8	87.5	96.8	50.0	56.6	82.5	89.5
Other social studies	8	100.0	97.4	37.5	42.5	85.0	81.6
Physics	2	100.0	96.7	0.0	45.3	60.0	82.6
Sociology	9	100.0	98.5	33.3	45.3	77.8	84.6
Sport/PE studies	11	72.7	97.8	0.0	30.9	36.4	75.4
VCE Business	1	100.0	93.3	0.0	29.4	60.0	72.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was inspected and modern foreign languages was sampled. In AS modern foreign languages, standards are above average and achievement, teaching and learning are good. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

English

Provision in English in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the last inspection, a broader curriculum offer has been made available.
- Teachers are experienced and provide direction to students.
- Students are generally aware of their target grades and how to achieve or exceed their targets.
- Results are not high enough in external examinations.

- More able students should be stretched further to enhance higher-level skills such as analysis, independent research and evaluation.

Commentary

196. Standards are average overall. Most students enter the sixth form with GCSE attainment in line with national standards, although the group following the new English language and literature A-level course in 2004-05 are of below-average ability. As the numbers entered for post-16 examinations in recent years have been small it is difficult to make a precise judgement about standards. There have, however, been year-on-year fluctuations against national averages: well above in 2002, followed by well below in 2003, with a marginal improvement in 2004 but still below average. Although standards are average overall, they are well below average on the new AS course.
197. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory. Teachers are experienced, have sound subject knowledge and make close reference to the examination board requirements to give direction to students. Written work produced by students generally shows care and effort but less able students lack fluency and tend to use some informal language when Standard English is required. Work is carefully marked and usually graded. Teachers provide helpful feedback to students on how to improve their performance. Students spoken to had a good appreciation of their current and projected grade levels. Many had taken advantage of module re-sit opportunities and almost all had secured improved grades in their AS levels. Some lessons were too teacher-led, with students having insufficient opportunities to develop independent learning skills. In particular, more able students should be stretched so that they develop higher-level skills such as analysis, independent research and evaluation. Most students' achievement is satisfactory, with Year 13 students showing evidence of greater insight into texts and accuracy in their written work.
198. Since the last inspection, standards are broadly similar though there has been improvement in the curriculum offer with the current availability of two English A-level courses, plus media studies and opportunities to re-take GCSE English. Overall improvement has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and communicate this well to their students who, as a result, are highly motivated and make good progress.
- Good teaching that is both interesting and rigorous in both the A-level and resit GCSE courses.
- Very good relationships between students and their teachers.
- Teachers do not assess students' work frequently enough; they do not set regular, challenging targets; and comments in students' folders do not always indicate how students' work could be improved.

Commentary

199. Mathematics is taught well in the sixth form. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and inspire their students to learn. They encourage students to work accurately and logically, insisting that written work is presented neatly using standard, recognised protocols and methods, and that diagrams are drawn clearly and

accurately. Teachers have high expectations of their students, whose written work indicates a clarity of thinking that reflects the clear, rigorous teaching received.

200. Students make good progress in mathematics and achieve well. Last year, four of the nine students who were entered for A-level gained an A grade. These were very good results and reflected the good progress that had been made since these students took their GCSE examinations. Standards have improved since the last inspection. They are now above average.
201. Teachers enjoy good relationships with their students and work hard to encourage all of them to do their best and to believe that they can succeed. Lessons are characterised by good pace, academic rigour and mutual respect. They contain a variety of challenges and activities, some of which require students to work together collaboratively. They do this well.
202. Students are not only taught to meet their examination requirements, of which teachers have a very good understanding, they are also encouraged to appreciate the beauty of mathematical proof in pure mathematics and, to some extent, to relate the statistical and mechanical components of the course to everyday situations. Students would benefit if this could be developed further and if they are encouraged to think conceptually about open-ended investigations and to find a number of different ways of solving the same problem.
203. Students' folders contain many exercises which give them much practice in tackling examination questions. Most carefully annotate their work in order to make revision for examinations easier. By contrast, a few students do not annotate their work and even omit the questions they are answering, thus rendering their folders of little use for revision purposes.
204. Students are required to take a number of tests throughout their course; these are often in the form of past papers. These are marked thoroughly by the teachers, with a grade being given, although teachers do not always indicate how students could improve their work.
205. The overall improvement in the provision for post-16 mathematics since the last inspection has been good in recent years. Accommodation and resources are adequate. The department is well managed and the team of teachers work together harmoniously and supportively; they are currently developing a new scheme of work to support the recently introduced A-level examination course. They are very generous in giving of their own time to help students with their work.

EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

Excellent sixth form teaching inspires students to consider the nature of truth whilst investigating trigonometric identities.

In a Year 13 mathematics lesson, students were learning about proof, using trigonometric identities. The teacher varied the content of the lesson and was careful to check the understanding of all pupils as the lesson progressed. At one point a student was asked to demonstrate her work on radians to the other members of the group. This she did with confidence and clarity. The teacher spoke enthusiastically and eloquently about the beauty of proof and read from 'The Music of the Primes'. The students reflected upon mankind's search for truth; the eternal nature of mathematical truth; and the absoluteness of proof. The students were spellbound, and then quietly and seriously set about investigating a trigonometric identity. The teacher's gentle approach masked the depth of challenge and pace of her demands on the students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

206. Students studying science subjects generally have a satisfactory grasp of the mathematical skills and concepts necessary. Those studying other subjects have few opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding further, although most have the skills necessary to cope with the mathematical demands of their courses.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and learning resources are deployed well.
- Students have insufficient opportunities in class to learn independently.
- Teachers have very good knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject.

Commentary

207. 2003 A-level and AS-level results were just below national averages. There has been a 100 per cent pass rate over the past years, but in 2003 there were fewer top grades than were attained nationally. In 2004 all students gained a pass at A-level, with half of them achieving the highest grades. These results are the same as national averages. Standards in lessons are average.
208. Achievement in lessons is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well, as do those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Students with special educational needs are well catered for and achieve well. There is an open policy on admission qualifications, with a third of students currently studying biology having achieved grade C at GCSE science. The department is proud of the achievement of many of their students who have chosen to study biological sciences at university.
209. Teaching is good and this promotes good learning. Teachers have very good command of their subject and they plan their lessons well. They engage and encourage the students well by establishing good relationships. Most teachers have very effective teaching styles that suit the needs of the students but there are insufficient opportunities for independent study because students are too reliant on the teacher. Homework is used well to reinforce and promote learning. Students' acquisition of ICT skills is underdeveloped; they make little use of spreadsheets, and lack of data projectors limits good learning. Assessment of students' work is good.
210. Leadership and management are good. The biology department is well organised and pro-active in managing improvements. Teachers are matched well to the lessons they teach. There are regular reviews of the department's performance and effective action is taken to improve. The team works well together and regularly meets to share ideas for improving the learning experience for students. There is good monitoring of students' performance in tests.

211. Laboratory facilities are satisfactory. However, there are few data projectors or other technical aids, which limits the pace and innovation that can take place within these rooms. Despite the age of most of the laboratory resources, they are satisfactory because they are managed well by the highly valued team of competent technicians.
212. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Examination pass rates have risen and there is now consistently good teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision of ICT in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have recently improved and are now in line with national averages.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is very popular in the school and there is a high number of entries in both the AS and A-level courses.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

213. In the 2004 A2 examinations, candidates gained grades that were below national averages. These results show an improvement on the previous year. The number of students doing ICT has trebled over the last few years. Although there were staffing difficulties in the first years of growth that resulted in a decline in standards, these have now been overcome. Teachers of ICT courses in the sixth form are suitably qualified and have between them a range of relevant experience.
214. The current Year 13 students are attaining standards that are around the national average. They have already attained results that are average in their 2004 AS examinations and are set to repeat this in A2. Students in Year 13 attain satisfactory standards in a range of practical activities such as project planning. Students have an adequate grasp of organisational structures and ways in which ICT contributes to organisations through management information systems. They have a satisfactory understanding of relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act. Their projects feature clear descriptions of problems to be solved using ICT and well considered explanations of how IT can benefit their chosen organisation. Students have a sound understanding of ways in which the software applications they choose can improve processes and procedures. Research is full and informative and they gain a sound understanding of clients' needs.
215. In the AS course students are attaining average standards. They demonstrate satisfactory understanding of ways in which ICT can be used to benefit, for example, people with special educational needs. Students have a sound knowledge of the more widely used applications of ICT in industry and commerce. They know about ways in which criminal elements use ICT for crimes such as fraud.
216. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and are delivered at pace. Good use is made of new technology to engage and motivate students. Relationships are well developed and this helps to engage and maintain students' interest. Teachers choose good topical examples to gain attention. They set up good, stimulating

activities, including group work, group presentations, discussion and debate. This makes lessons more interesting and effective and promotes students' literacy levels.

217. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a clear vision for the development of the subject in the school. His evident enthusiasm and commitment help to develop the relationships that have created an effective team. He has analysed the factors that have depressed results in previous years and the measures he is putting into place are already beginning to improve performance.

218. Improvement since last inspection is good. The subject is now the most popular in the sixth form and is taught by a stable and well qualified team of teachers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

219. The provision of ICT in the sixth form is good. Teaching and learning are good and standards are in line with national averages and are improving.

HUMANITIES

Geography was inspected. A-level sociology, AS philosophy and GCSE law, were sampled. Standards in sociology and law are average and achievement, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In AS philosophy, standards are above average and achievement, teaching and learning are good. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, based on good subject knowledge.
- Students respond well to innovative teaching.
- Good quality fieldwork enhances what pupils learn.
- Assessment data allows tracking of students' performance and should help in raising standards.

Commentary

220. In 2004, as in 2003, Advanced Level results were well below the national average. The cohort is too small to make any meaningful comparisons.

221. Evidence in the scrutiny of students' work and the observation of lessons shows that standards are below average. Students demonstrate adequate knowledge of the areas they are studying and an understanding of the physical processes and their effect on the environment. This is particularly evident in the work on periglacial landforms. The higher-attaining students can display their geographical knowledge and understanding through their discussion with their teachers.

222. Achievement is satisfactory. Students are building well on their geographical knowledge at GCSE. They have deeper understanding of the processes involved in a geographical study and write good notes on what they have learnt. Opportunities are given for independent learning, however, more would help them to become effective learners. Students could also benefit from being able to enhance their learning by the facilities local universities may provide.
223. Teaching is good. Teachers plan well. Questioning is often skilful and leads to some good discussions but in some groups this proves difficult owing to the passive nature of the class. Relationships are good and much is expected of students and most live up to it. Work is marked regularly with some useful comments at length.
224. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new head of department has a clear vision. Whilst the scheme of work is in place, a development plan is not, and the department's recent history of staff changes has not helped. Assessment is improving to inform students' progress. The use of fieldwork is helping students in their understanding of parts of the curriculum. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching shows very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm.
- Teaching promotes very positive responses from the students and ensures the inclusion of the less able.
- Assessment and marking are used well to raise achievement and motivation.
- The progress and achievement made by students is above that expected by their entry grades.
- Teaching needs to be more challenging of the more and most able students.
- The head of department is also head of department of another subject.

Commentary

225. Standards in examination results are above average, although the most recent results match national trends. This is due to the more mixed ability nature of the intake group. There is still a 100 per cent pass rate but the number of students achieving A/B grades is disappointing.
226. Achievement is good. From the work seen within lessons, student files and class work, it is above that expected nationally. The students' entry scores onto the course are low but they perform at or above the grades expected of them. The students show good progress over time, both within lessons and throughout the course.
227. Teaching is good. Good planning ensures that lessons are varied, inclusive and differentiated and also promote students' interest and engagement. Independent learning is encouraged and supported. There is good support for and involvement of the less able but the most able are insufficiently stretched and challenged. The use of and access to ICT and web-based resources are limited. Some teaching would be more stimulating and motivating if concepts were more explicitly related to the students' everyday life. Greater emphasis on the promotion of critical analysis and evaluation of theories and research would better enable students to achieve at the higher grades.
228. Students' work indicates above-average standards in knowledge and understanding, and in note-taking and organisational, literacy and evaluative skills. They can work both

independently and in small groups where their reading, discursive and listening skills are well developed.

229. Year 12 students show a firm grasp of knowledge, understanding and evaluation of key studies. They have a firm basis of knowledge, concepts and vocabulary for progression to Year 13. They show a deepening understanding of different research designs and specialist research vocabulary and demonstrate the ability to select a design for particular purposes and outcomes. They can design and carry out their own independent investigations. There is the beginning of knowledge regarding the use of statistics in research.
230. Year 13 students have a firm grasp of the main concepts of cognitive psychology, for example, memory, and know how these ideas are related to criminal behaviour and witness reliability. Students show a high awareness of the ethical bases and dilemmas of research. Good relationships and the relaxed atmosphere in the classroom allow for students to question and ask for help, which promotes an inclusive climate and, in particular, the achievement of the less able.
231. Students' response to learning and to the subject is very positive. They feel well supported towards maximising their achievement. Specific, achievement-related targets are set, of which students are aware, and which they find helpful in raising their achievement and motivation. Assessment and marking comments are used well to help raise expectations and achievement.
232. There is a well-stocked mini-library of key texts which adequately supports students' learning of the set syllabus. However, better access to and more frequent use of computers so that students could access journals, web-based articles and research would aid students' learning. Also, with the more extensive use of the interactive whiteboard, increased ICT use would serve to both extend and enhance the learning experience, allow for more varied teaching methods and also increase students' participation and independent learning.
233. The leadership and management are good. Policies and plans are well organised and rooted within a clear philosophy for the subject. There is good monitoring of student learning and effective use of assessment to promote learning and achievement. Since the department is made up of only one teacher, it is important that there are opportunities for meeting with others, both within the school and with other schools, for the development of good practice and peer support. The head of department of psychology is also the head of department of another subject and this inevitably restricts the time able to be spent on the full development of the subject within the school.
234. There is good improvement since the last inspection. Both results and the numbers taking the subject have risen and there is now a more appropriate syllabus and a new head of department.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	4
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	4
Overall standards achieved		4
Pupils' achievement	3	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		3
Attendance	5	5
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	3	4

How well pupils learn	3	4
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3

The leadership and management of the school		4
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		4
The leadership of other key staff	4	4
The effectiveness of management	5	5

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