

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CAMPION SCHOOL

Hornchurch

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102350

Headteacher: Mr John Johnson

Reporting inspector: Mr Anthony Shield
3569

Dates of inspection: 25th February – 1st March 2002

Inspection number: 190512

Full 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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Gender of pupils:	Boys (and girls in sixth form)
School address:	Wingletye lane Hornchurch Romford Essex
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Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Havering
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Robert Townsend
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3569	Mr Anthony Shield	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils' taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9970	Mr John Acaster	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11508	Mr Chris Griffin	Team inspector	English	
27719	Mr Paul Metcalf	Team inspector	Mathematics Equal Opportunities	
2711	Dr Alan Jarvis	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22491	Mrs Lorraine Small	Team inspector	Design Technology	
18638	Mr Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology	
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30427	Mrs Felicity Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History	
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15606	Mrs Christine Hill	Team inspector	Art Special Educational Needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Champion School is a Roman Catholic boys' comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 – 19, with girls in the sixth form. Situated in Hornchurch on the edge of the London Borough of Havering, it draws its pupils not just from Hornchurch, but from a wide surrounding area, including Essex, Thurrock and the London boroughs of Redbridge, and Barking and Dagenham. Most pupils come from socially advantaged homes, although not exclusively so, and some pupils come from more deprived backgrounds. At around three per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. There are 937 pupils on roll, with 184 in the sixth form, of whom 17 are girls. Attainment on entry is well above average in relation to other schools nationally, although the school loses some of its most able applicants to other schools in the area. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is consistently well below average, with just thirty-six pupils on the register of special educational needs, mostly with moderate learning difficulties; this represents less than four per cent of the school roll. Six have Statements of Special Educational Need for learning and behavioural problems. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, and there are limited numbers from other ethnic groups. There are no students in the main school with English as an additional language. There are also very few in the sixth form, and none is at an early stage of acquisition.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school in which consistently high standards are promoted by good teaching. All pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The headteacher, teachers and all other staff have created a climate of good relationships and behaviour in which pupils have the confidence to achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is a Christian community in which very good relationships and a sense of obligation to one another and the wider community are strongly promoted.
- Good, and sometimes inspirational, teaching, which results in well above average standards and high levels of commitment and motivation from the pupils.
- The very positive ethos for learning, which promotes very good attitudes and behaviour and a personal maturity amongst senior pupils.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, which enables them to succeed very well.
- The leadership of the headteacher and other senior staff, which focuses on promoting high standards of academic and personal development.

What could be improved

- The senior management structure and procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and provision.
- A more consistent approach to assessment in subjects and the use of assessment data to inform planning and to set targets for pupils.
- Access to and the use of information and communication technology in all subjects.
- The quality, adequacy and use of the accommodation.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall improvement since the last inspection in October 1996 has been good. Test and examination results at the end of Year 9, GCSE and A-level have all improved; improvements in GCSE performance in particular have been very marked. The quality of teaching has improved and in particular the percentage of very good and better teaching is higher than at the time of the last inspection. Key issues

from the previous inspection regarding financial planning and the curriculum have been satisfactorily addressed although improvements to the management structure remain an issue.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A*	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In 2001, the school's test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9, were well above the national average. Comparison with similar schools indicates that results were well above average in English, very high in mathematics and above average in science. The trend in the school's average points score for all subjects has improved in line with the improving national trend.

Eighty three per cent of pupils gained five or more A* to C grades in 2001. This was well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The average points score was also well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Progress in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 9, was very high in comparison with similar schools. Over the last three years, results have been consistently well above average and very high in comparison with boys' results nationally. The improving trend has been broadly in line with the national trend.

GCSE results in almost all subjects were significantly above average. Pupils in 2001 met the challenging targets set for them by the school. Those set for 2002 aim to maintain these high standards.

Results at AS/A-level and AVCE in 2001 were well above average and similar to results in previous years. Boys achieve slightly better than girls. Students did particularly well in mathematics, physical education, classical studies, computer studies and geography, and less well in chemistry, design technology, general studies, art and economics.

In work seen, the standards of pupils' work are at least above average in all subjects in Years 9, 11 and the sixth form. In English, mathematics, and science, standards are well above average. Pupils' achievements are good, given their attainment on entry.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and have very positive attitudes, which make a powerful contribution to their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Many pupils demonstrate thoughtful and sensitive behaviour both in and outside classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships amongst the whole school community is a strength. Ethnic minority pupils are well integrated. Sixth formers act with maturity and take their responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are average overall and the zero rate of unauthorised absence is well below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, including in the sixth form, and has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was observed and nearly one in three lessons was very good or excellent. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. In other subjects, teaching is consistently good and in most subjects it is sometimes inspirational. Teaching in design technology and physical education is very good throughout the school. Teaching is also very good in geography and music in Years 10 and 11.

High expectations, good relationships, good pace of learning and effective classroom management characterise much of the good teaching. Planning is usually effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, although there is a small number of lessons where high attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teaching of both literacy and numeracy is good. In almost all cases, the quality of learning matches the quality of teaching, helped by pupils' very good attitudes in lessons. Many pupils confidently take responsibility for their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum has good breadth and balance, and provides well for pupils' needs. The good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and music enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' individual needs are carefully and thoroughly assessed. Pupils are treated sensitively and they make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. A strong moral ethos underpins the work of the school and spiritual and moral issues are addressed in a number of subjects. Social development is actively encouraged and there are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, particularly in the sixth form. Cultural development is effectively promoted through good opportunities in music and art.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school ensures the welfare of its pupils well through effective pastoral support, provided by tutors and heads of year. Assessment systems are not well co-ordinated and there is a lack of consistency across different subjects.

Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's learning. The school's partnership with parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior managers are providing clear educational direction, and all staff are committed to maintain and improve standards. The management structure is not always effective in ensuring a rigorous implementation of policies.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are committed and hardworking and bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the school.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors its performance in external examinations carefully.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The budget is prudently managed, and best value principles are applied wherever possible.

Staffing and resources are satisfactory overall, but the accommodation is not adequate to meet the expanding needs of the school. The quality of the learning environment does not always inspire and enrich the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their child to work hard and achieve his/her best • The good behaviour and high standards of discipline • That their child is making good progress as a result of good teaching • The positive school ethos helps their child to become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority were concerned about the amount of homework • Some parents felt that the school did not work closely enough with the parents

Inspectors endorse the positive comments made by parents. They found little evidence to support the minority view concerning homework or that the school does not try to work closely in partnership with parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

There are 184 students in the sixth form, including 17 girls. Overall there are 95 students in Year 12 and 89 in Year 13. This is in line with the average size of sixth forms nationally. The number of students recruited into the sixth form has been maintained at about this level for some years. Most are of white UK heritage, although a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school offers a range of AS, A-level and AVCE courses, appropriate to the students' needs. In 2001 nearly three out of four students from Year 11 continued into the sixth form. The minimum entry requirements of at least six GCSE passes at grade C for two-year courses, and at least a C grade in the subjects to be studied is usually strictly adhered to.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The overall quality of provision in the sixth form is good, and it is cost-effective. Standards are well above average and students achieve well. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching in all subjects and mature and responsible attitudes by students have ensured these standards have been maintained at this level in recent years. The sixth form is well led and managed. The programme of curricular and enrichment activities is well designed to meet the needs of all students. The main strengths and areas that could be improved are:

Strengths

- High standards are promoted by good and sometimes outstanding teaching.
- The maturity, confidence and poise of students, and their very good attitudes to their studies contribute strongly to their good progress.
- Excellent relationships amongst the students themselves and between staff and students, and the effective integration of girls into the sixth form.

What could be improved

- The percentage of students achieving the highest grades at A-level.
- The achievements of the girls in examinations.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements 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	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. High standards in A-level examinations are promoted by good teaching and the students' mature and committed approach. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge and understanding.
Chemistry	Good. Although results were below average in 2001 current standards in Year 13 are well above average. Staff have a strong subject knowledge and teaching and learning are good. Students learn well and are taught an interesting course which helps develop inquisitive minds.
Business Studies	Good. Results in A/AS business studies are above average. The quality of teaching is good throughout the department.

Economics	Satisfactory. The provision in the economics courses is satisfactory although the number of higher grades achieved is below average. The quality of teaching is good throughout the subject.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Good. The standards achieved in examinations are above average. Students enjoy the courses, which match their needs and ambitions. Provision for less able students needs to be strengthened.
Physical Education	Good. Standards are well above average and the students make very good progress as a result of very good teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge and very high expectations. Levels of participation in sixth form recreation lessons and extra curricular activities are very high.
Geography	Very good. A consistently high standard of teaching has led to improved standards with A-level results well above the national average. The provision of residential fieldwork in both Years 11 and 12 is a particular strength.
History	Good. Although results in 2001 were below average, students are achieving well and are developing their skills of analysis and interpretation. Good teaching and skilful questioning are enabling students to become independent learners. Relationships are very good.
English Literature	Good. Good teaching supported by positive attitudes leads to above average performance in A-level examinations.

In other subjects, work was sampled. Teaching was generally at least good and often better. Some very good teaching was seen in design technology in which students were working thoughtfully and achieving above average standards. Standards are also above average in classical studies. Some excellent teaching was observed in French and there have been some very good recent improvements in the overall provision.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are sensitively supported by both tutors and subject staff. They appreciate the time given by teachers to support them at an individual level throughout their time in the sixth form. Realistic targets are set for each student and are regularly monitored. Guidance on sixth-form courses is good and the programme for advising students on careers and future studies is satisfactory.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Management is good and there is a clear sense of purpose about the sixth form. Monitoring and evaluation of performance is comprehensive, although more could be done to ensure good practice is shared

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students enjoy being in the sixth form and would recommend it to others • Good teaching which is both challenging and encouraging • Teachers are willing to give time and help with difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advice given on careers and what to do after leaving school • Students are evenly divided about whether they feel that they are treated as a responsible young adult

Inspectors by and large agree with the views of students, although they consider that the quality of guidance on careers and higher education is satisfactory and has some very effective features. Students are given good opportunities to exercise responsibility and many respond with a confident maturity.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, 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".

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall standards of attainment on entry to the school in Year 7, as measured by the pupils' attainment in national tests taken at the end of their primary schools, are well above average. Cognitive ability tests taken on entry indicate an above average ability level of attainment although the school loses a few of its potentially most able pupils to other schools in the area. Overall attainment on entry has been similar in all years. The proportion of students with special educational needs is consistently well below average.
2. In national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science was well above average. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals, performance in English was well above average. In science it was above average and in mathematics it was very high, and within the top five per cent of schools. Results in English have varied from year to year, but have always been above or well above average. In both mathematics and science, results have been consistently well above average. Overall standards in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection, broadly in line with the rising national trend.
3. At the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades in 2001 was 82.7 per cent, well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to G grades was also well above average. The average total points GCSE score per student in 2001 was 54.9, well above the national average of 39.1, and well above the average for similar schools. Based on an average of the three years 1999 – 2001, results have been consistently well above the national average and very high in comparison with boys' results nationally. Despite slipping back a little in 2001 from the outstanding performance in 2000, results at GCSE have been improving in line with the national trend.
4. Pupils taking GCSE in 2001 achieved exceptionally well, despite the slightly lower results than in the previous year. Progress through the two years of the course as measured by their attainment in Year 9 tests in 1999, was very high in comparison with schools whose pupils attained similar results in Year 9. Results in most subjects were significantly better than results nationally for the percentage of students achieving an A* to C grade. Performance in art and design, graphics, resistant materials, English, Italian, mathematics, music and physical education (PE) was particularly impressive in 2001, with at least eighty percent of pupils achieving an A* to C grade. Only in classical studies was the performance of pupils lower than the national figures.
5. The most significant factor in these high standards is the good quality of teaching, which has a strong focus on maximising achievement for all pupils. In addition, the very good attitudes of most pupils to their learning, supported by the overall ethos for learning promotes good progress.
6. The ambitious GCSE targets set for 2001 were met, and exceeded in relation to the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades. Targets set for 2002 indicate that these high standards will be maintained. Inspectors judge these targets to be both realistic and challenging.
7. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards overall are well above average, and in line with recent GCSE results and tests at the end of Year 9. Most students' achievements are good given their prior attainment on entry and good progress is made through the school.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to prior attainment and difficulties on entry. Although relatively few in number, they are very well supported and they make very good progress against their targets. The majority has moderate learning and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. All these pupils take national tests towards the end of Year 9, and a full range of subjects at GCSE at the end of Year 11.
9. There is no significant variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils. There are no pupils with English as an additional language in Years 7 to 11. Pupils from ethnic minorities make as good progress as other pupils, although the school's systems for tracking their progress are not as comprehensive as other aspects of the school's assessment data analysis. This is partly because the school does not have an accurate databank of the pupils' ethnicity. Pupils of higher attainment generally make as good progress as others in the school, although there is some limited evidence in some subjects that the percentage of pupils achieving A and A* grades is lower than might be expected. To some extent, this is a reflection of the overall ability profile of the pupils on entry. However on occasions inspectors identified some missed opportunities in lessons to provide high attaining pupils with extended opportunities and more challenging activities, particularly when work was not planned specifically to meet their needs. Nevertheless the school is increasingly focused on the need to challenge more pupils to achieve the highest grades at GCSE, and has some effective strategies in place.
10. In work seen in English during the inspection, standards were well above average in Years 9 and 11. Given their attainment on entry, students make good progress and achieve well through Years 7 to 11. Standards of literacy are well above average throughout the school. Pupils speak fluently. With only a few exceptions pupils have a secure grasp of standard English when speaking. Most read fluently. They locate information quickly and bring a critical approach to what they read as they did in a Year 9 English lesson observed, in which the pupils searched for evidence that might have undermined the objectivity of a writer's point of view. They are good at making deductions from the text and demonstrate this skill confidently in history. Most write at length, organise their work well into paragraphs, and use punctuation accurately, although a small number make errors in spelling. Most writing is typified by clarity, good planning and structure and the effective communication of what the pupil knows and understands.
11. In work seen in mathematics, standards are well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are good throughout Years 7 to 11. Attainment is well above average in most aspects of mathematics, although pupils' problem solving skills are less well developed. Overall standards of numeracy are well above average and most pupils accurately use and apply numeracy skills in different contexts. Many pupils are very adept at mental calculations. Some effective work was seen with pupils using graphs and formulae in science, and pupils confidently and accurately tabulate results and plot graphs. Other subjects in which the confident application of numeracy was witnessed included design and technology, geography and business studies.
12. Standards in science are well above average in Years 9 and 11. Pupils are making good progress in Years 7 to 9 and very good progress in Years 10 and 11. This reflects the increased focus on examination requirements in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have a good grasp of scientific principles and are learning to apply them in a range of contexts.
13. In other subjects, standards in work seen in Year 9 were above average in information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, modern foreign languages, art and design, music and physical education (PE). They were well above average in design and technology. In Year 11, standards were above average in ICT, history, design technology, geography, art and design, business studies and PE. They were well above average in modern foreign languages and music. Most students' achievements are good in all subjects throughout the school, although in design technology and PE, they are very good, and in music they are very good in Years 10 and 11.

Sixth form

14. The results of students entered for AS and A-level examinations in 2001 were well above average. The average points score of candidates entered was 21.2 compared with the national average of 17.4. Results have been consistently at this level in recent years, dipping in 1998 to 19.4 but rising again in 1999 to 22.0.
15. Boys tend to do better than girls, although the number of girls is comparatively very small. In 2001 students did particularly well in mathematics, sports studies, classical studies, computer studies and geography where results were above the national average for these subjects. They did less well in chemistry, design and technology, general studies, art and design and economics, although only in economics was this significant.
16. The school insists on an entry requirement in the sixth form of at least six or more GCSE grades A* to C, including at least a C grade in the subjects to be studied. The average points score per students in 2001 exceeded the school predictions but did not quite meet the ambitious targets set by the governors. Over the past six years, A-level performance relative to the students' GCSE results has varied, and achievement in 1999 and 2000 in particular was strong. Through its detailed and comprehensive analysis of students' performance, the school has identified the relatively low level of top grades and the comparatively poor performance of some girls as issues for improvement. A sixth form working party of teachers has been set up to explore reasons for this possible underachievement. Inspectors confirm that these are issues for research but, nevertheless, judge the achievements of most students to be good. Much of the teaching observed in the sixth form was of a good or better quality and offered good levels of challenge. Retention rates through courses are good, and students rarely embark on courses to which they are not suited.
17. Not all subjects were inspected in detail during the inspection. Of those that were, standards observed in English, computer studies, history, business studies and economics were above average for this stage in the course. Standards in economics are higher than recent A-level results because of an increasing emphasis on analytical work in the teaching. Standards in mathematics, chemistry, geography and sports studies were well above average. For most students on these courses, their achievements and progress through the course, given their attainment at GCSE are good, and very good in geography and sports studies. In subjects sampled some very good work was seen in French, art and design, music and design technology. Boys still tend to do better than the small number of girls, but students from ethnic minority groups achieve at least as well as others.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good, and have improved since the previous inspection. The school's standard of attendance overall is broadly satisfactory. This has fallen away from formerly well above average figures. Punctuality to lessons, however, has improved.
19. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy life within it. They like the quality of friendship shown amongst pupils and teachers. They readily name their favourite subjects and recognise the high standards expected of them. Where a year council exists, as in Year 10, they appreciate the opportunity for expressing their own views and taking initiatives. Pupils also appreciate the range of extra-curricular opportunities offered by the school, and many are keenly supported. For example, there is sometimes a shortage of space for the many musical events taking place at lunchtime. Sporting activities lead to a strong 'esprit de corps'.
20. Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work. They listen and concentrate very well. Most take pleasure in trying to obtain a high standard in whatever they do. Behaviour in lessons is usually characterised by a strong work ethic, and is often very good, sometimes excellent. In a well-taught swimming lesson in Year 9, for instance, pupils respected the firm discipline and evaluated each other's performance effectively. Similarly, in a Year 10 geography lesson on demographic change, behaviour was excellent with the majority of students volunteering to

answer questions. Occasionally pupils are expected to be too passive, resulting in a lack of active learning taking place.

21. Behaviour around the school is very good, and movement is orderly and good-natured. Pupils often show commendable restraint and patience as they have to wait outside classrooms. Break-time behaviour is pleasant and sociable. The long lunchtime is often used productively for extra-curricular activities, private use of the library and computers, and to practise sporting skills. Dining arrangements lack grace but are not abused. Assemblies are respected. Very little silliness or anger was observed during the week and pupils often showed restraint and courtesy. Poor behaviour does, however, occur and the rate of exclusions last year was high. This was principally because of incidents where groups of pupils had been linked in unacceptable behaviour.
22. Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils show much respect for teachers and for one another. The school's ethos encourages a sound understanding of Christian values. Pupils help one another, and they co-operate readily and enjoy group activities Pupils thank each other and, when necessary, they apologise. Currently, pupils are not greatly consulted, and responsibilities at younger ages are few but, whenever possible, they exercise sensible initiative, for instance, in charitable work.
23. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The published figure for unauthorised absence is much better than the norm. Pupils' punctuality overall is good.

Sixth form

24. Students enjoy their life in the sixth form, and value the courses they have chosen. They appreciate the dedication to high standards reflected in the challenge within lessons. They feel themselves to be well supported, with many staff being very encouraging and approachable. On the other hand a significant minority of sixth-formers do not think they are adequately consulted and they are evenly divided on whether they feel that they treated with consideration as young adults.
25. Sixth formers' attitudes to work, their behaviour and sense of responsibility are very good. This was typified in a Year 12 lesson on the respiratory system in which students responded well to questions, showing good individuality. They put much effort into creating good notes, working quickly because of the pace of teaching. Similarly good study habits were evidenced in a Year 13 consideration of Shelley's *Ozymandias*, with much critical analysis of its structure and form. Discussions are lively and inclusive: the small minority of girls are very well integrated and respected within both learning and social activities.
26. Sixth-formers have many opportunities for responsibility and exercise them impressively. Prefects are very visible on duty throughout the school. They set good examples and are much respected. Sixth-formers work co-operatively; for instance in fund-raising for charity. Individual initiatives have led to the introduction of a drama group among younger students and the maintenance of a flourishing school bookshop. The development of personal and learning skills is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching is good throughout Years 7 to 11. It has improved since the time of the last inspection. The proportion of very good and better teaching is much higher, and unsatisfactory teaching has all but been eliminated. Almost three out of four lessons were judged to be good or better, and much teaching observed was skilfully delivered. One in three was very good or excellent, and in these most effective lessons, the pupils' learning was often of the highest quality.
28. The overall quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Much of it is very good. This is leading to good progress in these core subjects. Teaching in other subjects is also

good and in design technology and PE it is very good. Teaching is also very good in music and geography in Years 10 and 11.

29. Characteristics of the most effective teaching are high expectations and good pace, very good classroom management, very good relationships, the setting of homework which extends and builds on work done in class, an awareness of the examination requirements particularly in GCSE teaching, effective use of support staff, and the fostering of pupils' independent learning and problem solving skills. Teachers' own very good subject knowledge and understanding enables work to be introduced and developed with confidence. Pupils' learning skills are good. They are frequently required to take responsibility for their own learning, use deductive skills and to apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts to consolidate and deepen understanding.
30. Where teaching is only satisfactory and less effective, it is often because the assessment of progress has not been used to plan for individuals and target setting is not used with precision to enable pupils to plan their next learning step. As a consequence, higher attaining pupils in particular are sometimes not sufficiently challenged. Marking is sometimes inconsistent even within subjects. Learning is not always reinforced through an evaluation of the learning outcomes at the end of the lesson. Sometimes, constraints on learning are imposed by the limitations of the accommodation and access to resources, particularly computers.
31. When teachers have regular and planned access to computers, good use is made of ICT to support learning. In art pupils are encouraged to research and scan images using computers, and in history pupils present their work in word-processed formats. However in most subjects, access to computers is limited, and while there is an expectation often that the pupils will word process work on their home computer, opportunities for this in school are not so common. In English, work is word processed, but there is no planned progression of ICT skills. In mathematics, requirements in relation to the use of ICT are only just met.
32. The teaching of literacy is good, and subjects across the curriculum are making an effective contribution. Most subjects develop the pupils' appropriate use of subject vocabulary well. Teachers display and refer to key terms in physical education, design technology, business studies, art and modern foreign languages. In geography the use of glossaries effectively enhances the pupils' use of vocabulary. Although there are no displays in history the very good use of specific vocabulary by the teachers and the use of spelling lists have an effective impact. Reading and study skills are good in physical education. In modern foreign languages pupils are taught and expected to use a range of reading methods such as skimming and scanning to help them summarise a text. Reading for research in geography is enhanced by a very supportive structure of headings and subheadings that helps the pupils scan efficiently. Pupils read frequently in history and from a wide range of resources in design and technology. In ICT they do not have the chance to read a wide enough range of source materials.
33. Writing skills are especially well supported in a number of subjects. Frequent use of writing frames and a strong emphasis on the appropriate sequencing of points enables pupils to make good progress in design and technology. They also have the chance to use independent strategies when devising questionnaires. Efficient note taking and understanding are enhanced in business studies through opportunities to work in groups as preparation for presentations. In history the support for essay writing is very good with clear guidance on introduction, development and conclusion. This support for extended writing is a strength. The pupils also write in a range of contexts: diaries, newspapers accounts and radio news scripts. In geography, there is very good support for different types of writing. A checklist enables pupils to see how well they have produced explanatory, analytical, recounting or personal writing. There are fewer chances for supported writing in art and not enough models and templates in ICT. In music, opportunities for writing are limited but spelling is corrected.
34. The teaching of numeracy is good, and all subjects make a strong contribution to reinforcing and applying numeracy skills in different contexts. Number work is developed well in languages for counting, and in ICT for simple financial modelling. Algebraic skills are used well in science for substituting in formulae such as Ohms law and transforming formulae by changing the

subject in science. Measuring skills are practised in technology and Year 11 pupils interpret graphs on product life cycles in business studies. Bar charts and pie charts are used well to record data in languages and geography work uses population pyramids to show birth rates by gender for different ages. Star charts are used in food technology for sensory analysis although the use of market research to influence design ideas is underdeveloped.

35. It is the high expectations that teachers have of what pupils can achieve that characterises the very best teaching. Where these are high, pupils are constantly challenged, the pace of lessons is brisk and the pupils' learning is very good. This takes place within well-planned and well-managed lessons that take account of the different starting points of each pupil. For example, in a very good Year 10 geography lesson observed on demographic changes, the challenging work set reflected the teacher's high expectations. The pace of learning was consistently strong and, as a consequence, pupils responded to the teaching with committed concentration, maintaining excellent attitudes throughout. The teacher's very secure knowledge of the subject enabled clear explanations and language to be used. The lesson drove the pupils' thinking forward.
36. Much of the teaching encourages pupils to apply learning in different contexts and to work independently. In a very good Year 8 design and technology lesson observed, groups of pupils were designing and constructing a bridge to test the strongest structure. The pupils particularly appreciated the relevance and application of their learning. The learning was effectively underpinned by well-structured teaching of basic knowledge, which was then applied in a practical context. Pupils worked with interest and enthusiasm throughout, and developed good independent problem solving skills through the teacher's encouragement to experiment.
37. The pupils' good attitudes and positive approach to their learning are important factors in contributing to their good progress. This is supported by the overall school ethos for learning and the often excellent relationships established between teachers and pupils. In an excellent Year 8 PE lesson taken in the sports hall because the outside field was unfit, the pupils' excellent behaviour and commitment to the work underpinned the learning. The teacher's confident approach and excellent class management ensured that the pupils made enormous gains in skills and tactical awareness. Even low attaining pupils began to understand the concept of using space to create forward momentum.
38. Teaching on GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11 is strongly focused on the examination requirements and is very well focused on specific learning outcomes. This is always managed effectively and pupils are not spoon-fed the answers, but challenged to think for themselves and work out solutions independently of the teacher. Sometimes, as in a very good Year 11 high attaining science lesson on the amplitude and frequency of sound, the teacher offers model answers, which challenge the pupils to consider how they might respond. However, the pupils are still challenged to develop thinking skills through the tasks set and they all respond with excellent attitudes throughout the lesson.
39. Planning is usually effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, including those from ethnic minorities, and teachers use their very good knowledge of individual pupils to set work carefully adapted to their learning needs. However there are some lessons in which all pupils move at the same pace. In mathematics, there was little evidence seen in the work scrutiny of any difference between the work set between the most and least able pupils in Year 7. As a consequence, although work is usually challenging for most pupils, the highest attaining pupils are not always sufficiently stretched. Although pupils identified as gifted and talented benefit from extra curricular activities designed to develop their specific skills, there is sometimes insufficient challenge in lessons.
40. The quality of teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are identified as requiring additional support from assessment information. Teachers and support staff use the information and recommendations from annual reviews to set realistic targets for pupils' learning. Liaison between support assistants, the special education needs co-ordinator and staff is very good. Pupils make significant gains against their targets, for learning

and personal development, because of the very good blend of help and challenge provided by support staff and teachers.

41. The quality of marking and the use of ongoing assessment are satisfactory, but are not consistently good. In several subjects, marking is regular and supportive with detailed guidance on how to improve. As a result, pupils' knowledge of their own progress is very good, and most know exactly what they must do to improve. However this is not consistently the case. In English, for example, marking is not as rigorous as it might be, particularly in the pupils' drafting books. As a consequence, the pupils are not always sure about how to improve. Some teachers set learning targets for the next step, others do not.
42. Although a minority of parents felt that homework was not always set according to the timetable, and that too little was set, inspectors found little evidence to support this view. In general, homework is well used to extend and reinforce work done in class, and develops pupils' research and independent learning skills. Scrutiny of the pupils' journals indicated that it is usually set according to the timetable. However some pupils reported that on occasions, homework is used merely to finish off work uncompleted in lessons.
43. The school's very positive ethos for learning underpins the school's work and the attitudes of pupils. Learning is at the heart of the school's work, and is immediately apparent. Pupils move purposefully to lessons and attitudes in class indicate that most pupils are keen to do well. As a consequence, they work hard, and learn at a good pace. Pupils' co-operative skills are very good. In a very good Italian lesson in Year 10, pupils worked together in pairs very well, and their enthusiasm to participate led to very good progress. In several music lessons observed, pupils co-operated constructively, supporting and learning from each other. Many pupils demonstrated considerable responsibility and independence in their learning. The teacher had to intervene only occasionally to prompt ideas or adjust the direction of the learning.
44. Pupils' knowledge of their own progress is not as consistently good as other aspects of their learning, although this improves in Years 10 and 11 as pupils move towards GCSE examinations. Lower down the school, however, the inconsistent approach to the use of National Curriculum Levels in different subjects means that pupils are not so confident.

Sixth form

45. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. During the inspection, all teaching observed was at least satisfactory, and over eight out of ten lessons were at least good. Nearly one in three lessons was judged very good or better. Of the subjects inspected in detail, teaching is good in English, mathematics, chemistry, ICT, history, business studies and economics; it is very good in geography and sports studies.
46. Strengths of the teaching include the teachers' subject knowledge and understanding. This expertise enables them to approach the syllabus confidently, pose and answer questions which challenge the students' thinking, and plan lessons and schemes of work which successfully build on prior attainment in a meaningful and relevant way. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge in one very good geography Year 13 lesson observed, on models of economic growth, enabled the teacher to set high levels of challenge and answer questions with authority. The students were able to explain their thinking well and draw on a wealth of prior knowledge to sustain their arguments. The teacher's high expectations ensured that the students made very good progress in applying new knowledge. The confident approach of teachers to their subject at this level was characteristic of teaching observed in most subjects and is a key factor in students' achievement.
47. Teachers often put points across skilfully and ensure that material is presented in an interesting and relevant way. Consequently, students participate fully in the lessons and make good progress. Students particularly appreciate teaching, which encourages them to contribute. In one Year 12 ICT lesson observed, the students approached new work on a database with confidence and high levels of independence. They worked hard and were able to explain their

thinking and what they had learnt about the software. However, in some lessons opportunities for active participation are limited. The teacher talks for too long and the students are involved merely in passive note taking.

48. Most sixth form teachers have high expectations of what all the students in the group are capable of achieving, and the students respond very positively to this approach. Most adopt a very positive and mature attitude to their studies. They are keen to do well and succeed to the best of their ability. In a Year 12 chemistry lesson high levels of motivation contributed strongly to the good progress made. The teacher adopted a clear structured approach, which meant that the students learnt in a methodical way.
49. The teachers' good knowledge of examination requirements means that the students are guided to approach examinations with confidence. In a Year 12 history lesson on the Russian revolution, the teacher challenged the students to question assumptions and to support their own thinking with relevant examples and sources. They were encouraged to give positive criticisms of each other. By the end of the lesson, the students had made very good progress, particularly in the practice and hidden demands of examination questions. Good examples of lessons in which students were prepared effectively for the forthcoming examinations were also seen in mathematics.
50. Some teachers adopt good strategies to promote the students' independent learning and their perseverance to solve problems and overcome difficulties themselves. High levels of independent learning and research skills were demonstrated in an excellent Year 13 history lesson in the computer room, in which students were guided in taking responsibility for improving their work and focusing on the structure of essays. The students' confidence in their teacher was demonstrated in the businesslike way in which advice was received. They were quiet but focused in a mature way on their work. Students were highly motivated and showed both excitement and pride in their achievements. The teacher's excellent relationships with the students, and knowledge of when and when not to intervene, ensured that the students were prompted to work as much as possible on their own. This they did with confidence, demonstrating high levels of resourcefulness and independent thinking. For some students, however, this more independent and self-reliant approach to learning is the biggest challenge of sixth form work. On occasions, there is a tendency for teachers to over direct the learning, and not allow students to pursue their own thinking and ideas.
51. In other lessons observed, the quality of discussion and encouragement of students to express their ideas and opinions was good. The teachers constantly challenged and provoked the students to think more deeply and to re-consider their views. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to link abstract concepts to everyday and relevant examples. In discussion with the students themselves, it was clear that they have a mature and sensible view of what makes for effective teaching. They reported that one of the key factors in the most successful teaching was the fact that the teacher made the learning relevant to everyday events and to contemporary issues. A particularly good example of this was observed in a Year 13 mathematics lesson when the principles of mechanics were demonstrated by reference to rockets and golf balls! Other good examples of making learning relevant were observed in geography, business studies and economics.
52. In discussion, the students praised the support and helpfulness of teachers and their approachability and willingness to offer help at any time. Students also reported that lessons in which their own views and ideas were valued were effective. Students' learning skills are good, and most work hard with good levels of motivation. The commitment and hard work of staff is another key factor in the levels of students' achievement. Most students take care with the presentation of their work, and files and notes are well organised and can be used effectively for revision. Students have been taught good strategies for taking and organising their notes. In general, students' skills in self-study and research are good

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

53. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provision is broad and balanced. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided together with religious education and personal and social education. Overall, a good range of learning opportunities is provided including a good range of quality extra-curricular and sporting activities. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection.
54. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils study the full range of National Curriculum subjects and RE with the additional opportunity to study classical studies in Year 9. In addition, higher attaining pupils are recommended to study Italian in Years 8 and 9. As a result, a much higher proportion than normal study a second language. Since the last inspection, the time allocated to art and music has been increased and is now adequate to cover the curriculum more fully. Some weaknesses noted at the last inspection, however, remain. There is still no curricular provision for drama, and cross-curricular provision for ICT is still not assured in a number of subjects including English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages.
55. Pupils follow a curriculum in Years 10 and 11 which prepares pupils very well for GCSE examinations. There is limited provision for vocational courses, although on occasions the school negotiates appropriate provision for a small number of pupils at the local college of further education. The core curriculum includes English, mathematics, double science, French or Italian, physical education and RE. Information and communication technology and design technology are also taken as core subjects in Year 10, with the option to continue with these in Year 11. The proportion of pupils who continue to study two languages in Years 10 and 11 drops as languages are set against humanities subjects. The curriculum is also supplemented by a good range of other subjects. All pupils take the double science option, and a GCSE design and technology short course in Year 10. In addition, there are currently no electronics or systems courses to challenge the higher attaining pupils. In the core physical education curriculum the full programme of study is followed, but the lack of teaching time restricts the depth of work that is covered.
56. The school's effectiveness in developing literacy is good. Although there is no whole school literacy policy, good practice was observed in a number of subjects. This focused on supporting reading, writing and knowledge of subject vocabulary. The headteacher convenes a whole school literacy group and is clear-sighted about the need for a more systematic and monitored approach. For pupils needing extra support there is a carefully devised programme which matches provision very closely to the pupils' needs under the direction of the special education needs co-ordinator. The library is used frequently, but no formal lines of communication exist between the librarian and heads of department in order to support literacy. The librarian is not, for example a member of the whole school literacy group. Some effective communication does occur at a less formal level.
57. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is good, although there is no whole school numeracy policy to provide a coherent framework. However the school is planning training for all staff across subjects, and number work is developed well in several different subjects.
58. A satisfactory programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been thoughtfully devised and is taught by form tutors once a week. The programme includes study skills and organisation, team building, health education, careers and work experience for pupils in Year 10. Some good teaching of this programme was observed.
59. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and a very good range of learning opportunities is provided. The planned curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. Highly effective procedures are in place for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Parents, pupils and staff are involved at appropriate stages; documentation is of a very good quality. The setting of learning objectives through Individual Education Plans (IEPs) is precise. However, although IEPs are distributed to all staff they are not always well matched to specific subject activities in the classroom. The withdrawal programme for English is very well organised which results in the pupils having the same curriculum as mainstream pupils but at a level which is matched to their needs.

60. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which support and extend the curriculum. Opportunities for rugby are first class and the first team last year became the first maintained school to win the National Cup at Twickenham. However, there are also good opportunities in music and other sporting activities. A number of subjects provide additional clubs to support pupils with their studies. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and have attended one day enrichment courses provided by the local education authority which have had a positive impact on their achievements.
61. Provision for careers' education is good. In Year 9 pupils discuss what careers might be suitable. Clear advice is given on option choices for GCSE. However pupils have little access to computer based careers information. Advice in Years 10 and 11 focuses on courses available in the sixth form and local colleges and there are good links with the local careers service.
62. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Effective links have been made with a variety of employers and organisations to enable a successful work experience programme to take place in Year 10; this helps to widen the experience of both pupils and teachers. The school acts as good neighbours to the immediate community. For example, it provides facilities to the local community group and annually entertains over 300 senior citizens at a Christmas party. Links with feeder primary schools are satisfactory, but there are no formalised curricular links between subject departments and primary schools to help ensure curriculum continuity. However, several teachers have made productive visits and some students have worked as classroom assistants on work experience.
63. The school is committed to issues of social inclusion and although there is no formal school policy, equal access and opportunity to the school's curriculum is satisfactory. The school's curricular and pastoral structures are designed to ensure equal opportunities especially through religious education, assemblies, PSHE and history. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own religious, social and cultural identity although their awareness of cultural diversity is more limited. While aspects of multi-culturalism are addressed in music, history and English, in other subjects opportunities are missed. However the school works very hard to overcome stereotypical subject choices and subjects such as languages, art, music and English are much valued and respected by the boys.
64. Provision for the spiritual development of the boys is very good, and strong improvements have been made since the last inspection. Catholic principles permeate all areas of the school and pupils are encouraged to reflect them in their attitudes and treatment of each other. The school has recently focussed on its direct provision and has extended the opportunities to attend retreats to all pupils in the school. Voluntary masses are held several times a week, and the response of pupils to the mass held for the school's rugby team before its departure indicates the integration of their beliefs into all areas of their school life. The practice of holding a daily act of worship either in assembly or in tutor groups is well embedded, although the quality of this practice is variable and depends upon the tutor. School assemblies are held regularly and pupils respond well. There is no open access to the chapel from the school, although it is well used for services each day. The commitment of many of the staff to the development of the spirituality of the pupils is evident from the many opportunities observed for them to reflect upon their own reactions to what they have seen and learnt, and to wonder at the world around them. A very good example was seen in an art class where pupils in Year 7 were amazed by closer observation of representations of the centre of a flower.
65. The school has a clear moral code that is founded in its Christian principles, and its provision for moral development is good. There is a clear system of sanctions that supports this code and all pupils are aware of their responsibility to uphold it. Moral issues are discussed in many areas of the curriculum, such as science, where pupils consider the question of genetic engineering and alternative energy sources, and in geography where they study the economy of the third world and the effects of the global economy on the lives of the poorest people. In history, Year 11 pupils were captured by the injustice embedded in the system of segregation in America and India in the 20th century, and reflected on the success of the non-violent opposition to it. In PSHE

lessons, pupils learn about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and discuss the law and social responsibility as part of the course. A clear characteristic of the school is its concern for the welfare of others, and pupils are keenly aware of their responsibility towards the disadvantaged. 'Poor man's lunches' are held in preparation for Lent and assemblies address the problem of world hunger. Charity fundraising takes place in each year group and is used to support such causes as 'Cafod' and the homeless in Canning Town. During the inspection pupils were raising money to send the sick to Lourdes, accompanied by students from the school.

66. Provision for the social development of pupils is good. Pupils respond well to each other and, despite the narrow corridors, they co-operate and share the space. Opportunities for paired and group work are found in most subjects and pupils listen to and respect the views of others. The school has a strong sense of community, and the annual school garden party on sports day is a good example of this. The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities that enable pupils to work with those from other years and older pupils coach the younger ones in the sports clubs. The annual geography field trips and school skiing trips are very good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. Pupils are very aware of the needs of the local community and the annual senior citizens' Christmas party is an excellent opportunity for pupils from all years to benefit from social interaction with the wider community. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the main school are limited. Year 9 and 10 have recently elected a year council, but other year groups do not have a forum for discussion of ideas or for representation. All posts of responsibility within the school are taken by the sixth form.
67. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. There are frequent opportunities for them to experience live theatre, and the school has thriving choirs and an orchestra. The enthusiasm and size of the choir was testament to the pupils' appreciation of music. A professional theatre group are to visit the school, but there are few other opportunities for the pupils to work with professional poets, writers, artists or musicians. The music department provides very good opportunities for pupils to perform at home and abroad, including visits to Germany, Paris and Rome as well as in support of the rugby team at Twickenham. Pupils have opportunities to experience European culture through the French and Italian trips, and exploration of the culture is an integral part of the modern languages curriculum. In religious education, geography and history pupils investigate the cultural backgrounds of the people they study, such as in the study of the road to Indian independence. In business studies, pupils study the work ethic of Japan and recognise the pride the Japanese have in their work. Opportunities to explore the culture of non-European countries are limited and are often portrayed in the role of those in need. There is insufficient celebration of the multi-ethnic diversity of Britain today through art, music, design or in the images to be found around the school.

Sixth form

68. Curriculum provision in the sixth form has been recently reviewed and enhanced. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. A wide range of A-level subjects is provided, with students taking four AS levels in Year 12 and continuing with three of these to A-level in Year 13. Entry requirements to these courses are high with students generally being expected to have attained at least a C grade in appropriate subjects at GCSE. However, there is scope for some subjects, such as information and communication technology or economics to be chosen without it being studied at GCSE. There is also the possibility of taking the AVCE full award in business together with one AS level subject taken over a period of two years.
69. Students do not have access to a planned programme of key skills. Most students have a limited amount of time allocated to private study, which they use well to complete work or get ahead of their studies. Students confirm that they are given little guidance or coaching on how to best to use or plan this time. In private study time, they have access to computing facilities if needed and have access to reference materials either from the library or individual departments. Students are expected to do a lot of homework. Most respond very well to this demand.
70. The majority of A-level courses are well matched to students' aspirations and potential. Course retention rates are high, an indication of the care with which courses are chosen to ensure good

match to needs. The girls who have joined the sixth from other schools sometimes find difficulty in adapting to the challenging curriculum, but they generally blossom in Year 13. Curriculum provision within subjects is good, although limited access to computers in some subjects is adversely affecting standards. Students can participate in a number of extra-curricular activities, including sports, music and voluntary activities, but the range is not as wide as in the main school. Students themselves are not unhappy with this arrangement as the vast majority are very focused on their studies and are keen to do well.

71. The school is committed to social inclusion and equal opportunities. Girls are well integrated into the sixth form, although some facilities, particularly those for sports changing, are inadequate. The school has identified the under-achievement of some girls in the sixth form and has set up a working party to look into the issues.
72. The sixth form has very good provision for their spiritual, moral and social development. Posts of responsibility as prefects enable them to make significant input into the smooth running of the school, and their work as Year 7 'buddies' supports the confidence and smooth integration of the younger pupils. Students support younger pupils through the paired reading scheme and in direct support for pupils with special educational needs. The inclusion of girls into the sixth form has provided additional opportunities for students to share ideas and understand different viewpoints that were previously unavailable. The re-opening of the school bookshop by the girls is an indication of their integration into the school.
73. Students have a strong sense of obligation and loyalty to the school. The students' sense of responsibility not only to the school, but also to the wider community is formalised in a programme that enables them to provide a wide range of service. The sixth form committee co-ordinates many of the charity events that take place in the school, such as the senior citizens' Christmas party, and the camp for under privileged children, which they help fund, erect and actively support, that takes place in the summer. Their work with children with special educational needs in their residential home and on their visits to the school for the activity days enables students to develop an appreciation of the wider community. The work of the sixth form for the Chuka mission in Kenya is highly significant. Their renovation of a children's home there, and their sponsorship of children through school, and of students through university, reflects their appreciation of their own education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

74. The school cares effectively for its pupils, providing a good quality of educational and personal support and guidance. Arrangements for pupils' welfare are good. An up to date health and safety policy lays down clear responsibilities and is administered well. There is a comprehensive structure for risk assessment and the result of a report on behalf of the local education authority is expected imminently. Child protection procedures follow the local guidelines and are satisfactory. First aid is currently administered in cramped surroundings but larger facilities will result from the forthcoming rebuilding programme.
75. The school provides effective pastoral care through tutors working within year teams. Pupils speak warmly of the friendliness and support shown within the system.
76. Good behaviour is promoted well by the consistent maintenance of a strongly Catholic ethos throughout the school. This daily reinforces high expectations. Rules are posted, rewards and sanctions are well known, but the very good quality of respect and relationships pervading the school underpins behavioural standards. Occasional instances of poor behaviour are noted on referral forms and handled effectively through graded measures, including detention. Occasionally, form detentions are given, despite a perception of unfairness. Pupils report that bullying is not tolerated and is minimal. All exclusions are very carefully considered.
77. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Daily registration is efficient. Tutors and teachers follow up absences but annotations are not always completed to indicate that parental authorisation has been obtained. The education welfare officer calls

weekly to review outstanding cases of absence. The pastoral assistant headteacher calls for reports from the appropriate year head when the attendance of any student declines below 80 per cent. Overall school attendance has fallen in recent years and additional measures to increase awareness of its importance are necessary.

78. The school's management procedure for assessing pupils' attainment is unsatisfactory as there is no consistent approach to assessment in all subjects, nor for the use of assessment data to inform planning and to set targets for pupils. Since the last inspection there has not been a significant improvement in the use of statistical attainment information for target setting and curriculum planning by departments. There is a need for more streamlined and manageable information that can be used more effectively by the departments. There is also still a variation amongst departments in the quality of assessment procedures and effectiveness of practice. There is considerable variation in the grading and marking systems used in the school.
79. The school produces detailed and comprehensive data about pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects. The information is based on examination results, formative assessments, school assessments and regular reviews of progress. Departmental results are analysed and this is being extended to individual class and set analysis. These show how well pupils in each subject have done against what might have been expected or against teachers' predictions. All Year 7 undergo formative assessment and the school tracks progress and attainment against targets and benchmarks. However not all departments are making sufficient use of the data to analyse their performance.
80. There are school guidelines on reporting to parents but each department is expected to develop its own procedure for assessment and marking. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are variable with very good practice in mathematics and science where there is regular testing and an effective system for tracking pupils' progress. History is also now using the school attainment data to set targets for the pupils. The quality of marking is variable within and across the subject areas. Although it is generally supportive it is not consistently so, and does not always offer guidance on how work can be improved.
81. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is inconsistent overall but strong features were evident in mathematics, science, physical education and history. In mathematics, regular assessments are used for selecting appropriate teaching sets based on pupils' level of attainment. In history recent work on National Curriculum levels have led to changes in the curriculum in Year 9. The development of assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 has informed curricular planning in physical education. Improved monitoring and co-ordination of coursework completion has led to improved examination results as far fewer pupils are failing to meet the course requirements.
82. The school has invested considerable time in improving the fragmented system of assessment procedures in the school. A working party has reviewed the timing of reports and parents evenings so that they are more in line with assessments. All departments have been allocated time to monitor pupil progress and this has become a standard agenda item at many departmental meetings. The school is also piloting the introduction of a computer based program in Years 7 and 10 and this will provide departments with information on individual pupils prior attainment as well as helping with the production of interim reports. The school is also aware that there is a particular need to monitor low attaining, high attaining and under achieving pupils. Management of assessment in the school is also fragmentary. Three senior members of staff have some specific responsibilities for assessment, but there is a lack of overall co-ordination and monitoring of the implementation of assessment procedures across the school.
83. The school has secure procedures for assessing and identifying pupils with special educational needs. The review and monitoring procedures that are in place enable the school to be very effective in meeting the needs of all pupils with special educational needs. The school liaises well with other agencies, parents, pupils and teachers. Pupils are supported very effectively in lessons. The school complies with the Code of Practice and statements and reviews are up to date. The provision in statements is being fully implemented. The school is successful in

meeting the targets identified at the time of the annual reviews. There is effective monitoring of pupils' achievements especially by support staff and the school makes good use of the special arrangements at GCSE.

Sixth form

Assessment

84. Assessment is satisfactory in the sixth form with an accurate analysis of GCSE performance helping to inform staff of the potential of students and to set realistic targets for their courses. Guidance is provided on the courses they aim to take in the sixth form and most courses chosen match the students' abilities and aspirations. Monitoring of progress and marking is variable across the departments although most students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Students have target grades and regular testing and assessment provide accurate information on their progress and attainment. The AVCE courses involve regular modular assessments and provide students with accurate information on their strengths and areas for improvement. However, the provision of support and advice for below average students on AS/A-level courses is not always satisfactory. Information to students and parents in the form of written reports and student reviews is good and they give a clear indication of strengths and weaknesses, as well as future potential and predicted grades.

Advice, support and guidance

85. Educational and personal support and guidance for sixth-formers is satisfactory. Students are provided with good information about the courses available. Most are pleased with the quality of guidance they received when considering the transition in Year 11. Most students report that induction is satisfactory. Joiners are quickly assimilated into the routines and the strict but supportive atmosphere of the school. Some girls, however, feel at a disadvantage and feel the need for special 'catch up' opportunities to put them on a par with what the boys have done.
86. Students particularly appreciate the accessibility of both subject teachers and tutors. Many give their time generously. Individual tutors know their students well and support and advise them accordingly. The tutorial programme covers a sensible series of topics. The school has sound procedures for monitoring attendance, and provides students with satisfactory careers advice and guidance on future studies. Although many students felt that the quality of careers advice was inadequate, inspectors judge the provision to be satisfactory, and with some good features. There are satisfactory links with the careers service and students have access to advice and resources if they need them. Tutors offer good guidance on higher education, and there is good access to reference material on both careers and higher education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

87. Parents and carers have very good opinions of the school, and the school has the confidence of the community it serves. More than a third of the school's parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Overwhelmingly, they note that the school expects its pupils to work hard and achieve well. They believe that its Catholic ethos is important and pervades all aspects of the school, resulting in their children developing mature and responsible attitudes, with good behaviour as a strong feature. About one in eight parents has reservations about the homework arrangements. A similar proportion thinks that the school could do more to work closely with parents, and to be better informed as to how their child is progressing.
88. The school has effective links with parents. Written information is of good quality. The prospectus, both for the main school and the sixth form, is informative and complies with statutory guidelines. The governing body's report includes responses to the questions raised at the previous annual parents' meeting. A regular fortnightly newsletter keeps parents up-to-date with school developments, recent results and forthcoming events. Parent-staff association and other social occasions are frequently mentioned.

89. The school keeps parents aware of their children's progress through the daily journals which record what is being studied. Parents are asked to sign this record weekly and comments may be written. An annual parents evening for each year group reviews students' progress, and parents also receive interim assessment letters. Attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels is not normally indicated. The quality of annual academic reports is generally good. Parents are asked to acknowledge receipt of these but are no longer invited to make a written comment.
90. The school has very effective links with parents of pupils on the special educational needs register. Through regular communications they are encouraged to contribute towards their children's educational development. Parents receive good quality information about their child's welfare and progress and make a positive contribution to children's learning at home and at school.
91. Parents make a very good impact on the work of the school. They generally meet the school's wishes as expressed in the home-school agreement. Most lend assistance to their children's learning. Attendance at parents' evenings is good. Parents make a substantial financial contribution to the work of the school and give further support via parent-staff association events. Many parents assist in school, others volunteer their services in the governing body, and many are active supporters of the school's sporting and cultural events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

92. Overall leadership and management are good, and the school has maintained consistently high standards of achievement and teaching since the last inspection. In addition the school works hard to maintain its core values, which are to develop in its pupils enquiring minds, self-discipline and the pursuit of excellence, to encourage young people to fully develop themselves through active involvement in extra curricular activities, and to acquire a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith.
93. The headteacher provides good leadership. He is clear about the direction of the school and his authority is widely respected. He has been keen to maintain the traditional values of the school, while moving it forward and embracing new ideas and approaches. The school's adoption of a whole school approach to literacy for example has been carefully considered and implemented. The school is confident in its successes, but is never complacent. Governors and the senior management team are continually evaluating what works and seeking ways to secure further improvements. The headteacher's approach to leadership has successfully gained the full support and co-operation of the staff.
94. The senior management team is experienced and provides the school with authoritative and clear-sighted direction. As individuals they are thoughtful and confident with a secure grasp of their roles and responsibilities. However the structure of the team does not always enable them to work effectively. The school has been without one deputy headteacher since before the last inspection. Although there have been a number of attempts to appoint an additional deputy, these have proved fruitless. The consequence of this has been an overworked team and some imbalance in their workload. The headteacher himself has been unable to delegate some aspects of his work to other senior managers. Responsibility for some aspects of the school, such as assessment, is fragmented and unsatisfactory. In other areas, such as performance management, there has been no clear oversight and as a result, its implementation has been piecemeal and not carried through rigorously. The school has a shadow management structure, which it intends to implement as soon as is practicable. Implementation of this should be a priority, particularly as this was a key issue at the time of the last inspection.
95. Management at other levels is good and most heads of department are providing effective leadership of their subject, working hard to maintain high standards and secure improvements in teaching and learning. They appreciate the autonomy given to them by senior staff to run their departments in their own way. This sometimes leads to inconsistencies in management practice, for example the consistency of marking and assessment, or the extent to which heads

of department monitor teaching in their departments. Much very good practice was observed during the inspection. However the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress through work scrutiny is not regular enough to identify and share good practice.

96. Many aspects of the school are monitored effectively. The deputy headteacher produces detailed and comprehensive analyses of individual subject performance in test and public examinations, which are used effectively at whole school level to monitor performance against targets. These are used as the basis for the annual subject reviews between heads of department and their line managers. Governors are also kept well informed and comprehensive performance and financial data are provided for them to make informed judgements and decisions.
97. The special educational needs department is very well led and managed. Systems and procedures for the management of provision for special educational needs and the meeting of statutory requirements are thorough and rigorous. The quality of provision is kept under on-going review. Planning is good, and funding and resources are appropriately allocated.
98. The school development plan is detailed and is drawn up as a result of a comprehensive review of performance at all levels. Whole school priorities such as the implementation of whole school literacy and ICT policies are carefully considered with staff training implications taken into account. Resources are identified and where appropriate built into the budget plan. Development planning at departmental level is less well focused. Some targets are imprecise and are sometimes little more than lists of tasks to be done, for example 'provide a computer and printer', or general exhortations to 'raise attainment'. Departmental targets for specific improvements in test and examination performance are not made explicit. Many priorities relate merely to improvements in resources, and do little to demonstrate the impact of this on the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, departmental plans do not always relate to the whole school plan. Although priorities are discussed at termly line management meetings, some targets are allowed to slip too easily. Overall, the development plan is not sharply focused enough to provide an effective framework for maintaining and improving standards.
99. Increasingly this is a reflective school in which all members of the school community are involved in monitoring and reviewing practice and seeking ways to improve standards. It has some way to go before it is a fully self-evaluating school. All staff are committed to sustaining its high standards and share the school's values and ideals. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.
100. Governors are committed and hard working, and they bring a good range of experience and professional expertise to the school's governance. The chair of governors has an effective professional relationship with the headteacher and senior staff. Governors are well informed and have a good awareness of the school's future direction. Discussions in committee and full governors' meetings are detailed and comprehensive, and the school's work is monitored effectively. Governors are confident in their ability to challenge and question the senior management. Statutory requirements are met.
101. The school's budget is very well managed. Governors have a good overview of a tight budget and are kept regularly updated with monitoring statements. They monitor the educational impact of spending decisions and have a good understanding of issues related to best value. Governors for example, set limits for the size of sixth form groups, and all potential groups have to be justified. Budget planning is carried out well with the school's educational priorities in mind, and the school has made sensible and realistic long term plans to improve the accommodation and the computer network.
102. The school understands the need for best value wherever possible in its spending decisions, and has carried out reviews for instance of its cost effectiveness in the light of moving from a four to a five form entry school. Planning for consequent increases in staff have been carefully managed. The most recent audit of the school's financial systems and controls was in February

2002 and indicated that all financial systems were well controlled and maintained. Designated funds, including those for special educational needs and social inclusion are used appropriately.

103. The school is efficiently administered and it makes satisfactory use of information systems to process data and ensure that information is readily available for governors and staff to manage the school effectively.
104. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff to meet the needs of curriculum. Well-qualified and experienced staff in a number of subjects are a key factor in promoting high standards of teaching. However staffing in ICT is less satisfactory. Expertise is not consistently high amongst the range of qualified and unqualified teachers, and some of the most expert ICT teachers are in demand from their own subjects. The use of unqualified teachers and support staff places a high demand on the head of department. Support and administrative staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, and learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs are very good.
105. The school has begun to implement its procedures for performance management, but currently arrangements have stalled and are unsatisfactory. Many members of staff are not up to date with their appraisal and target setting and professional development is subsequently not linked closely to the schools' forward planning. There is no formal staff development policy. Improvement in this respect since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
106. The school has good links with teacher training institutions and is proactive in seeking out potential new teachers. The training the school provides is valuable in attracting and retaining new staff. However, new staff are not consistently well supported by their head of department.
107. The quality of accommodation is barely adequate and unsatisfactory. Despite some improvements since the last inspection there are only just enough rooms for the number of pupils on roll. Many subjects are taught in general teaching rooms, and as a consequence they lack a sense of identity, and specialist equipment is moved from room to room. Many rooms are too small for the size of teaching groups, and rooms used by modern foreign languages teachers have poor acoustics. In addition to the inadequacy of many of the rooms, the quality of decoration and fabric is poor in several areas and fails to provide a stimulating learning environment. Apart from some good display in the geography and music rooms, many classrooms have bare walls and opportunities to celebrate pupils' work are missed. The physical education department has unsatisfactory changing facilities. The gymnasium is of poor quality, and the playing fields have inadequate drainage leading to flooded pitches.
108. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. Most subjects have adequate resources but many subjects are not well-funded. The library is a good size and is well managed. It offers a range of services for pupils, which are well used. A good collection of careers resources is based in the library, which successfully supports the careers programme in both the main school and sixth form. However, the ratio of library books to pupils is below average. The ratio of computers to pupils is below average, and pupils in a number of subjects have difficulties with access to computers.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

109. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The headteacher offers a clear sense of direction and purpose to the whole school and takes an active part in ensuring that the sixth form provision is consistent and adds value to other aspects of the school's activities. At the time of the inspection the head of sixth was acting as an assistant headteacher while day to day management was carried out by his deputy. The acting head of sixth form and her tutors ensure that students in the sixth form act as excellent role models for younger students. The success of the sixth form contributes to the very strong school ethos of hard work and achievement. Students in the sixth form are treated differently to their younger contemporaries.

They have both more responsibility and slightly more freedom, yet the sixth form is very much connected to and integral to the success and good reputation of the school.

110. The integration of girls into a predominantly male environment is well managed. The girls themselves report that they feel welcomed and confident to play a full part in sixth form activities. Although their performance at A-level does not yet match that of the boys, the school is aware of the problem and is investigating ways in which their potential can be more fully realised.
111. The sixth form aims to promote both academic excellence and personal development. These aims are understood by all. The highly visible and successful presence of sixth form students contributes to the ethos and reputation of the school as a whole. This is recognised by students, staff and governors and reflected in the standards achieved not just by sixth formers but by pupils at all stages in the school.
112. Monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the sixth form are good. There is a sharp focus on reviewing and improving examination success. As in the main school, extensive data, including value added data in relation to prior GCSE performance is produced. This provides a very good basis for analysis. Head of departments are expected to identify strategies to raise standards further. The monitoring of teaching is less rigorously promoted, and while this is satisfactory, there are inconsistencies between subjects. Lesson observations, both by peers and senior management, are not well-established, and mechanisms to ensure that best practice is shared are not securely in place.
113. The governing body is well informed of the performance of the sixth form, although there is no single governor with responsibility for sixth form matters. They play an active role in contributing to the constant drive to raise standards of achievement still further. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of individual departments and ready to intervene when appropriate.

Resources

114. Sixth form provision is cost effective and the school manages both high retention and course completion rates. In addition the high standards that are achieved along with good average class sizes in the sixth form indicate good value for money. Although there are some small sixth form classes in modern languages for example, the average student teacher ratio in the sixth form is almost 13:1. The school seeks to apply the principles of best value whenever possible and a number of governors have extensive commercial and business experience.
115. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Students are well supported by the range of adequate learning resources available and the sixth form accommodation, which provides satisfactorily for their needs. Access to computers is adequate and library resources are satisfactory overall for sixth form study.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

116. In order to maintain and improve standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Review the roles and responsibilities for the senior management team, implement the shadow management structure as soon as practicable, and improve the arrangements for performance management and the overall monitoring of teaching (see paragraphs 94, 95, 105 and 112).
- (2) Adopt a more consistent approach to assessment in all subjects and use the range of assessment data available to inform planning and set targets for pupils (see paragraphs 41, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 125, 142, 152, 174, 182 and 252) by:
 - improving the co-ordination and management of assessment to ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability;
 - ensuring that assessment data is analysed at subject and class level to better inform both curricular and development planning;
 - developing more consistent systems for assessing pupils' performance and monitoring their progress.
- (3) Improve the access to and the use of information and communication technology in all subjects (see paragraphs 31, 108, 134, 141, 174, 183, 187, 201, 206, 217 and 228) by:
 - implementing the school's plan for more computer resources and improved network access;
 - ensuring that staff training matches the developmental needs within all subjects.
- (4) Improve the quality, adequacy and use of the accommodation (see paragraphs 30, 107, 135, 187, 195 and 214).

Sixth form

- (1) Continue to raise the percentage of students achieving the highest grades at A-level (see paragraphs 16, 47, 50 and 51) by:
 - improving the levels of challenge of the highest attaining students;
 - using assessment data more rigorously to plan work for their needs;
 - ensuring greater opportunities for active learning in lessons;
 - monitoring and sharing good teaching and learning practice more rigorously.
- (2) Improve the achievements of girls (see paragraphs 15, 17, 71, 85 and 110) by:
 - ensuring that they are given support at the start of their courses to catch up if necessary;
 - reviewing teaching and learning styles to engage and involve girls more effectively.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	111
	Sixth form	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	4	32	43	31	1	0	0
Percentage	3.6	28.8	38.7	27.9	0.9	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	7	7	26	8	0	0	0
Percentage	14.6	14.6	54.2	16.6	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	753	184
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28	n/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	36	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	9.1
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National comparative data	1.1
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	149	0	149

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	140	134	132
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	140	134	132
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	94 (86)	91 (82)	89 (86)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	66 (33)	78 (61)	60 (58)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	137	135	134
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	137	135	134
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	93 (81)	91 (81)	90 (86)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	55 (43)	68 (58)	48 (52)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	127	0	127

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	105	125	127
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	105	125	127
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	83 (83)	98 (99)	100 (99)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per pupil	School	54.9 (57.0)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	73	7	80

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	86	7	93
	Average point score per candidate	19.9	17	19.7
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	73	7	80	13	0	13
	Average point score per candidate	21.6	17	21.2	10.2	n/a	10.2
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	677
Any other minority ethnic group	7

Nb The data is incomplete because the school does not hold comprehensive figures

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	51	1
Other minority ethnic groups	3	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.1
Key Stage 4	21.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	2,777,108
Total expenditure	2,768,907
Expenditure per pupil	3,172
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,348
Balance carried forward to next year	49,549

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	937
Number of questionnaires returned	766

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	42	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	55	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	52	15	2	1
The teaching is good.	36	57	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	43	10	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	37	7	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	46	13	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	54	40	3	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	43	6	1	4

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Well above average test and examination results in Years 9 and 11, the consequence of high expectations and good subject knowledge and understanding.
- Outstanding progress and achievement in the 2001 GCSE examinations.
- Good teaching which improves the pupils' writing and reading skills.

Areas for improvement

- Aspects of the subject leadership and management: monitoring procedures; evaluation and development of teaching and learning; collaborative curriculum development.
- The quality and quantity of marking in the drafting books.
- Target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress.

117. Good specialist teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes help them to achieve well above average standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. The teachers have high expectations with respect to the amount, range and quality of work that the pupils do. Despite these clear strengths there is a lack of consistency in some of the department's procedures and not enough formal monitoring, evaluation, development and support for teaching and learning.

118. In the 2001 end of Year 9 national tests standards were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. Standards were very high in comparison with boys nationally. These results represent good achievement in relation to the pupils' attainment on entry in Year 7. Results have been well above average for the last four years.

119. In the 2001 GCSE English examination the proportion achieving grades A* to C was well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The results represent an outstanding achievement that places the pupils in the highest five per cent when compared with pupils who had started their GCSE courses with similar prior standards. About one in five gained grade A or A*. On average the pupils outperformed boys nationally by one whole grade. The results fell slightly from those in 2000 but are broadly in line with those of 1999. In the 2001 GCSE English literature examination the proportion at grades A* to C was significantly above the national average. It exceeded the national average for boys by 30 per cent. These figures represent very good achievement given that the school entered more pupils than most schools.

120. In work seen in the current Year 9 standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are well above average, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well given their attainment on entry. Most are confident and fluent speakers whether describing events or explaining and supporting their opinions. A very small number are less confident but their standards are at least average. Most pupils are fluent readers, and have a strong command of higher reading skills. One group of Year 9 pupils not only located information efficiently from a range of texts but also made intelligent critical inferences about the reliability of the information. A very small number are less fluent, and their oral and written answers show a tendency to be more literal in their comprehension. Many write with accuracy in a range of contexts: narrative, explanatory, analytical and argumentative. A significant number of very high attainers also use precise and imaginative language. Several 'stream of consciousness' pieces on Macbeth's mood swings during the banquet scene were highly engaging and carefully crafted. Occasional lapses in spelling mar the work of some pupils.

121. Standards are well above average in the current Year 11 across all aspects of English, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to achieve well. Many pupils' standards of speaking and listening are very high. The vast majority are confident and fluent in

prepared and improvised contexts, despite some lapses in standard English when speaking in a formal setting. Standards of reading are well above average, and are a strength of the work in English. Pupils' course work shows a consistently high standard of analytical, evaluative and discursive writing about a range of literature, including non-fiction and media texts such as film. The best focus very effectively on the use of language, such as the impact of Brutus' lines following Caesar's assassination. A small proportion of pupils are at the average or below average level because, despite secure knowledge, they are not analytical enough. Standards of writing are well above average. Most pupils effectively use a wide range of vocabulary: an incident in a text becomes 'a pivotal point', and characters are portrayed with empathy, sensitivity and conviction through the pupils' creative writing. Nearly all pupils make significant gains in increasing the amount they write while improving its organisation, structure and clarity. A few are below average. Although making good progress in relation to previous standards, they make too many technical errors and lack clarity in their expression.

122. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress and succeed in examinations, because teachers plan appropriate work for them. In Year 11 effective additional support helps some with tasks such as course work completion.
123. Overall provision for the development of literacy in English and across other subjects is good. Most subjects take opportunities to introduce and use appropriate subject vocabulary, and to stress accuracy in writing. Pupils are taught how to take notes efficiently and many subjects encourage pupils to speak at length about issues. Although nearly all pupils use computers to word process work not all have the chance to use computers enough in school. ICT skills are not mapped out with a clear sense of progression and increasing challenge.
124. Overall standards of teaching and learning are good throughout Years 7 to 11. The teachers' subject expertise results in excellent coverage of the GCSE course. Consequently, the pupils are thoroughly prepared in terms of their knowledge and writing. This is confirmed by the quality of planning, organisation and analysis in the pupils' course work. Thorough preparation for the end of year national tests was a strong feature of Year 9 teaching. In one group a helpful matrix helped the pupils to record the secret thoughts of Henry V when he exposed those who plotted against him. In another class the same scene was approached by a lively 'thought-tracking' activity, which greatly enthused the pupils. A supportive emphasis on examination technique lays the foundation for success. However, pupils are not merely spoon-fed, and teachers are careful to make pupils think and analyse in depth. An excellent Year 10 lesson observed was characterised by high expectations and independent and active learning. Expectations are consistently high. The marking of essays at grade A sometimes includes comments which begin: 'Now, to get an A*...' Further evidence of the independence with which pupils work was seen in the highly individual analyses of the dramatic impact of characterisation in 'East is East' and on the realisation of the hero motif in 'Gladiator'. Pupils' writing was lively, their response intelligent and thoughtful. The working atmosphere in lessons is often very good. In a Year 11 lesson the pupils evaluated the work of others with genuine respect and sensitivity. This was a direct result of the teacher's high expectations and confidence in the pupils' ability to do well. Good use of pair and group work leads to enthusiastic learning. Only in one class were there signs of a small degree of low motivation. Homework is a real strength: it consolidates learning and challenges the pupils' thinking.
125. There are some issues for improvement. The marking of the drafting books is not satisfactory. Many comments are brief, with no specific judgement about what was good or specific advice on how to improve. In some books marking is inadequate and pupils are not getting enough feedback. Some procedures lack consistency. In Years 7 to 9 the volume of formal writing differs from class to class. The use of National Curriculum levels is increasing but is not consistent. In lessons, chances to reinforce learning points are missed because the teachers do not tell the pupils the learning aims for the lessons or give them the chance to explain what they have learnt at the end. Not all teachers use the same symbol or marks to assess GCSE course work.

126. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and the range of challenging GCSE assignments reflects the teachers' high aspirations for the pupils. Coverage of the GCSE syllabus is very good. A coherent curriculum that includes relevant strands of the National Literacy Strategy is emerging for Years 7 to 9. Pupils are presented with a good range of challenging literature. The pupils benefit from a busy programme of theatre visits - although there are no formal drama lessons.
127. However, there are some shortcomings in leadership and management. The monitoring, development and support of teaching and learning are not systematic and therefore ineffective. Compliance with departmental procedures is not monitored closely enough so leading to the inconsistencies already mentioned. Teachers are not effectively using the school's comprehensive assessment data to set targets for each pupil in all years and to track and support progress towards those targets. Although there is some sharing of ideas and materials, there is not enough systematic collaboration in the production of schemes of work and teaching and learning materials.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The very high standards attained at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 promoted by consistently good teaching.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and awareness of examination requirements.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and involvement in their work.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring to share strengths and identify areas for further improvement.
- Catering for the spread of ability and further challenging the most able.
- Developing ICT in line with National Curriculum demands.

128. In the 2001 national tests in mathematics, standards were well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. Over the last three years, results have remained well above national averages and increased in line with the national trend. In 2001 the performance in mathematics was broadly in line with English and science. In relation to pupils' standards on entry to the school, achievement is good.
129. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, the number of A* to C grades in mathematics was well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The number of A* to C grades has increased over the past three years whereas the average point score, which takes account of all pupils, dropped in 2001. The subject residuals in 2001 indicate that relative to their performance in other subjects, pupils did significantly better in mathematics than in the other subjects which they took.
130. On the evidence of the pupils' work and the lessons observed, standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average, and pupils' achieve well through Years 7 to 9. The work covers all aspects of the subject with a good emphasis on using and applying mathematics. Pupils can identify patterns in linear sequences and draw scattergraphs to find relationships between variables. Higher attaining pupils can confidently and accurately solve simultaneous equations, solve equations using the formula and interpret cumulative frequency graphs. In work seen in Year 11, standards are well above national averages, and pupils continue to achieve well. Pupils have a good knowledge of trigonometry and can find the general term of a linear and quadratic sequence. Higher attaining pupils have a good idea of circle theorems and can use the sine and cosine rules to calculate the lengths and sides of any triangle. Throughout Years 7 to 11, pupils' thinking skills are not sufficiently developed and extended.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout Years 7 to 11. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a good awareness of examination requirements, which provides a consistent focus for lessons and homework. Lessons get off to a prompt start and the pace is quick. High expectations are constantly reiterated and teachers enjoy positive and productive relationships with their pupils. However, lesson planning is often informal and learning objectives are rarely shared. As a consequence insufficient attention is given to the spread of ability especially in Year 7 mixed ability classes where all pupils do the same work. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the individual strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. In a Year 11 lesson observed on completing the square, the teacher made very good use of pupils' prior learning to look at gradient functions and then challenge pupils' thinking about imaginary numbers. Homework and revision assignments are set regularly and detailed information is kept centrally and converted into levels and grades as a basis for target setting.
132. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, making a strong contribution to their overall achievements. In lessons, they listen carefully and attentively to the teacher. They immerse themselves fully in their work, take personal responsibility and want to do well. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with the teacher and with each other. In a Year 9 lesson observed for example, pupils sensitively supported one another in understanding how to simplify algebraic expressions containing negative terms.
133. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers have a very good awareness of pupils' individual needs but individual education plans do not make specific reference to numeracy or include numeracy targets. Learning support assistants, where present, offer good support to pupils and, in some lessons, sixth form students also offer help and encouragement. The provision for higher attaining pupils is mostly good but at times there is insufficient challenge in the work set.
134. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and schemes of work have recently been aligned to take account of the changes in the National Curriculum. Curriculum links with primary school are underdeveloped so that the department is mostly unaware of the work undertaken in partner schools. As a consequence too much work in Year 7 repeats that already covered and progress is not so rapid at the start of Year 7. The provision for literacy is satisfactory. However the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. Although Year 7 pupils draw geometric shapes modelling the use of LOGO and undertake work, often at home, to create patterns of tessellations, and Year 11 pupils word process their GCSE coursework, overall access to computers is inadequate. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is good and number work is developed effectively in several subjects. Pupils use numbers accurately and apply skills confidently.
135. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department engenders a strong team spirit among her team of teachers and she has a good awareness of the department. However monitoring is insufficient to share strengths, identify weaknesses and ensure consistency. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the department has maintained the high academic standards highlighted in the last inspection report.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection because of consistently good teaching and learning and good curriculum provision.
- Teachers' very strong subject knowledge and the regular setting, completion and marking of homework results in the boys making good gains in their scientific knowledge and understanding.
- The pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attitudes to learning are very good because of the interest which teachers generate in the subject and their insistence on high personal standards and work ethic.

Areas for improvement

- Access to and use of information and communication technology.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of the accommodation and display which is unsatisfactory.• The use of target setting to give pupils specific areas to focus their learning on. |
|---|

136. Standards in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 9 were well above the national average as they have been for the past four years; they were also above average compared with similar schools. Science results were very strong but not quite as strong as those in English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, standards have risen in line with the national trend. At GCSE all pupils take double award science; this is a much higher proportion than most comprehensive schools reflecting the high emphasis given to the subject in the school. Standards in 2001 were well above average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Impressively, standards last year were in the top five per cent of similar schools strongly indicating that the pupils achieved very highly during Years 10 and 11.
137. Standards seen in the inspection at the end of both Year 9 and 11 are also well above average. Pupils' achievements are good through Years 7 to 9 and very good through Years 10 and 11. In all years pupils have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of physics, chemistry and biology. They demonstrate good skills in practical work and work safely. However the pupils' capacity to analyse and evaluate data obtained from investigations is not as strong as their ability to plan and carry out fair tests. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good and their behaviour in class is excellent as a direct result of the consistently high expectations for them to work hard. By the end of Year 9 pupils routinely use the names, symbols and scientific terms for frequently encountered substances and processes and many can confidently use word equations for chemical reactions. In biology they can recall the major components of the blood and explain the job each one does and in physics, pupils can link cause and effect.
138. By the end of Year 11 pupils' knowledge and understanding is often impressive. For example, in the fast-track group most pupils could confidently link the ideas that the loud sounds they hear have a higher amplitude than softer sounds and that this is related to the greater distance moved by the air particles that are vibrating. Pupils of lower ability were seen further developing their understanding of how the discovery of metals was linked to their relative reactivity and famous scientists predicting the methods that might be used to extract them. Pupils demonstrate accurate use of scientific conventions and terminology, for example in writing balanced chemical equations using the correct symbols for elements and compounds and in explaining the principles of genetics.
139. Pupils' written work is very well presented, with few grammatical or spelling errors, and the subject makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. There is very good use of mathematics calculations, transposition of formulae and graphical work, especially but not exclusively in physics. The department has recently acquired some computers but there is currently a low use of them to enhance standards.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, and sometimes better throughout Years 7 to 11. Teaching in physics is particularly strong and often has a strong focus on interpreting evidence from first hand investigations. Characteristics of the most effective teaching are well-developed teaching routines, very good subject knowledge and understanding and the effective use of homework to extend and reinforce learning. Some very good teaching was seen in which these elements were evident such as in a Year 10 physics lesson in which pupils were introduced to the ideas of how to make a simple reaction timer. Pupils made very good progress as a result of very challenging teaching within a well planned lesson. The subject was brought alive by an imaginative and lively approach. Learning was reinforced at the end of the lesson by a well-managed review of the key learning points. However not all lessons followed this good practice. Others fail to make clear to pupils at the start of the lesson the key learning points to be covered.
141. The curriculum is well structured and meets statutory requirements. Good emphasis is placed on developing experimental and investigative science in Years 7 to 9. Some work encourages pupils to make sense of the evidence that they had collected, often using quantitative methods well. Computers, however, are not used extensively to support and enhance learning.

142. Leadership and management of the subject are good, and the department has a clear strategy for improvement. However monitoring of both teaching and learning is insufficiently formalised. There are effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment, and progress is monitored carefully. Marking is often thorough but in many cases could be more evaluative. Target setting in science is underdeveloped. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and high standards have been maintained. The quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory overall with some laboratories being poor and deteriorating. Some of the laboratory furniture and flooring constitute health and safety hazards as they are not fixed securely and present sharp edges.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Good management and teaching are securing good achievement and above average standards.
- Above average results, in the GCSE examinations, as a result of good teaching and learning.
- The use of information and communication technology to inform and support teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for studying the art of other cultures.
- The provision of resources and equipment for three-dimensional work.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress.

143. In the 2001 GCSE examinations one hundred per cent of candidates gained A* to C passes with a good proportion gaining A* and A grades. These results are significantly above results nationally. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001, 81 per cent of pupils reached Level 5, above the national average of 73 per cent.
144. Standards are above average by the end of Year 9. Given that pupils' attainment is average on entry in art, they make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 9 pupils can use different techniques to combine a variety of media and build up layered effects based on close observations. The majority have a good control of a range of different media, observation skills are good and pupils can apply colour sensitively. They are beginning to understand perspective and how to create space and depth through line and tone, light and shade. Work in three dimensions indicates that pupils know the properties of clay and understand how it can be used. Across all years pupils are given opportunities to use and develop literacy skills, especially specialist art vocabulary. ICT is used for researching and scanning images, annotating work in sketchbooks and labelling finished work on display. The digital camera is well used for contextual and portrait work of older pupils.
145. Standards of work seen in the current Years 10 and 11 are above average. Pupils make good progress in meeting the criteria for their chosen themes, and their achievements are good. Working with increased independence, they can generate ideas for their chosen themes, investigate materials and produce a good range of support work in their sketchbooks. However, the quantity of work produced is small and there is very little evidence of three-dimensional work, something the department is working to overcome. High attaining pupils have developed their own style and way of working, showing flair and imagination in their work.
146. Throughout Years 7 to 11, the overall quality of teaching, satisfactory at the last report, is good because of the high expectations for pupils' learning and the teaching of basic skills especially in Years 7 to 9. Pupils learn well, especially when they are learning new skills, and put a great deal of creative effort into their work. Year 10 and 11 pupils respond well to the high standards set for their developmental and finished work. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge and make good use of specialist resources. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher's expertise enabled her to demonstrate and explain with confidence how to replicate the surface effects of paintings studied. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that high standards are set for learning and

behaviour. However, in some less successful lessons, the introduction to the lesson goes on too long and pupils lose the key points. As a result the teacher has to spend time clarifying the techniques and processes involved. Good use is made of key words, questions and the works of other artists to stimulate and extend pupils' ideas. Planning includes clear targets and methods for all pupils to learn. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and given good support in lessons. Several of these pupils show considerable flair in their work. Displays of pupils' and teachers' work are used effectively to demonstrate what is expected. Homework is well used to extend learning and further develop skills. Assessment is not used consistently to inform the planning of lessons and pupils are not sufficiently informed of their progress especially in Years 7 to 9. Grades awarded do not reflect descriptors in the National Curriculum. Pupils' attitudes are good throughout, and they take a great deal of pride in their work. High levels of motivation and commitment contribute strongly to overall levels of achievement.

147. Leadership and management of the subject are good, and overall improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have improved, but there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to spread good practice and raise the quality of provision to that of the best. While the curriculum is well planned, there is insufficient emphasis on art from other than Western cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and improving.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that students gain a good understanding of the subject.
- Good individual support for all students and this enables them to make very good progress.
- Good relationships between students and teachers create very good conditions for learning.

Areas for improvement

- The limited time given to pupils doing the GCSE short courses.
- Plan more specific work to meet the individual needs of students particularly for those who are gifted and talented.
- The use of National Curriculum levels and level descriptors to enable students to become more involved in setting their own targets for improvement.

148. Standards for students at the age of Year 9 are well above the national average. This is reflected in both the well above average teacher assessments of Year 9 students in 2001 and the work seen during the inspection. The achievement of all pupils including those with special educational needs is very good.
149. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 reach well above average standards across a range of activities including designing and making products in resistant materials, graphics, electronics and some opportunities in food products in Year 8. They use the guidance provided by teachers well and generally respond very well to the information provided in lessons. Pupils develop a very good range of graphic skills and pay very good attention to detail, quality and presentation. The use of ICT is good at this stage. Pupils present their work using desktop publishing, use the Internet, digital cameras and use specialist graphics software. All pupils in Year 8 use computers to control moving objects.
150. Achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is very good in both designing and making. Pupils use the design process in all three years. In the main, pupils research their work well and there is very good coverage of technical knowledge to underpin their design and make skills. This was seen in a Year 9 project where pupils were designing and making an alarm system. They researched and covered the knowledge about electronic circuits very well using textbooks as well as knowledge learned in class. There was less emphasis however on analysing other existing alarm systems. Some evidence of this was seen in the 'D' lock project. However,

market research and gaining information on consumer preferences are less well developed with pupils in Years 7 to 9. As a result they are inclined to develop a narrow range of ideas

151. Overall standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are above the national average, and pupils continue to achieve very well. Although the 2001 GCSE results of pupils doing the full course in design and technology were well above the national average, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades of pupils doing the short courses were only average. Pupils following both the GCSE full and short courses show a good range of research and investigation skills. Coursework is of good quality. Pupils use and apply the design process well and combine both designing and planning skills effectively. There is less emphasis, however, on analysing the information they have researched and showing how the information and ideas have influenced their own design ideas. Practical skills are of a good standard and pupils work confidently to master a very good range of skills. This was seen in a Year 11 resistant materials lesson, where pupils were designing and making a range of products based on producing storage and display cabinets. Pupils showed very good quality design work including detailed production drawings. They demonstrated a good range of construction skills to make their products using both traditional and modern methods of production. For example they used a variety of joints ranging from simple butt joints to more complex finger joints, deciding on which was the most appropriate for the purpose. Products are of very good quality among all pupils. Higher-attaining pupils work very accurately, while middle and lower-attaining pupils meet the requirements of the courses well.
152. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout Years 7 to 11. Lessons are well planned, teachers provide clear learning objectives and lessons are well structured to support pupils in their learning. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject, and pupils accept their guidance with confidence. In the most effective lessons, teachers prepare the pupils with a good foundation of knowledge, which enables them to test and experiment with a variety of ideas. This helps to increase their understanding of basic principles and pupils are able to consolidate their knowledge after testing and modifying ideas. This was seen in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were testing their models of bridges, which they had designed and built in groups. Their structures showed a good understanding of triangulation to reinforce and strengthen the basic structures. The teacher encouraged pupils to test and modify their designs, and as a consequence, pupils became more familiar with the various stresses and forces. This influenced their own thinking and pupils went on to produce a good variety of bridges which were strong enough to serve the purpose of taking high level loads. All pupils receive good individual support from teachers in lessons, and as a result, they achieve very well. Pupils develop good skills in literacy, emphasising the correct use of technical terms and encouraging the use of technical vocabulary associated with the subject. Pupils are encouraged to use the library for investigation and research. They confidently apply numeracy skills as they design, measure and mark out dimensions onto material. Teachers try to include all pupils in the learning activities, but some teachers lack a wide enough range of strategies to plan work which is suitably matched to individual needs, especially for those who are gifted and talented. As a result they are insufficiently challenged. Although there are good examples of marking, which is helpful in showing pupils how to improve, it is inconsistent across the department. Written feedback on the progress of examination coursework for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and the use of National Curriculum Levels and statements in Years 7 to 9 which describe each level is underdeveloped. As a consequence, pupils are not yet fully involved in setting their own targets for improvement.
153. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and they respond very well to teachers. They are enthusiastic and participate well in all classroom activities. Pupils concentrate very well in lessons and respond well to the high expectations of the teachers. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which provide good conditions for learning.
154. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department maintains good working relationships within the department, and staff work hard to maintain high levels of efficiency. Teaching and learning are monitored well and this has had a good impact on maintaining standards in the subject. However, inconsistencies in the quality of marking remain. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The department benefits from good

technician support. He makes a very effective contribution to the efficient running of the department and provides good support to pupils who need technical support and help with their design work.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good relationships and the clever use of humour create a positive environment in which pupils are motivated well.
- Good teaching gives pupils confidence and enables them to achieve well and attain above average standards.
- The leadership and management of geography are very good.
- The provision of new programmes of study make clear what skills the pupils are expected to develop and the sequence of lessons to be taught.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures need to be more analytical.
- More textbooks and video equipment are required to support learning and teaching.

155. Pupils' standards of attainment on entry in Year 7 are average. Standards observed in Years 7 to 9 and specifically in Year 9 are above average for the majority of pupils but for a substantial minority, they are considerably higher. This is in line with the teacher assessments made at the end of 2001, and is an improvement on standards reported at the time of the last inspection. The level of achievement overall is good.
156. Standards in Years 10 and 11 and specifically in Year 11 are above average, although a substantial minority of pupils is attaining standards well above average. This is also an improvement on standards at the time of the previous report. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C pass grades in 2001 was down on 2000, and the proportion gaining the higher A* and A grades was below average. Those figures, however, reflect the cohort's attainment at the end of Year 9 in 1999 with an average points score in line with the national average. Those results may have been affected adversely by entering too many of the lower attaining pupils for the higher tier papers. They would also have been affected by the lack of sufficient textbooks for independent use at home. Literacy skills are very varied with a reasonable minority of pupils throughout Years 7 to 11 spelling incorrectly and using poor English expression. The overall level of achievement in geography is good.
157. Pupils' attitudes generally are good. Pupils respond positively to good relationships and a level of support, particularly for any pupil with a problem, that encourages confidence and generates a reciprocal interest. In the most effective lessons pupils are enthusiastic and very well motivated. In a minority of lessons, poor social skills oblige teachers to spend a disproportionate amount of time in keeping pupils controlled and focused on their work. Sometimes this may arise because work is insufficiently challenging but on occasion non-co-operation appears almost wilful. Although on these occasions, which are rare, the result is a degree of underachievement, learning is mostly good and in the better lessons it is very good.
158. Pupils arrive to their lessons ready and equipped to work, respond well to challenging teaching and sustain a high level of concentration. They volunteer to answer questions and work very co-operatively in groups to discuss geographical issues sensibly with each other and their teachers. This is an improvement on the last report. A Year 9 class organised into three groups made notes from a video on energy sources, the way energy is used and how it is wasted. Afterwards they discussed this evidence with enthusiasm volunteering suggestions as to how energy might be saved in the school using radiator thermostats and movement sensors. In a Year 11 class, pupils worked in groups to identify the concepts of the "Green Revolution" and how it developed. They worked very well together listening to each other's views considerably

before coming to a consensus opinion on its outcomes. The quality of learning for those with special needs is also generally good because of the level of individual support received from teachers and in some cases because of the effective use of differentiated resources.

159. The quality of teaching overall throughout Years 7 to 11 is good; much of it is very good. This is a significant improvement on the previous report. An outstanding feature of most lessons is the wide variety of well-planned activities in the programme of study. This allied to the strength of the teachers' subject expertise arouses interest and in some instances enthusiasm and lessons tend to move with a brisk pace. The quality of teachers' relationships with pupils is generally good. This arises because teachers have a genuine commitment to getting pupils to realise the teachers' high expectations of them and because they can use humour very effectively to encourage and to explain. Work is demanding and frequently requires pupils to research information using resource documents or websites, thereby developing their independent learning skills. Teachers pose challenging questions that, for example, provoke Year 10 pupils to think hard and determine for themselves how economic developments in a developing country will in the short term affect birth and death rates and consequently the whole structure of its population. Above average pupils are able to go further and determine the long-term social and economic consequences for the country. During each lesson there is a great deal of individual support for pupils who are identified as having special educational needs. That support is strong and unobtrusively directed and accounts for the good progress made by those pupils.
160. On occasions, pupils are allowed to dominate lessons with questions and comments that may not be wholly relevant or necessarily add to general learning. When activities are insufficiently challenging, then attitudes are not positive and teachers have to spend a disproportionate amount of time keeping pupils focused.
161. Leadership and management of geography are very good. New programmes of study have been written and the department's handbook has been revised. The development plans reveal a clear and positive vision for the future development of geography but would benefit by having more detailed short and long term objectives. The lack of resources, particularly textbooks and video has had an adverse effect on standards. Assessment generally is good. Marking is done thoroughly and assessments are used to monitor progress. However in not using National Curriculum levels or examination board criteria, which are more meaningful, the system is not sufficiently informative or analytical. A substantial volume of local fieldwork and planned residential visits has been organised. Since the last inspection report, standards have improved in all year groups, the quality of teaching has improved, the programmes of study are well prepared and there is a growing programme of fieldwork to support learning and stimulate personal and social development. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to gain confidence and achieve success.
- The department provides very good support for the development of literacy.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding enables them to respond clearly to pupils' queries.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to reflect on the moral issues reflected in the topics studied.
- The choice of topics provides pupils with a good understanding of the development of the modern world.

Areas for improvement

- Extend the very good opportunities for pupils' self assessment in the sixth form to the rest of the school, to enable pupils to understand areas for improvement.

- Develop display in order to extend learning opportunities and to provide a more stimulating environment for pupils.
- Extend the good use of source material to include other forms of primary sources through visits that would provide opportunities for first hand investigation.
- Investigate alternative methods of teaching in order to provide for a wider range of learning styles.

162. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate standards well above the national average in 2001. Assessments since the last inspection have been rising. Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were well above the national average for A* to C grades, and above average for the highest grades A* and A. All boys have achieved a pass grade in history over the last three years.
163. In work seen during the inspection, pupils are achieving above average standards by Year 9. This represents good achievement. By Year 9, pupils have a good overview of the topics studied and are able to select and extract information from books and the Internet. They recognise the value of sources to the historian and suggest motives that may affect their reliability. Understanding the need for cross-referencing material is less secure. In project work they demonstrate good research skills, for example in their investigation into aspects of the 1st World War. Higher attaining pupils provide clear, reasoned explanations for their choice of topic and link different aspects of it. Pupils are beginning to reflect on the quality of their work and can identify strengths in the work of others. They are keen to respond to questions and with good teacher questioning, they are encouraged to develop their answers and achieve a higher level of response as a consequence. Written answers are less developed, and without prompting many pupils do not include more than the minimum they feel is required. Oral work enables pupils to express their ideas to the class and they achieve a higher level of fluency than in their written responses. Pupils enjoy opportunities to use computers to present their work and are achieving a good standard when using 'Publisher' to present newspaper reports of past events, such as the report on the Battle of Hastings undertaken by Year 7.
164. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of their deliberate inclusion in questioning by teachers, and the use of group work that enables them to listen to a range of views before making their own judgements. The involvement of the sixth formers as support for younger pupils has a positive effect upon the achievement and confidence of both parties.
165. In work seen during the inspection, pupils following the GCSE course reach above average standards and are achieving well. Coursework demonstrates that they can select and organise information in order to demonstrate clear understanding of different viewpoints, such as over the war in Vietnam. Higher attaining pupils explain how the different views develop and recognise their effects upon subsequent actions. Most pupils use written sources with confidence to obtain information and are aware that the motive for writing must be taken into account when considering their reliability. The use of written source material is a strength of the department and pupils' comprehension skills support this work. They are able to compose their work in clearly planned essays that display confidence and understanding. Pupils enjoy discussion and respond enthusiastically in class. Supported by good questioning from teachers, they are encouraged to develop their responses and many demonstrate thoughtful analysis of points made. Short written responses in class do not reach the same standard and a significant proportion of pupils are often reluctant to write more than the minimum. Pupils take responsibility for making their own notes from textbooks, explaining key words and summarising their notes in response to questions, identifying the key characteristics of the period studied. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress supported by the class and group oral work that enables them to consider different responses before composing their own.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout Years 7 to 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject that they communicate to their pupils. Some excellent teaching was observed where the skilful questioning and listening of the teacher encouraged pupils to achieve a much higher level of response than might have been expected. Where teaching is very good the objectives are clear and the good use of questioning encourages pupils to develop their responses further and to approach their studies in a mature

fashion. For example, a class of Year 7 boys discussed the merits of a fellow pupil's essay in a very mature and astute manner. Pupils are confident that their teachers will lead them to exam success, and in the best lessons seen they were given the opportunity to reflect upon their work without a reduction in the pace. Where teaching is less successful pupils become listeners, questions being used merely to punctuate the teachers' delivery. Pupils clearly work best when they are active learners, but will generally accept a more passive and less productive role. A limited range of teaching and learning styles was observed and the lack of alternative methods of recording information could disadvantage some pupils. Essay marking is generally thorough, providing good information to pupils as to how to move forward. Pupils have the opportunity to evaluate their work at the end of a topic and set themselves targets, but as yet there is no teacher comment to enable pupils to measure the accuracy of their judgement, and there is no system by which they are accountable for their progress in reaching their targets.

167. The quality of leadership and management is good. The department has identified appropriate targets for development and is committed to improvement. All teachers have been observed teaching by the head of department, however time for mutual observation is limited and this reduces the opportunity to share good practice. The department is well organised and records are in the process of being entered on computer to make them easy to access by staff. There is no link with other departments however, in order to compare pupils' progress in other subjects until the annual whole school review of results. Appropriate efforts have been made to minimise the effects of a teacher leaving mid-year and pupils have responded well. The department is well resourced with books and videos, however display is not used to extend learning or to stimulate interest. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to undertake first hand investigation through visits or visitors. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Strengths

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- All pupils take an examination in ICT.

Areas for improvement

- The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are not sufficiently thorough and assessment is not used effectively for developing ICT provision.
- Staffing, resources and accommodation are unsatisfactory and inhibit teaching and learning.

168. The school's assessment of attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show a well above average percentage of pupils reaching expected levels, although fewer pupils reach the highest levels than they do nationally. At the end of Year 11 in the full GCSE exam, which about a third of the pupils sat in 2001, standards were well above average, with 74 per cent of pupils gaining grades in the A* to C range. GCSE results have improved steadily overall in the last four years. The school also entered pupils for a short GCSE course at the end of Year 10 and standards were low with only 32 per cent of pupils gaining grades in the A* to C range.
169. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. Pupils achieve well given their prior attainment on entry in Year 7. The highest attaining pupils are able to design relational databases as a solution to data handling problems which involve simple but realistic financial or management situations. Most pupils use spreadsheets effectively to make predictions. Their skill in using information technology to communicate information, say in the form of newspapers or multimedia displays, is average.
170. Pupils also reach above average standards by the end of Year 11, consolidating and extending the skills and knowledge learned earlier. Their achievements throughout Years 10 and 11 are good. They have a good understanding of computer systems and how they are used in the 'real

world'. They are able to incorporate text from Internet research as well as vector-drawings and bit-mapped images they have produced themselves to enliven designs. Pupils in art lessons use scanned images and digital photographs very effectively as a basis for paintings and portraiture. Less well developed is the ability to devise sequences of instructions for controlling devices connected to a computer.

171. Teaching and learning are good throughout Years 7 to 11. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and this is reflected in the learning during most lessons. The quality of learning is improved by the very good attitudes of the pupils, who are very well behaved, and show a high level of commitment and enthusiasm. This plays an important part in the examination courses when pupils are expected to work at home or after school in the computer rooms. Teachers set work which is demanding and requires pupils to apply knowledge and skills developed previously, encouraging experimentation and discussion. Discipline in lessons is good, enabling the teacher to support individuals whilst the others press on. Relationships are good and pupils are happy to consult each other for advice and help. In the most effective lessons, teachers provide good visual models for pupils to work towards, with demonstrations to show how pupils can make improvements. In a Year 7 lesson observed, the teacher demonstrated a well-designed multimedia program which inspired the pupils to see if they could match or exceed the graphics and effects. However, this does not always happen. In one lesson observed, for instance, the teacher relied on dictating notes and instructions, when points would have been put across more effectively as demonstrations or worksheets. This disadvantages the weaker pupils who can become confused, especially when they have to carry out a complex set of tasks in the correct order. Few lessons include a plenary to review progress. So, whilst pupils have a good idea of their test and homework marks, their understanding of how well they are doing on a regular basis is less secure. Permanent teachers know the pupils well and use this knowledge effectively in Years 10 and 11 to help pupils improve their work. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, the teacher used a large display to show the pupils how to improve the weaker aspects of their assignments. She gave them copies of this as a reminder of the approaching deadline.
172. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. The lack of taught ICT in Year 8 poses some problems of continuity although many pupils have computers at home which they use regularly. The use of ICT across the range of National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory but varies. Strengths are seen in history, art and design technology. Good examples of desktop publishing to produce newspapers, image manipulation and graphic design complement the mainly business-orientated topics taught by the ICT department. The modern languages department is also booking time in the computer rooms to develop its provision. The Internet is increasingly being used for research although teachers do not use electronic mail as part of their planned programme of study. Since the last inspection new examination courses have been introduced in Years 10 and 11 which have been tackled vigorously by both pupils and teachers. The GCSE short course is proving extremely difficult to cover as the timetable only allows a single period per week for one year. Last year time was lost through clashes with the work experience programme resulting in under achievement by pupils at all levels. The school should consider whether this is an appropriate way to ensure the pupils' entitlement to ICT in Years 10 and 11. Not all subject areas make good use of ICT to enhance learning and this aspect is unsatisfactory in mathematics, English and science.
173. The department makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, providing extra support and work tailored to their needs.
174. Whilst teachers use test and exam results to help pupils in target setting and grade prediction, they do not regularly and consistently assess attainment and progress with reference to National Curriculum Levels in Years 7 to 9. Staffing, accommodation and resources have improved since the last inspection but have not kept pace with rising pupil numbers and are now unsatisfactory. The four computer suites are in one separate block and access by different subjects is often limited. Departmental provision is very varied and only music, science and design technology have more than one or two computers. The school has well thought-out plans for developing provision with a whole school network and broadband Internet access. The school

has managed the shortage of specialist teachers well but subject expertise and confidence vary. The monitoring and development of teaching and staff training is not adequate to ensure the professional development of teachers and the sharing of good practice. The nationally funded ICT training scheme for the whole school staff has stalled.

175. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory and play a large part in the generally high standards that the department achieves. The school has a good vision for the development of ICT throughout the school. The enthusiastic and committed head of department sets a good example in teaching, giving up a generous amount of free time to satisfy the huge demand for the computer rooms at lunchtime and after school. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Standards achieved in GCSE examinations in French and Italian are well above national averages.
- The good quality of teaching and learning in both languages enables pupils to make good progress and develop their independence and confidence in French and Italian.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes towards their learning and excellent behaviour enable them to achieve well.
- The very effective management of the subject has led to significant improvements in standards achieved.
- The subject's contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation and access to specialist facilities, including ICT for all pupils.
- The use of assessment to plan for the progress of groups of differing ability within teaching groups.

176. Standards achieved by the end of Year 11 are well above national averages in both French and Italian. In 2001 standards attained at GCSE in French are well above average. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in French was well above average and in Italian it was high. In French the percentage of pupils entered for examination was much greater than the national average and in Italian too it was higher than the national average. In 2001 pupils achieved better in other subjects than they did in modern languages but standards of work seen during the inspection indicate significant and sustained improvement. Progress and achievement are good throughout Years 7 to 11, accelerating during Years 10 and 11 as pupils approach examinations.

177. By the end of Year 9 standards attained in French and Italian are above average overall. Pupils taking up Italian in Year 8 rapidly reach a similar standard to that in French. Teacher assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above was below average in 2001, however work seen during the inspection indicates that standards achieved by pupils currently in Years 7 to 9 are above average overall. By the end of Year 9 reading, writing and listening skills are very well developed, pupils identify the main points and specific detail from a good range of short texts containing familiar vocabulary and write accurately and in detail about their experiences. They respond promptly to questioning, describe events in response to visual cues and report what they have read or heard in the third person. They participate in dialogues to exchange opinions and preferences and give and gather information. A minority of pupils studying French, particularly lower attaining pupils, persist in spelling errors because their written work is not always thoroughly checked or corrected. A small number of pupils have difficulty with pronunciation in French and their confidence in speaking is adversely affected by their reliance upon written prompts and notes in speaking activities or because they see the written version before they have had enough time to practise. By the end of Year 9 all pupils have a very good understanding of grammar. Most are able to explain and apply rules effectively and average and higher attaining pupils are beginning to display independence and confidence in

expressing their views and recounting events. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, make good progress and achieve well, increasing their range of language and developing skills.

178. By the end of Year 11 standards in work seen are well above average in French and Italian. All pupils have a very good understanding of the way languages work and are able to identify, apply and explain patterns. They recall previously learned language with ease in response to visual prompts and questioning. Average and higher attaining pupils write at length and in detail, with good attention to accuracy. They express and justify their views and respond to the views of others on a variety of topics as well as describing events in detail. Pupils transfer language from one context to another with ease, adapting it successfully to suit their own needs. They write for a variety of purposes, obeying grammar rules and conventions, for example in both informal and formal letter writing. Listening and reading skills are very well developed; all pupils respond promptly and appropriately to instructions and questions in both French and Italian and understand the main points from texts. Speaking skills are above average overall; pupils respond appropriately in response to structured questioning but some hesitate and lack confidence when they have not been given sufficient time or opportunity to practise. All pupils make good progress and achieve well during Years 10 and 11.
179. Overall pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning, and behaviour is usually excellent. Pupils listen attentively, concentrate on tasks set and are concerned to do well. They respond with interest and enthusiasm when engaged in games, pair work activities or they are asked to think out problems for themselves. This is a major factor in developing their confidence as linguists. When given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own progress pupils are enthusiastic and ambitious.
180. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both French and Italian throughout Years 7 to 11. The teachers' enthusiasm and love of the languages they teach is a strength. This is communicated to pupils and they respond with interest and enthusiasm. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge and activities are conducted almost entirely in either French or Italian; as a result pupils are accustomed to hearing the languages and they respond promptly and appropriately. In a Year 8 Italian lesson pupils rapidly understood the pattern for describing the relative positions of pupils in the room and transferred this knowledge to describing places in a town because of very clear demonstrations, clear presentation of the structure on the board and the challenge set to pupils to identify and explain the rules for themselves. Teachers make very good use of resources such as flashcards, the board and the overhead projector to present new vocabulary and to give pupils practice in using it through participation in games. In a Year 9 French lesson pupils practised using adjectives through a game of noughts and crosses. They were keen to participate and as the game progressed their attention to accuracy increased. In all lessons objectives are clear and shared with pupils and learning is effectively reinforced through reviews at the end of each lesson.
181. Teachers manage pupils very well, have high expectations and usually present pupils with a high level of challenge. In the majority of lessons activities are well matched to pupils' needs and are well sequenced enabling them to build effectively on previous learning. This coupled with very effective monitoring and sensitive intervention while pupils complete tasks ensures all pupils make good progress. In a Year 8 French lesson pupils enjoyed participating in games and brainstorming activities to practise how to suggest leisure activities to others and were confident in using appropriate tenses and structures as a result.
182. The subject is very well led and managed. Since the last report there have been significant improvements in the standards achieved in French, in the quality of teaching and learning across the department and a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes towards their learning. Italian has been introduced successfully and has proved to be a popular choice. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The subject curriculum is enhanced by trips abroad, extra lessons for examination candidates and by pupils' access to native speakers on a regular basis. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are good but the use of assessment to plan for the progress of groups of differing ability within teaching

groups is not developed consistently across the department. Teachers work very well together as a team, sharing ideas and spreading good practice and are committed to achieving high standards. As a result they have a very good capacity to improve further. The department makes a valuable contribution to the development of pupils' literacy.

183. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. A large proportion of pupils do not have access to specialist facilities and are taught in unsuitable rooms or at a distance from the languages area. As a result the range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils involved is severely restricted. The department has identified opportunities to use ICT to support and extend pupils' learning but access to computers is inadequate so that they are unable to use the technology effectively or on a regular basis.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The high standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Teaching is good and often very good especially when opportunities are given to consolidate and review learning.
- The excellent quality and range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- The management of the department is good and there is strong commitment shown by other music staff.

Areas for improvement

- The quality and variety of teaching and rehearsal spaces means that practical work is severely restricted.
- Lack of opportunity for pupils to use ICT.

184. In 2001, teachers' assessments of work done by pupils at the end of Year 9 indicate that their attainment is well above average. Work seen during the inspection was above average, less high than the teachers' own assessments. However, pupils' achievements are good and between Years 7 and 9 pupils learn to become confident instrumentalists and can use musical language effectively in their work. A lesson for Year 7 pupils explored how particular music is used for different effects. Pupils were quick to recognise pieces of music and to discuss each one. Those pupils who have special educational needs are well supported in the classroom and all pupils make good progress.

185. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 are well above average. Work seen during the inspection confirms these figures, and pupils are achieving very well. Results in 2001 show a decline from previous years in the highest grades achieved, however these can be attributed to problems the department had in recruiting specialist staff prior to the examination. Evidence seen in lessons indicates that many Year 11 pupils are on course to achieve high grades. Pupils bring very good instrumental skills and knowledge to their work. Pupils in Year 10 listened to the opening theme of Frère Jacques. After a short practical session they were able to vary the theme by transposing it into a minor key, adding a counter melody or playing it as a round in pairs. Their application was impressive and they displayed a clear understanding of how to approach the task.

186. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In the most effective lessons, tasks are clearly explained and opportunity given for a review of learning at the end of the lesson. There is clarity of purpose and pupils are keen to do well. The display of subject vocabulary around the department makes a good impact on their literacy and pupils are encouraged to use musical language at all times. However at present there are limited opportunities for pupils to write about their own and others' music. This means that they are not so skilled at written evaluations of different pieces of music. Teaching is very well planned for examination ensuring activities are linked and mnemonics used to help pupils

remember different musical forms. Work is set appropriately to ensure that it suitable for all pupils. Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of how a ground bass is used. Other pupils show good awareness of instrumental colour and texture when composing. Pupils' melodic work and understanding of the use of chords is well developed.

187. The accommodation is restricted and the lack of small rehearsal spaces means that pupils' opportunities for practical work is limited. Practical work has to be undertaken in the classroom and pupils are to be commended for their application when working in close proximity to each other. On occasions time is wasted during lessons re-organising teaching rooms so that pupils can use percussion instruments or keyboards. Access to ICT is also limited.
188. A major strength of the department is the excellent variety and quality of extra curricular activities. Pupils display very good attitudes and the quality and commitment of those who attend these activities is high. Nearly a quarter of all pupils regularly participate in ensembles. Sixth form students are given the opportunity on occasions to direct rehearsals. Performances are held regularly including in London and European venues. Pupils from all year groups apply themselves studiously in rehearsals understanding musical points of phrase and style. High rehearsal standards are developed and the repertoire chosen for ensembles reflects a wide variety of musical styles from church music to traditional jazz arrangements of popular tunes. Pupils clearly enjoy their music making and offer support and encouragement to each other.
189. The department is well managed and improvement since the last inspection has been good. New procedures are being developed to monitor and assess work done by pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are involved in setting targets, although not all classes do this regularly. Pupils' practical work is not recorded regularly, and consequently pupils are not always clear how to improve their work. More effective systems are used for GCSE pupils, which include very clear and precise targets for improvements discussed individually with pupils. There are good links with instrumental teachers who work closely with the department especially to support examination pupils in their practical work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve good standards in GCSE examinations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good; teachers have very good knowledge and very high expectations of pupils.
- Standards are very high in rugby; school teams perform at a high level.
- Very good relationships and very positive pupils' attitudes contribute to a very purposeful atmosphere.
- Participation in extra curricular sporting activities is high.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of curriculum documentation and development planning are in need of further development.
- There is insufficient time for core physical education in Year 10 and 11; lack of time constrains breadth and depth of the curriculum.
- Both outdoor and indoor facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory; they constrain activities and learning.
- Access to computers is required in GCSE work in order to improve investigation and presentation.

190. Pupils enter Year 7 with below average skills, but due to very good teaching pupils by the end of Year 9 reach standards that are above average. Teacher assessments in 2001 indicate that standards are average; however, standards seen during the inspection are judged to be above average. Pupils, by the end of Year 11, demonstrate standards that are above average. Pupils who take GCSE reach well above average standards, although only a small number of pupils obtain A* and A grades. Within the core physical education programme Year 11 pupils also achieve above average standards.

191. The above average standards reached by the end of Year 9 represent good achievement by all pupils. Pupils by the end of Year 9, including those with special educational needs show competence in a range of physical activities. Swimming, rugby, gymnastics and football were seen during the inspection. In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils take partial responsibility for their own warm up; they know the reasons for warming up the body prior to taking part in physical activities, and understand some of the physiological changes that occur. High attaining pupils understand that the reasons for stretching are to minimise injury and maximise performance. In games, the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of the rules, and have appropriate skills to enable them to participate successfully. Pupils apply rules fairly and accept the decisions of those who officiate. Year 9 pupils in rugby pass the ball very well especially to the left with a minority being successful on both sides of the body. Pupils' passing skills are well developed and many do so at speed and under controlled pressure of opponents. The development and reinforcement of the pupils' literacy is successfully developed through key words and good use of technical language.

192. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 11 are above average, and pupils continue to achieve very well. These standards are further enhanced for many pupils through their involvement in extra curricular clubs, school teams and representative honours; almost half the pupils are involved in extra curricular sport. GCSE files show pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the circulatory, respiratory and skeletal systems and the effect that physical exercise has on the systems. Many understand the principles and different types of training. Pupils successfully develop their understanding and expertise in both theory and practical aspects. In theory lessons pupils make limited use of computers for investigation or to enhance presentation of their work. Year 10 pupils showed good individual skills of dribbling, controlling and passing in football and many used these individual skills effectively within a game. Many showed a good understanding of attacking and defensive heading of the football; high attaining pupils looked around them to see the opportunities available; however, the majority of pupils failed to successfully finish passing sequences. In a Year 10 rugby lesson observed, pupils made the ball available in close conditions using the pop-up pass very effectively. Pupils played the game very effectively at a

very fast pace and support for the ball carrier was strong. High attaining pupils very successfully scooped up the ball, at speed, from the ground, looped successfully to receive a return pass and changed the direction of attack. Pupils make very good progress and they are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment as they build on the basic skills learned in Years 7 to 9. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well-integrated into lessons and receive good support by teachers and their peers.

193. The quality of teaching and learning is very good across Years 7 to 11. Teachers show very good knowledge and understanding. This was seen in a Year 8 rugby lesson and Year 10 basketball lesson where very good knowledge of techniques resulted in very good progress being made. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort, levels of attainment and behaviour. Most pupils work very hard and maintain their efforts and concentration in all games and activities. They persevere, working on the basics but doing them to a very high level. Pupils work successfully in small groups, challenging and competing with one another constantly improving their performance. At the start of lessons teachers make very good use of questions and answers to reinforce the pupils' knowledge and understanding. To further improve examination results, methods are required to involve pupils more actively in their learning.
194. On-going teacher evaluation in lessons is very good. As a consequence pupils make very good progress; teachers evaluate, analyse and take action in order to improve individuals' skills and group learning. Overall, very good evaluation of movements, very good subject knowledge, very high expectations and very good relationships combine to ensure all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress in their learning. Teachers know their pupils well and adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of individual pupils.
195. Leadership and management of physical education are good. The recently appointed acting head of department has already identified areas for future development. Access to computers is limited, and accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. There is no dedicated room for GCSE theory, and overall facilities are poor. Progress since the previous inspection has been good.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Results are above average and show evidence of value added to prior attainment.
- Pupils have positive attitude to lessons and are interested in the subject.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject.
- Teaching is good and lessons are well planned.
- The department uses a variety of appropriate and effective teaching methods.
- Group work and independent learning are now strengths of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Successful learning and teaching strategies are not shared widely enough.
- The department does not use assessment information effectively enough to track progress and identify under achievement.
- Lower attaining pupils do not receive sufficient additional support.
- The use of ICT is insufficient.

196. Overall, standards in business studies are above national averages and this represents good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment. GCSE results in 2001 were well above average with 75 per cent gaining A* to C grades. Results in previous years have been consistently good with an above average percentage of the higher grades.
197. In work observed in Year 10 and 11 standards are above average and achievement is good in relation to prior attainment. Many boys are achieving at the highest level with detailed notebooks and developed analytical skills. Year 10 pupils were able to apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs to occupation case studies in a lesson on job satisfaction. Year 11 pupils were able to

confidently discuss the management of inflation, unemployment and interest rates for different parts of the business cycle. Some of the low attainers had difficulties with extended writing, organisation of notes and completion of tasks that often restricts their progress. Teachers are emphasising reading, the revision of key words and the use of the correct business studies terms and this is having a positive effect on achievement and literacy skills. A number of pupils would benefit from additional support in classes and the development of more differentiated material. Most pupils' numeracy skills are good enough to cope with the statistics, graphs and tables that are used in the subject. However, at present little use is made of computers.

198. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The majority of pupils work hard and want to do well. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and this enhances learning and progress. Pupils show respect for each other and are able to work collaboratively. It is only occasionally that chatter and poorer behaviour mean that some pupils are put off their tasks and lose concentration.
199. Teaching is good overall in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and this helps pupils develop their understanding. The confidence and enthusiasm of the teachers motivates the pupils and engages them in the work. Teachers challenge the pupils and this leads to high levels of interest, sustained concentration and considerable progress in many lessons. Lessons are generally well planned with clear objectives thus enabling pupils to work productively and at a good pace. Teaching is less effective when tasks are less structured, the pace is slower and there are longer deadlines for work. In a Year 11 lesson observed, pupils prepared group presentations on the suggested reasons for the rise in inflation rates in the UK. The exercise was demanding and enabled the pupils to apply earlier work on the management of the economy. The management of pupils is good with high expectations of behaviour. An impressive range of successful teaching strategies enables pupils to learn effectively. Pupils respond well to structured assignments and work well on individual and group tasks. In a Year 10 lesson observed, pupils made good progress when analysing the factors affecting motivation at work through a variety of appropriate activities such as brainstorming, group work, individual exercises, case studies and plenary feedback. Pupils make progress when they clearly understand the tasks and there is a balance between support by the teacher and independent group work. Pupils are encouraged to think independently and develop their analytical skills. Revision questions at the beginning of lessons on previous topics allow pupils to consolidate their knowledge. In a Year 11 lesson observed, pupils were able to review the main aspects of the product life cycle from the previous lesson and then apply it to the changing mobile phone market.
200. Teachers are able to involve the pupils in discussion and this leads to greater understanding and progress. They emphasise literacy skills by using a good range of written work for pupils and frequently require pupils to read to the class. As a result, pupils are confident in their use of words and this helps their learning and achievement. Marking is variable and does not always indicate how pupils can improve their work. Opportunities for sharing good teaching and learning have not been fully developed by the department.
201. The department is satisfactorily led by an experienced head of department. There is a committed team of teachers and departmental meetings are held on a regular basis, providing a forum for discussion on strategies for raising attainment. Lesson observations have been introduced as part of the performance management policy and this has the potential to lead to greater rigour in the teaching and learning. There is a considerable amount of statistical information available on pupils' prior attainment but this is not, as yet, well used by the department to track pupil progress and identify under achievement. Accommodation is adequate but displays of pupils' work are limited, and do not provide exemplars of what is expected at the higher grades. Resources are well used although the use of ICT is limited. The department has addressed most of the issues raised in the previous report, and improvement since then has been good.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, nine 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 2001

GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	33	88	71	30	33	2.4	2.3
Chemistry	11	100	87	73	42	4.3	2.9
Biology	18	94	84	44	36	3.3	2.6
Physics	17	82	86	35	41	2.6	2.8
Design and Technology	15	93	85	27	25	2.7	2.4
Business Studies	36	94	87	42	28	3.3	2.5
Economics	17	82	88	18	42	2.1	2.9
Computing	15	100	81	13	22	2.7	2.1
ICT	26	81	81	4	22	1.8	2.1
Physical Education	12	92	88	25	24	2.1	2.4
Art and Design	14	100	86	78	44	4.2	3.0
Music	14	100	95	36	44	2.9	3.2
Classical Studies	23	83	97	13	55	1.8	3.5
Geography	14	79	91	28	39	2.4	2.4
History	23	100	94	83	42	4.2	3.1
Religious Studies	5	60	92	0	41	0.8	3.0
English	34	100	95	32	37	3.2	2.9
French	4	100	91	100	48	4.8	3.1

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	18	100	89	61	43	7.8	5.8
Chemistry	10	90	92	20	43	5.2	5.9
Biology	15	93	88	20	34	4.8	5.2
Physics	9	78	89	56	40	5.3	5.7
Design and Technology	5	100	92	20	30	4.0	5.4
Business Studies	30	100	90	40	32	5.9	5.5
Economics	17	88	90	11	36	4.1	5.5
ICT	21	90	85	28	23	5.2	4.6
Physical Education	17	100	92	35	25	6.5	5.1
Art and Design	9	100	97	11	46	5.6	6.6
Music	3	67	95	33	35	4.7	5.7
Classical Studies	16	100	96	56	49	7.0	6.5
Geography	13	100	93	54	38	6.3	5.7
History	17	100	89	24	35	5.6	5.4
English	29	97	94	28	37	5.8	5.9
French	3	100	92	33	38	6.0	5.6
General Studies	79	81	85	20	30	4.0	4.9

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus during the inspection was on mathematics and chemistry.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- The high standards attained in A-level examinations.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and awareness of examination requirements.
- The students' very positive attitudes, high standards and commitment.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring to share strengths and identify areas for further improvement.
- Catering for the spread of ability and intellectually challenging the most able.
- Developing ICT in the sixth form.

202. Standards in the mathematics A-level examination in 2001 were well above national averages with all students achieving a pass grade and 58 per cent achieving the higher A and B grades. Results improved in 2001 and confirm a rising trend. Subject residuals in 2001 indicate that relative to their performance in other subjects, students did significantly better in mathematics than their other subjects. On the basis of their GCSE results in Year 11 and the entry levels required to continue A-level mathematics, achievement at the end of the sixth form is good. Students in Year 12 were also entered for the AS-level examination with 88 per cent of the students achieving a pass grade and 30 per cent achieving the higher A and B grades indicating achievement in line with expectations.
203. On the evidence of the students' work and the lessons observed, standards in Year 13 are well above average, and students achieve well given their attainment on entry to the sixth form. Work in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics, is well practised in preparation for external examinations. Students can solve quadratic equations, identify series and use differentiation to find the maximum volume of boxes, cylinders and enclosures. In mechanics they have a good understanding of Newton's laws of motion and use trigonometry well to resolve forces in different directions. Statistical work covers measures of location and dispersion as well as discrete and continuous random variables.
204. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. Lessons get off to a prompt start and teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and a good understanding of examination requirements. They have a very good awareness of the individual strengths and weaknesses of their students. Homework assignments are set regularly and marking includes useful and supportive comments on how to improve the work. Students have a good idea of their potential grades for A-level and a good awareness of what they must do to meet these grades. However, insufficient attention is given to the spread of ability in classes. In some lessons, teacher talk dominates and students spend too much time copying notes from the board.
205. Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are very good. Students enjoy positive, supportive and good-humoured relationships with the teacher and with one another. They are enthusiastic and interested in their studies and have high expectations of themselves and their work. Sixth form students also support pupils in Year 7 mathematics lessons.
206. The curriculum in the sixth form is limited to A-level mathematics and there is no provision for further mathematics. Folders are well kept with high standards of presentation and well-organised work. The department makes good use of technical vocabulary although reading around the subject is not sufficiently encouraged and the stock of available books in the library is inadequate. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory although students do use ICT at home to download revision material from the Internet to support their studies.
207. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum in the sixth form is good. Students demonstrate an awareness of number systems in ICT and number skills are well rehearsed in business studies for cash flow analyses while, in a Year 12 economics lesson, students interpreted and transformed graphs on supply and demand curves. Students collect, record, tabulate and interpret data in languages and they analyse break even graphs to good effect in business studies. In a Year 12 geography lesson, students used maps and scale to calculate distances and work out the nearest neighbour statistic to identify the pattern of settlements in an area while Year 13 students looked at forces and angular momentum as well as measuring the effective use of oxygen in sports studies. At present, there is no whole school numeracy policy to provide a coherent framework to develop students' numeracy skills.
208. Leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are good. The head of department engenders a strong team spirit among her team of teachers. However, monitoring is insufficiently regular and rigorous. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good and help to develop students' independence, a problem solving approach and inquisitive minds.
- Students are taught an interesting and relevant course that succeeds in developing their practical skills to a high level and giving them an astute awareness of the applications and consequences of chemistry in the world around them.

Areas for improvement

- Formal processes for diagnosing individual learning needs and identifying targets for improvement.
- The induction of students, particularly the girls, into the Year 12 course.
- The quality of the accommodation in chemistry is poor.

209. Standards at A-level in 2001 were below average, and some students did not realise their potential. The numbers reaching grade A or B was not as high as anticipated considering the standards reached by the same students at GCSE. Results in the previous three years have varied from below average to well above average, in relation to the prior attainment and ability of the students. Standards reached at AS-level were well above average.
210. Standards in the current Year 13 are well above average; achievement is good. All students are expected to reach at least a C grade and some the very highest grade. Many now exude confidence although some confirm that this has blossomed particularly in Year 13. Students' attitudes to work are excellent. Their written work is very well presented, up to date and thorough, reflecting good reading around the subject. In the two lessons observed students were investigating how some chemicals can selectively exchange one element for another and exploring the differences in reactivity between carbon compounds which each contained six carbon atoms joined in a ring. In each lesson students were applying the theory they had learnt and read about in private study with proficiency, often being able to apply their understanding well to new situations. Scrutiny of work over a period of time and that seen in lessons confirms that they carry out experimental procedures very well, making their own assessments of the safety hazards associated with the chemicals and methods they are using. They are proficient in a range of chemical calculations, although occasionally some lapses in procedure are made. Many have developed strong skills in analysing and evaluating the evidence obtained from their experiments. They combine this with their theoretical knowledge to make sense of what is going on and draw sensible conclusions. They have a very well developed sense of how chemistry is used in everyday life and of the social and moral impact of chemical processes and compounds. There are some areas in which they are less proficient. Some find difficulty in naming chemicals correctly using modern nomenclature, in understanding how electrons are organised in different energy levels in atoms and in understanding the patterns of the properties of elements in the periodic table. Occasionally information and communication technology has been used to help produce better standards, for instance in gathering experimental data electronically, but overall too little use is made of this valuable tool.
211. Standards seen in Year 12 are currently below average and a minority of students are still adapting to the higher demands of sixth form work. However, most are working hard to overcome barriers they have to learning, their confidence is developing and they are becoming more competent in the problem solving and exploratory approach which is fostered. Some girls who have joined the course from other schools where the work is more proscribed have found the step up to AS-level work starker than the boys who have been used to the schools expectations. However, the girls are aware of this and have a will to succeed; attitudes to work overall are not yet as strong as the Year 13 students. Students practical skills are advancing well.

212. Teaching and learning are both consistently good. Both teachers' very strong subject knowledge shines through, the demands and spirit of the examination syllabus are kept firmly in mind and good pace is maintained in lessons. The very regular setting of challenging homework is also key factor in developing high standards. Good relationships have been established; staff willingly provide extra help to individual students. Work is not always explained in a way which differentiates between the individuals in each class. Key learning points are sometimes not consolidated in the last few minutes of the lesson. Lessons are well prepared and students have been provided both with the textbooks they require and a clear overview of each topic.
213. Written work and especially problems and assignments are marked thoroughly, with helpful and evaluative comments made. Annual reports also contain some targets for learning but there is insufficient discussion with each student on how these have been formulated. Students are aware of their target grades and the results of tests and other assessed work. However, there is no system in place to assess how well each student is doing through a review of how well they have done in each topic.
214. The subject is led well and provision has improved over recent years. Although one laboratory has recently been renovated and re-equipped, poor accommodation is adversely affecting standards, especially because some of the fume cupboards are not working. This means that much practical work proceeds at a slower pace than it should. Laboratories are often over crowded. The fabric of the laboratory is deteriorating and although it is hard for staff to develop an attractive learning environment the quality of display is unsatisfactory.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

215. Work in design and technology was sampled. Overall provision for the A-level course is very good. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above the national average. Some students on the course were disadvantaged as a result of them only following a short GCSE course in Year 11. In the lessons observed, both teaching and learning were very good and students were well supported by teachers. Very good relationships between students and staff created very good conditions for learning.

BUSINESS

The focus was on business education and economics. Lessons were observed in the A/AS courses in business studies and economics as well as an AVCE business studies course.

Business Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Results in A/AS business studies are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good on all courses.
- The introduction of the new AVCE business studies course has been well planned.
- A variety of teaching approaches are now used across the department.
- Students have opportunities to initiate ideas and develop their analytical skills.

Areas for improvement

- There is a lack of display of students' work.
- ICT could be more fully used in the department as a tool for learning.
- There is a need to further develop the schemes of work and resources for the AVCE business studies course.

216. Overall, standards in business education are average. In A/AS business studies, the examination results this year were above average and this has been a consistent trend over the last 3 years. When account is taken of the students' GCSE grades at the start of the course,

this represents good achievement in business studies. The AVCE business studies is a new course and first examinations will be taken in June 2002.

217. In work observed in Years 12 and 13 standards were above average in A/AS business studies and average in AVCE business studies. Achievement in A/AS lessons is good in relation to prior attainment and target grades. A /AS level students demonstrated above average literacy and numeracy skills. Many students were developing their analytical skills and were achieving at a high level. Lessons seen in A/AS business studies indicated that there was an increasing emphasis on the development of analytical skills as well as the accumulation of knowledge. The standard of work of current students on the AVCE business studies courses is average. Achievement is satisfactory in light of their previous GCSE results. The nature of the course has enabled the steady accumulation of knowledge and a basic understanding of the subject matter. In a Year 13 lesson observed, AVCE students built effectively on their previous knowledge of financial planning with group presentations on the causes of cash flow problems. Clear guidelines and transparent systems of assessment for the assignments allow students to make progress at their own pace. Students are using word processing, data logging, spreadsheets and graphics in their assignments but ICT is not used sufficiently as a tool for learning.
218. Overall, the quality of teaching is good on all courses. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and this helps students develop their understanding. A variety of teaching methods are used in order to enable the students to learn effectively. Students make particularly good progress when there is a balance between teacher led activity and independent or group work. Group work and presentations are particularly successful and ensure that students are engaged and challenged. Work is regularly assessed with supportive and diagnostic comments. As a result, students know what they have to do in order to improve their work. Examples of very good revision exercises were observed, including the use of key words, key term lists, the revision of previous topics and examination practice questions. Homework tasks enable reinforcement of work that has been covered in lessons. Teachers recognise the individual needs of students by asking targeted questions, selecting particular groups and making sure that tasks are achievable. Teachers encourage access to learning resources that are appropriate and effective for independent study. In a Year 13 AVCE business studies lesson observed, groups of students were well prepared for an assignment on selling, when they were asked to prepare the work schedule for a salesman of refrigerated fresh foods; this helped their understanding of marketing. Teaching is less successful when the teacher talks for too long and the students lose concentration. Lack of pace and challenge in a number of lessons observed restricted the progress of higher attainers. It was also evident in the AVCE business studies course that a number of students require more support and guidance with their assignments and interpretation of information.
219. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The department is led by an experienced head of department and all members of the department teach in the sixth form. Lesson observations as part of performance management have been introduced but this is not developed enough to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching and learning. The department has established links with the economics department at the University of East London and a neighbouring school in Upminster. Accommodation and resources are adequate but there is insufficient display of students' work.
220. The department has addressed most of the issues raised in the previous report, and improvement since then has been good. The department is in a good position to move forward and build on its success.

Economics

Overall, the quality of provision in economics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good on all courses.

- A variety of teaching approaches is now used within the subject area.
- Students have opportunities to initiate ideas and develop their analytical skills.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need to develop strategies to increase the number of higher grades in A/AS economics.
- There is a lack of display of students' work.
- ICT could be more fully used in the department as a tool for learning.

221. In GCE A/AS economics, results in 2001 were below average and similar to results over the last three years. The percentage of students gaining the higher grades is below average although 94 per cent of the students gained A to E grades. The smaller number of students gaining the higher A and B grades in economics may be due to the challenging nature of the course and the need for high level skills of analysis and conceptual thinking in the examinations.
222. In work observed in Years 12 and 13 standards were above average. Achievement in lessons is good in relation to prior attainment and target grades. Students demonstrated above average literacy and numeracy skills. Many students were developing their analytical skills and were achieving at a high level. Year 12 students demonstrate sophisticated conceptual skills when examining the movement of the aggregate supply and demand curves and the effects on employment and inflation. Lessons seen in economics indicated that there was an increasing emphasis on the development of analytical skills as well as the accumulation of knowledge. Students in both Years 12 and 13 use the Internet to research the case for and against joining the European currency but there is considerable scope for further development of ICT on the courses both as a learning tool and as part of the schemes of work.
223. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and this helps students develop their understanding. A variety of teaching methods are used in order to enable the students to learn effectively. Students make particularly good progress when there is a balance between teacher led activity and independent or group work. Guided questioning and discussion in group presentations in a Year 12 economics group allowed detailed understanding and analysis of the characteristics of free, planned and mixed economies. The teacher encouraged the students to ask and answer questions so that they could reflect on the topics and further develop their understanding. Work is regularly assessed with supportive and diagnostic comments. Students know what they have to do in order to improve their work. The teacher in a Year 12 economics lesson observed skilfully led a revision exercise on the action required to cure a balance of payments deficit in preparation for a practice question. Homework tasks enabled effective reinforcement of work that had been covered in the lessons.
224. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject has addressed most of the issues raised in the previous report, and improvement since then has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus during the inspection was on information technology and computing.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The standards achieved in examinations are above average.
- The students enjoy the courses which match their needs and ambitions.

Areas for improvement

- The provision for less able students, particularly in developing individual learning skills, is not well developed. This contributed to the relatively lower standards in the computing AS-level exam last year.

225. Standards in the A-level information and communication technology examination in 2001 were above average and have generally been maintained over the last few years. Standards in the intermediate AS-level information technology examination were lower than average in 2001, whilst standards in the AS-level computing examination were above average. Girls who join the sixth form courses in ICT have done relatively less well than the boys although the small number makes comparisons unreliable.
226. Attainment in work seen in both the A and AS-level classes is generally above average. There is no real difference in performance between the computing students and the information technology students. All students find the AS-level courses demanding because of the pressure of preparing for the early examination. Students in both areas have a very good understanding of software tools and how to use them to develop highly sophisticated systems. Computing students devise Visual Basic programs to provide facilities which the database and spreadsheet packages cannot provide on their own. The students' understanding of computer hardware and software and their use in industry and entertainment are also good. This enables them to provide realistic and original solutions to problems set by the examination board. The students' ability to plan and schedule their work, to meet deadlines and cope with the documentation aspects of the course is less secure. This was evident in a Year 12 class, where students were all at different stages of development and the teacher needed to provide a separate response to each individual. Not all students were close to completing on time. All students achieve well given their wide range of attainment at GCSE.
227. Teaching and learning are good overall, providing the drive and impetus needed to fulfil the challenging schedules. Teachers explain tasks carefully and provide good evaluation of the students' responses, enabling them to set targets for improvement. The students' response to the challenge is very good. They show high levels of commitment, interest and self-discipline. In a good Year 13 lesson, the teacher provided effective individual support, including individual assessment sheets to show students how they were progressing and what they needed to do next. Students were able to see how better planning in the earlier stages would have made their efforts more efficient later on. This process needs to be refined to help students develop strategies for coping, especially with the AS-level demands. Students starting from a lower baseline would benefit from more demonstrations, visual material and examples of excellence to help clarify their thinking and set standards. However teachers do helpfully give students copies of the syllabus and explain the marking schemes.
228. The two examination courses provide a reasonably broad offering for the more academic students which the sixth form attracts. The school does not provide ICT as part of a key skills programme but most sixth form students are sufficiently competent to make good use of the ICT facilities to enhance their work in other subjects. Internet research, word processing and spreadsheets analysis are commonly used in a range of subject areas. In an excellent Year 13 history lesson, students were shown how to use the facilities of a word-processor to highlight different aspects of the structure of their essays. This was extremely effective in developing their technique, particularly because of the confidence the pupils had in the teacher and her use of information technology.
229. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, with the improvement in standards lower down the school contributing to the good standards in the sixth form. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The aims and vision of the department are good and the school is well-served with a committed and enthusiastic head of department. Aspects of the management of the subject are weaker, such as the monitoring of teaching and learning. The analysis of examinations data is still underdeveloped and has yet to impact on teaching or the curriculum. Whilst the resources and accommodation are

unsatisfactory in terms of the whole school facilities, sixth form students enjoy reasonably good access most of the time. Plans to upgrade the computers and set up a broadband connection to the Internet will also make their life easier by speeding things up. The school is well placed to make further improvements in the future.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus during the inspection was on physical education.

Physical Education

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

Strengths

- Examination results at A-level are very good, and students achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good; teachers have a very good subject knowledge and high expectations.
- There is a strong rugby ethos; standards are very high and many students perform at national level.
- Very good relationships and very positive students' attitudes contribute to a very purposeful learning atmosphere.

Areas for improvement

- Further improvements in the documentation for examination courses are needed.
- Greater access to computers to enhance investigation and presentation skills.

230. A-level results in 2001 were well above average with over one third gaining A or B grades, and all students passed A to E grades. This represents very good achievement for this group of students. The 2001 AS results are average; these students achieved well in terms of their transition from GCSE work. A programme of physical recreation and school fixtures operate on Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays and this offers a range of activities for both male and females in the sixth form. The standards of students' performance in physical recreation, extra curricular sport and inter school activities are very high. Standards of rugby and athletics are very high and many students perform at a high level at national level.

231. Standards of work were well above average, reflecting a very good level of achievement. Course work is well presented and shows a good understanding. Year 12 and 13 students have a positive approach to their work and find the work challenging. Year 13 students, studying sports psychology, show a keen interest and see the connections between theory and practice, successfully linking sports psychology at school team level to national and international level. They show a good understanding of the factors that constitute a successful team. Most students correctly use good technical words like pleura and broncos related to respiration. They successfully use mathematical formula for comparing velocities of one hundred metre sprints at different stages of a race. Students in Year 12 are at the beginning of their course, but are adapting and responding well to the challenge of higher levels of work showing a good level of maturity. In games students exhibit a very good standard of individual skills of passing, controlling the ball and making good use of space in order to create opportunities. Many boys play rugby at a very high level. They show a wide range of passing skills which when put under pressure of speed are very successful. Retention of the ball and ball handling skills are of a high order. The school's rugby squad is drawn from the sixth form; students participate at a very high level and have reached the final of the Under 18 national championships, an event they won in 2001.

232. The quality of both teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and explain concepts very clearly. Their confidence and enthusiasm is transmitted to their students. Planning is good, but in order to gain more A and B grades, students should be engaged more actively in their learning. In most lessons learning objectives are clear and shared with the students. This leads to increasing confidence as they progress through the

course. Teachers have very high expectations of students, evident for example, in the enthusiastic way in which Year 12 students worked on their ball handling in rugby. Evaluation of physical activities is of a very high order; teachers observe activities, analyse and where necessary step in to support and further extend students. This is a strength of teaching and was seen in all sixth form lessons. Very good knowledge, expectations and analysis of progress leads to very confident learning by the students. Students are encouraged to debate with each other. They are very attentive in lessons and show a very keen interest in the subject. Students all show a mature and very positive approach to their studies, and they are clearly enjoying their courses.

233. The subject is well led and managed. The acting head of department has already identified areas for further development. However facilities are unsatisfactory. The changing rooms are inadequate and the school fields are not fit for use for much of the winter, due to the poor drainage. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

234. No subject was inspected in detail but both art and design and music were sampled. In art, A-level results in 2001 were well below average, but in earlier years they have been much higher. In work seen in Year 12, standards were well above average and the teaching was good. Students have a very good understanding of the different media and materials they are using and know how to achieve the effects they want. The standards achieved by students in music are above average. Teaching and learning are good with students effectively applying knowledge and understanding to their work. Students support extra curricular activities very well and provide musical support on occasions by directing ensembles.

HUMANITIES

235. Geography and history were inspected in detail, but classical studies was sampled. Results in classical studies at A-level have been consistently above average in recent years. Teaching was satisfactory in the Year 12 lesson observed. The students were working confidently and independently on their coursework, effectively guided and encouraged by the teacher.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching has led to improved standards with results well above the national average.
- There is a strong programme of residential fieldwork to support learning and personal development.
- Students' work is marked and assessed particularly thoroughly and contributes significantly to their high level of achievement.
- The leadership and management of geography are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures need to be reviewed to make them more analytical.
- There is a need for a greater supply of reference books to support a greater breadth of reading.
- Development plans need to be reorganised into short and long term developmental objectives.

236. The proportion of students gaining an A to E pass grade at AS-level in 2001 was well below the national average. This result was influenced by the failure of a few students to respond to the subject's genuinely comprehensive entry policy. The proportion gaining the higher grades was also well below the national average and this was influenced by a lack of sufficient varied textbooks to support the required breadth and depth of reading. However the proportion of students gaining an A to E pass grade at A-level in 2001 was 100 per cent and the proportion gaining the higher grades was also well above the national average. This result represents a considerable improvement on the previous year with ten students gaining higher than predicted

grades. In work seen during the inspection standards in both Years 12 and 13 were well above average. Achievement overall in Years 12 and 13 is very good.

237. Students' attitudes are excellent. They respond well to the relationships established by their teachers and behave in a mature and committed manner. In all respects the female students are well integrated into the Year 12 class as committed equals. As a result the level of learning is very good. All students co-operate with each other very well in group work. They share responsibilities fairly and in discussion listen to each other and argue positively to reach a consensus. In a Year 12 class observed, students working on coastline features produced a written analysis of how features were formed, which was then discussed in the whole class group. They join in discussions with enthusiasm and get many opportunities to discuss topics with each other, particularly when essays are returned. It is quite common on such occasions for teachers to get students to read out and discuss what they wrote with each other as part of the drive to improve. This is another area in which considerable progress has been made since the last report. Students use numerical skills appropriately, and their writing is of a consistently high standard but their use of ICT is limited mainly to using the Internet for research.
238. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers have established excellent relationships with their students. They use humour very well to mask a determination to drive students to achieve the high standards they expect of them. As a result they have established a mature environment of hard work and application but which the students themselves regard as "fun". They enjoy geography and their level of achievement is very high, which may well explain why some Year 12 students, for whom geography was originally their fourth choice, have subsequently decided to continue with it in Year 13. Teachers have a high level of subject interest and expertise that can make a potentially dull Year 12 lesson on the statistical analysis of settlement, both interesting and enjoyable. Teachers have the ability to generate confidence in students. To a considerable extent this is because they are inclusive and have a commitment to support students, who may have difficulties with data interpretation or statistical analysis. Lessons are planned very well with a good balance of activities that occur at a sharp pace. They may involve individual students giving presentations on topics they have researched for homework or there may be discussion groups looking at specific topics. In a Year 13 lesson students examined models of economic growth, and with particular reference to Rostow's model, and drew on substantial prior knowledge to identify countries to which the model might apply. Students' work is assessed extremely well. Notes are checked for content and structure and assignments are marked very thoroughly with developmental annotations and summaries. It is then often discussed in a lesson, during which students critically review each other's marked work and assess the different approaches to the topic. This latter element is valued very highly by the students themselves who regard it as an important way to learn and improve.
239. The leadership and management of geography are very good. New programmes of study have been written and the department's handbook has been revised. The development plans reveal a clear and positive vision for the future development of geography but are not yet sufficiently detailed in both short and long term objectives. However time to monitor teaching systematically in the classroom and the lack of resources have had an adverse effect on standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

History

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject encourages student confidence and provides clarity of response to queries.
- Good relationships with students support an amiable working atmosphere.
- Students are well motivated and keen to succeed.

Areas for improvement

- Develop the wall display in order to extend learning opportunities and to provide a more stimulating environment for students.
- Investigate alternative methods of teaching in order to provide for a wider range of learning styles.
- More frequent use of student presentation and debate in order to encourage confidence and the development of independent thinking.

240. A-level results for 2001 were below the national average for the proportion of students achieving A/B grades. This was a considerable reduction on previous years when results were above national averages. There has been a downward trend in the highest grade results over the last three years and the department has recently changed the course in order to arrest this trend. Students did achieve well in relation to their previous GCSE grades however, and all students achieved a pass grade. The first group of students entered the new AS-level examination in 2001. The results were well above national averages and students exceeded their projected grades. This represents good achievement. Twenty-three students took the AS-level and only three have not continued to study history in Year 13.

241. In work seen during the inspection, students following the A-level course achieve standards above average in their essay work. Higher attaining pupils have developed a confident essay style that demonstrates clarity of thought and good organisational skills. Lower attaining students rely on generalisation or unexplained factual evidence, however they are developing an understanding of the elements of essay writing supported by good lessons that focus on analysis. Students consider alternative lines of argument and make their own judgements, supporting them with evidence and reason. They have a clear outline of the causes and developments of the 'Cold War' and confidently explain how the opposing views came about. Students identify the fears of the USA and the USSR that resulted in the division of Europe. They use sources readily to examine the opinions of the time and higher attaining students are able to identify the authors' un-stated inferences. They have a secure understanding of the effects of the 1st World War and can identify economic consequences with confidence. They are making the link with the unrest in Russia and higher attaining students can evaluate the contribution of different factors to the development of revolution. In their study of the Liberal reforms of the 19th century, students identify the steps taken by government to improve the conditions of the poor. Many fail however, to consider practical or philanthropic reasons, focussing on political ambition.

242. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. Students have confidence that their teachers will prepare them well for the examination, and the good knowledge and understanding of the teachers enables them to respond to students' queries with clarity and interest. Overall students are achieving well. They have very positive attitudes towards their studies and are prepared to work independently. Students enjoy the subject and they appreciate the support they receive for study skills, and the high expectations their teachers have of them. The very good relationships between students and their teachers encourage them to enquire, respond to questions and discuss in a mature manner that enables them to gain confidence and understanding. Students in Year 12 display less confidence, but with encouragement they are willing to debate amongst themselves and recognise that there may be different valid viewpoints to be held. Boys and girls are well integrated into the lesson and they treat the opinions of their fellows with respect. Teachers effectively involve students in the assessment of their own and each other's work. The practice of requiring students to prepare for their lessons through research and making notes, enables them to come informed, so lessons are used to analyse and extend their knowledge. There are limited opportunities for students to present their work other than through question and answer, and methods of recording information and notes do not

generally provide for a wide range of learning styles. Display is not used to re-enforce learning, or to enable students to develop their understanding of 'history in the making' through current articles. The support for the development of style and essay writing is very good and teachers make a positive difference to the development of literacy in their students.

243. The quality of leadership and management is good. Results of the examinations are analysed to identify weaknesses and the syllabus is reviewed in the light of this. The progress of individual students is reviewed and teachers know their students well. The course is well planned, although students attend only one external lecture annually, and there is no opportunity for fieldwork to provide them with first hand historical experience. There is a clear commitment in the department to developing a lifelong interest in history as well as exam success. The proportion of students in Year 13 who are intending to continue with their study of history to degree level is testimony to their success. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

244. The focus was on English literature but French was also sampled. Numbers in French have been very small recently and statistical comparisons with national results are invalid. Excellent teaching was observed in the two lessons sampled, leading to some high quality responses from the students.

English Literature

Overall, the quality of provision in English literature is **good**.

Strengths

- Above average standards in Years 12 and 13.
- Teachers have very good specialist knowledge.
- Students have positive attitudes.
- A good range of teaching and learning methods.
- Teachers' high aspirations for the students.

Areas for improvement

- Better use of target setting using assessment data.
- The analysis and monitoring of students' progress.
- Sharper emphasis on clear exemplification to improve the teaching of analytical writing skills.

245. In the 2001 A-level examination standards were broadly average having been above average for the previous three years. The proportion at grades A to E was average while at A to B it was below average. Value added data indicate that the students' achievement was broadly satisfactory. The very small number of female students tended not to do as well as male students. In the 2001 AS examinations the overall standard was above average. The proportion at A-B below was average but at A-E significantly above average.
246. Standards in the current Year 13 are above average confirming these students' AS results in 2001. They are achieving well in relation to their prior standards. The very best demonstrate not only a comprehensive knowledge of the texts they study but also a consistently evaluative style. They use technical terms appropriately and with assurance. They have clear strengths in their ability to evaluate the impact of the writer's choice of language on the possible meanings of a text. These qualities were apparent across a range of texts: nineteenth century novels such as 'Hard Times' and 'North and South'; Romantic poetry; and modern works such as 'Translations' and 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin'.
247. A very high proportion of the group are consistently at a secure C grade, which explains the overall above average standards. They are not consistently achieving the higher grades of A-B despite their qualities of accurate, fluent discursive writing and secure knowledge about themes and contemporary influences on writers. They do not, however, include enough detail in terms of references to the text. The significance of the references they do make are not explored deeply

enough, particularly with respect to language. This was also apparent in lessons. When discussing both 'North And South' and 'Ozymandias' the students were confident with their comments about meaning. However, only a minority linked the meaning with each respective writer's language, and then only after probing questioning by the teachers. Some tend to be too emphatic about meaning and less assured about discussing a text in terms of its ambiguities. A very small proportion are below average. Their judgements tend to be superficial; their writing lacks coherence and contains inaccuracies.

248. In Year 12 students are making good progress. They clearly enjoy the lessons. One group showed good knowledge and understanding about the contrasting values represented by Rome and Egypt in 'Antony and Cleopatra' and quickly and effectively discussed the specific features of the Rome/Egypt dichotomy. Another revealed a secure knowledge about Hamlet's character and used the text well to support their judgements.
249. The overall standards of teaching and learning are good. The subject expertise of the teachers is a clear strength. This results in good student knowledge of the texts, of their issues and themes and of their forms and structures. In addition, teachers are very well-informed about the contemporary issues that influenced writers. This knowledge extends to supporting the analysis of a text through a range of perspectives such as how 'Hamlet' would have been performed at the Globe. The teachers have high expectations so students work extremely hard. The teachers' questioning challenges the students' thinking. In the excellent lesson on 'Hamlet' a very well devised prioritisation activity effectively led Year 12 students into a detailed examination of Hamlet's soliloquy at the end of Act II. It led to a close, lively and inquiring focus on language through the careful selection of quotations to support judgements. It also enhanced the students' realisation that a range of responses can be valid. In the lessons observed relationships were good and the students showed positive attitudes. Homework is used effectively to apply the knowledge and understanding gained in lessons to a range of assignments and to prepare for future lessons.
250. There are some points for improvement with regard to teaching and learning. The department has rightly identified the improvement of the students' analytical writing as a development point to improve standards. However, the approach to this is not currently explicit enough. Not enough use is made of close analysis of good models of effective course work and examination writing. Nor is there enough use made of methods such as shared writing of extracts of essays to bring a sharper focus to the aspects of writing in need of development. Some marking lacks precise exemplification. For example, comments such as 'Improve your critical commentary...' were not backed up with examples of which features required improvement and how to do it. Some lessons showed teachers to be skilled in targeting questions at individual students and drew all students fully into the lesson. This good practice is not well enough established.
251. Students enjoy the course and are very enthusiastic about the texts they study, the theatre trips - and about what one termed 'our vibrant class discussions'. They value the approachability and accessibility of their teachers but would like more exemplification in marking. They also would like more advice on locating critics to support their research and writing.
252. The leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a commitment to high standards and teachers focus effectively on the assessment objectives approach of the new courses. Insufficient use is made of assessment to target grades for students and to help with tracking their progress. The monitoring of the students' response and approach to study such as meeting deadlines, file management and involvement in lessons is insufficiently rigorous.