

INSPECTION REPORT

MANGOTSFIELD SCHOOL

Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109320

Headteacher: Mr D Hall

Reporting inspector: W J Powell
3174

Dates of inspection: 4 to 14 February 2003

Inspection number: 249825

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr O Beg
Date of previous inspection:	3 February 1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3174	John Powell	Registered inspector	Business studies (16+)	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school lead and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
15849	Pauline Buzzing	Team inspector	English 11-18	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27719	Paul Metcalf	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics 11-18</p> <p>Educational inclusion, including race equality.</p>	
22691	Ray Woodhouse	Team inspector	Science 11-16	
10053	Janet Simms	Team inspector	Art and design 11-16	
23848	John Chambers	Team inspector	Design and technology 11-16	
15482	Clifford Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography 11-16	
10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	<p>History 11-16</p> <p>Religious education 11-16</p>	

18638	Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-18	
12867	Anne Looney	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages 11-16	
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	Music 11-16	
20395	Carolyn Rowe	Team inspector	Physical education 11-16	
4486	Michael Weller	Team inspector	Drama 16+ Special educational needs. English as an additional language.	

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Terms used in this report

*Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3** having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).*

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievements** reflect the standards that they reach in relation to their earlier performances, and thus whether the **progress** that has occurred is high enough for the pupils concerned. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those with a comparable proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

REPORT CONTENTS	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	12
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	15
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	18
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	25
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	28
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	29
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	33
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	34
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN YEARS 7 to 11	41
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	61

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This mixed community comprehensive school is located on the north-east edge of the Bristol conurbation. With 975 boys and girls aged 11 to 18, including 80 in the sixth form, the school is of average size. It has grown by some 14 per cent since the last inspection in 1997, and is set to grow further. It is a popular school, with three applications for every place. The pupils are mainly of white UK origin; only three per cent of the pupils are from other backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, there was a very small number of pupils from refugee and traveller families. Seventeen pupils are identified as having support for English as an additional language; none is at an early stage of acquisition. The proportion of pupils identified as having special needs is about average; 65 are at the stage known as school action, and 19 at school action plus. There are fewer than average pupils (16) with a Statement of Special Education Need. Changes to the school's admission arrangements in 1999 mean that the standards at entry have been rising steadily, but overall, are below average, with particular weaknesses in the pupils' quantitative skills. Until very recently, the school has had few pupils with entry standards significantly above average. The school is preparing a bid to become a specialist school, with a focus on engineering and science.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 and sixth form students show good achievement; those in Years 10 and 11 achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is good overall, although capable of further improvement in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that all pupils make the good achievement seen in other years. Teaching is unsatisfactory at all levels in art. The pupils' personal development, particularly spiritual and cultural aspects, needs to be planned for more thoroughly. Leadership and management are good, and the school gives good value for money. Cost effectiveness in the sixth form is very good.

What the school does well

- Overall, pupils and students do better than expected in examinations and tests, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form.
- The very good relationships, and the good behaviour, make for a calm learning environment.
- The pastoral support for pupils, which is very good.
- Teaching is good in most subjects; most of the teaching is done by specialists.
- The arrangements for the sixth form are very good, and this has a positive effect on the ethos of the whole school.

What could be improved

- The school's arrangements for developing literacy need to be more effective, and implemented more widely and more urgently, but especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment data could be better used to target teaching more precisely to the needs of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards and achievement in art are too low because of unsatisfactory teaching and the poor management of the subject.
- There are too few computers for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) through work in all subjects of the curriculum.
- The school does not plan sufficiently well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, so that spiritual and multicultural awareness could be higher.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Since then, there has been satisfactory improvement. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen. Standards at the end of Year 9 have risen in line with the national pattern. At the end of Year 11, they have fallen, although this reflects a fall in attainments at entry and staffing problems; achievement has been satisfactory. The school has met or exceeded its suitably demanding targets in all but one of recent years. In relation to its income, the school has continued to show good value for money, although at present, spending exceeds income. The school has made somewhat less progress than might be expected with the issues arising from the 1997 inspection. Elements of four of the six key issues identified in 1997 are contained in the key issues arising from this inspection. The school is on course to meet its current targets, which are sufficiently challenging.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	E
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	E	n/a	

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

In national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9, the school's overall results have been rising at a similar rate to the national trend. In 2002, the results for each of the three subjects were in line with the respective national averages, and those for schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. When considered against the pupils' standards at entry, the results in all three subjects are significantly better than would be expected; the pupils show good achievement in their first three years at the school. At the end of Year 11, the average points score in the GCSE examinations has shown a downward trend since the last inspection, against a rising one nationally, mainly because of a fall in boys' results. However, this is a reflection of the fall in standards at entry up to the change in admission arrangements in 1999. In relation to the pupils' test scores at the end of Year 9 in 2000, their GCSE results in 2002 are as expected. Overall, achievement for these pupils was satisfactory. The overall pattern of results over time in the sixth form is well below average in relation to the national average, but with male students reaching broadly average levels, in contrast to the well below average performance of females. However, in relation to their GCSE performances, male and female students both gain better results than would have been expected; achievement is good. In work seen during the inspection, standards are average at the end of Year 9, and below average at the ends of Year 11 and the sixth form. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. They are better in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form than in Years 10 and 11. Attitudes to the wider school activities are often very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in and out of classrooms because teachers have high expectations of them.

Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships are very good. The pupils and staff, and pupils and pupils, get on very well. This makes for a calm and productive working environment. Whilst satisfactory, pupils' initiative, sensitivity to others and personal responsibility are less well developed because of weaker provision in these areas.
Attendance	Good. The school works hard to bring this about.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is good in English and mathematics in Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in art is unsatisfactory at all levels, but teaching is good at all levels in citizenship, design and technology, specialist ICT lessons and religious education. Teaching is also good in Years 7 to 9 in science, geography and modern languages, and in Years 10 and 11 in history and music. Elsewhere it is satisfactory. Overall, there is less very good or excellent teaching than is seen nationally, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory at all ages; the effectiveness of the programme to improve the teaching of literacy across all subjects is too variable and too slow to be satisfactory at present. Overall, the school meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily, but in Years 10 and 11, teachers could sometimes do more to target work for the wide range of attainments in most classes. Overall, learning is good, with most pupils working hard and concentrating well. However, weaknesses in assessment mean that pupils do not always know how well they are doing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. There is a good range of curriculum pathways and learning styles from Year 10 onwards. Sixth form arrangements are particularly effective.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils are supported well, with a range of curriculum opportunities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils' needs are well known to staff and are met appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory. Whilst provision for moral education is good, and that for social development is satisfactory, arrangements for spiritual and cultural development are unsatisfactory. Overall, the school does not assure consistent experiences for pupils, or prepare them adequately for life in a multiculturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pastoral care is a strength of the school.

The school has good links with parents, although the quality of annual reports needs improving.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives very clear leadership. The quality of middle management is satisfactory, though variable, with unsatisfactory leadership and management in art and physical education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors play a good part in setting priorities for the school, and in holding it to account for its actions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The evaluation of performance is better established than regular monitoring of how well the school is working, particularly by middle managers.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Spending matches broad educational priorities in most respects. At present, growth is causing some problems in maintaining a balanced budget; spending exceeds income. There is satisfactory use of the concept of best value.

Staffing is good and accommodation is satisfactory. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory overall, mainly because the school has too few computers to provide pupils with sufficient access.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that the school's expects pupils to work hard. • They see the school as helping their children to become mature and responsible. • They believe that pupils make good progress in their work. • They see the school as being well led and well managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantial minority of parents would like better information on how well their child is doing, and to feel more involved with the school over their child's education. • Homework arrangements. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agree with the strengths above. They feel that the range of extra-curricular activities is good. Inspectors feel that annual reports are not specific enough on what is needed to improve progress. Homework arrangements, though sometimes variable, are satisfactory overall, as are the school's arrangements to involve parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

With only 80 students, 48 females and 32 males, this is a small sixth form in national terms. The size has been at this small level for the last three years. However, the sixth form is part of the wider Kingswood Partnership, a consortium that provides 16+ education for almost 800 students in six linked school sixth forms and one college. In recent years, these arrangements have been strengthened and refined. As a result, students have access to a very wide range of opportunities and curriculum pathways, including two-year A-level courses and AVCE programmes, and one-year GCSE and GNVQ programmes. The ethnic make-up mirrors that of the main school, with most students coming from white UK backgrounds. The standards required at entry are four or more GCSEs at grade C or better for advanced two-year programmes, and at least two grade Cs for one-year programmes. In practice, actual qualifications sometimes fall below this level, particularly for one-year students. Overall, the standards of students entering the sixth form are below average. The proportion of pupils from Year 11 entering the sixth form varies from year to year; in recent years, the figure has varied between 24 per cent and 43 per cent. The great flexibility of the Partnership arrangements means that overall, the proportion of students continuing with their education post-16 is broadly average. The proportion of students who remain through to the end of their courses, at almost 95 per cent, is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good; cost effectiveness is very good. The school's membership of a wider consortium of sixth form providers means that students have access to a remarkably wide range of opportunities and learning styles at relatively limited cost to the school. The students' needs are thus met very well. Students show good achievement. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form, and overall, its leadership and management are good. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Strengths

- Membership of the Kingswood Partnership of sixth forms provides a very good range of learning opportunities and styles that meet the needs of a wide range of post-16 students.
- Although many students enter the sixth form with relatively modest GCSE grades, achievement is good.
- The retention rate shows that the support that the students receive is very effective.
- Teaching is good, and students benefit from very good relationships with their teachers, who treat them as mature and responsible adults.

What could be improved

- Better use could be made of assessment data to monitor the progress that students are making, so that they have a clear idea of how well they are doing.

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	Satisfactory. Standards are average, and achievement is satisfactory as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and the positive relationships between teachers and students. Teaching is satisfactory overall because too little attention is given to the spread of ability in classes, developing students' independent learning skills and challenging the most able students.
Business studies (vocational)	Very good. Students gain above average results and show good achievement because of the many strengths of the good teaching, and their own very positive attitudes to learning.
Information and communication technology	Good. Students usually gain appropriately high grades in the A-level examinations. The numbers studying computing are often small but students are well served by the school's sixth form partnership. Current students are achieving well because of the good teaching in the subject.
English	Good. Standards are average and achievement is good as a result of their teachers' very good subject knowledge. Teaching is good, and the students' positive attitudes contribute well to the climate for learning.
Drama	Satisfactory. Although entries to advanced level courses have varied, standards are average and achievement is good. Students benefit from the opportunities the consortium offers.

Because of the small size of the sixth form, timetable constraints, and the fact that most options are taught at other centres within the consortium, little other work could be sampled. In general, teaching is good and students show good achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Staff know students well, and potential entrants to the sixth form receive good advice. Teachers help students out of lessons. Students could get better information about the progress they are making.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The school works closely with other members of the consortium, and shares common policies and procedures. These work well. The consortium manager provides effective evaluation of the school's outcomes. Those responsible for the sixth form are clear about their duties to ensure equality of opportunity. Examination of the value being added in the sixth form shows that students of all backgrounds and attainment levels achieve well.

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"> • Teachers are accessible and help students who have problems. • Students are helped to settle in to sixth form work. • Students are helped to study independently. • The school treats students as responsible young adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school could provide a better range of activities and enrichment courses outside their main subjects • The quality of advice on what to do after leaving school. • Students want more information about how well they are doing.

Inspectors agree with the strengths above. They feel that, within the constraints of working in a multi-site consortium, and a demanding 16+ curriculum, the school offers a reasonable range of enrichment activities. At the time of the survey, students in Year 12 had not started to discuss their career and higher education plans. These have now started to be covered, and students are much more satisfied; inspectors feel that the advice that students receive is very good overall. Students are right to expect better quality information about their progress. Assessment data are not well used at present and reports are inadequate.

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. The various evaluations of standards and, especially, of achievement contained in this report are made against the background of a changing intake profile. Pupils in the current Year 11 were the last to be admitted before a change in the admissions arrangements in 1999 caused an improvement in the standards at entry.
2. Overall, standards at entry are below average. Although now on a rising trend, they vary from year to year, not only in how they compare to national figures, but also in terms of differences between boys and girls, and between different areas of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. The intake contains a wide range of attainments but, in general, the school has relatively few pupils who have above average standards at entry, for example those gaining higher than the expected Level 4 in the national tests taken at the end of primary schooling in Year 6. More detailed tests administered by the school after entry point to boys having below average literacy skills on entry, whilst girls show more weakness in numeracy. These tests also suggest that pupils have the potential to perform at higher standards.
3. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9, the trend of improvement has been similar to that seen nationally, except that in 1999, there was a sharp dip caused by the poor performance of boys in English. In the 2002 tests, the average points scores in English, mathematics and science, and overall, were at the national average and that for schools having a similar proportion of free school meals. However, in relation to the pupils' standards at entry, the test scores are above expected levels in all three subjects. Thus their achievement in Years 7 to 9 was good. The lack of a "top end" in the intake is reflected in the no more than average results at the higher Level 6 or better. Pupils did rather better in the tests in English and science than their teachers judged that they would. Whilst girls did better than boys in the tests in English, the reverse was true in mathematics and science. The school's own analyses of the value being added by individuals between entry and the tests at the end of Year 9 show no patterns by sex, prior attainment or background.
4. Although not externally validated, the school's own assessments of pupils' standards in ICT are below average. This reflects the school's unusually rigorous approach to assessing standards in the subject. The school's own assessments in other subjects tend to show boys performing less well than girls, and also boys and girls alike performing less well than average at higher levels. Again, this reflects recent intake profiles.
5. At the end of Year 11, the average point scores at GCSE have been falling in recent years, against a rising trend nationally. This reflects the changing, and falling, nature of the school's intake, particularly in terms of a rapid fall in the standards being reached by boys. This period was also marked by turbulence in staffing, including the important areas of English and mathematics, and the resolution of financial problems. The 2002 examinations show a below average proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grade C or better; that at grade G or better is, however, above average. In the 2002 examinations, girls gained significantly above average results in drama; boys did not do so in any subject. In contrast, whilst no subject showed girls performing significantly below the average for their peers nationally, boys did so in art, business studies, design and technology, English language and mathematics. However, when results are considered in relation to the pupils' test scores when they were in Year 9, they are in line with what would have been expected overall, and boys and girls add value at similar rates in relation to their earlier test scores. Achievement is satisfactory overall for these pupils. Achievement was particularly good amongst the lowest attainers, whose results were well above the levels expected from their Year 9 test scores. The school's analyses of value added show that pupils from ethnic and other minority backgrounds achieve at similar rates to their peers.

6. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average overall. Given the below average standards at entry, this represents good achievement over time, and reflects in part the school's focusing of staffing and other resources in the first three years of the school, as well as the rising standards at entry since 1999. Standards are above average in geography because of good teaching, particularly in terms of the planning of lessons. Standards are below average in religious education, although pupils show satisfactory achievement. In art, standards are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, reflecting unsatisfactory teaching in most lessons and poor leadership and management of the subject. In physical education, standards are average but achievement is satisfactory, lower than in most subjects, because of shortcomings of management in the subject. In all other subjects, including English, mathematics and science, standards are average and achievement is good.
7. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 shows that whilst standards are average overall, achievement is no more than satisfactory; the gains seen in Years 7 to 9 are less evident. However, standards and achievement are slightly better in Year 10 than in Year 11, the former being the first intake to follow the change in admission arrangements in 1999. The reduction in achievement reflects, to some extent, the fact that this group of pupils was adversely affected by problems of staffing in the recent past, particularly in English and mathematics, and proper foundations, particularly of literacy, were not put in place. However, current teaching does not always take sufficient note of the diverse range of needs that pupils have, even in setted groups. Standards in art are well below average, and achievement unsatisfactory, for the same reasons as in Years 7 to 9. In ICT, standards overall are below average, and achievement unsatisfactory. Although most subjects have incorporated ICT into their courses, pupils have insufficient access to computers because there is too little ICT equipment; the number of computers at the school is well below average. In all other subjects, achievement is satisfactory, with standards below average in English, mathematics, history and religious education, and average in all other subjects seen. Standards seen usually match recent examination performance, except in physical education, where well below average GCSE results reflect inadequate linkage between theoretical and practical aspects of the work.
8. Whilst the school has developed a suitable policy to promote literacy across all subjects of the curriculum, its effectiveness is far too variable, and implementation in all subjects too slow, to be satisfactory. Standards are below average. Given the weaknesses in literacy that a significant minority of pupils show at entry, and the impact of past staff changes in English amongst older pupils, this is an unsatisfactory position. Reading and writing skills in particular need developing further to ensure that all pupils are able to do justice to themselves in an examination system that requires adequate literacy. Standards of numeracy are broadly average. In particular, pupils rely markedly less on calculators at the school than is often the case.
9. Pupils with special educational needs show good achievement in all years. They make good progress for example in Years 7 to 9 in literacy, with good examples of improvements in reading and spelling ages of six months or more. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, two-thirds of pupils with special educational needs pupils obtained five or more A* to G grades at GCSE, and all gained at least one A* to G grade which is well above the national average. The small number of pupils who have English as an additional language, and those from ethnic minorities, achieve in the same manner as their peers.

Sixth form

10. The relatively small size of the sixth form means that results are liable to considerable variation from year to year, depending on the entry standards of those opting for courses, and that statistically reliable comparisons with national data or trends are impossible for most courses.
11. Overall, the average points score of students following AS and A-level courses, or their equivalents, has been well below average in recent years. However, in relation to their earlier GCSE scores, students are performing at better than expected levels. There are no marked patterns to the value being added by sex, prior attainment or ethnicity. Overall, achievement in relation to prior attainment is good. In 2001, the last year for which national data are available, students performed

at above average levels on the AVCE course in business, but had below average results in biology, English literature and history. In 2002, the general pattern of previous years continued.

12. In the small number of subjects looked at in some detail, the standards observed on courses are below average, with students who had relatively modest GCSE scores performing at levels that are, in most cases, higher than would be expected. Achievement is therefore good. This happens because teaching is good; subject specialists support students well, and continue to do so outside timetabled lessons. The unusually wide range of learning pathways from Year 12, thanks to the curriculum structure, also contributes effectively to this good achievement. It also helps to account for the good retention rate, which is the highest in the consortium at around 95 per cent. Students are able to do the courses that meet their needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Attendance at the school is good, supporting most parents' views that their children like school. This is also shown in the good attitudes they show towards their lessons and to the life of the school, and the very good relationships between all members of the school community. Behaviour overall is good, creating a calm and orderly ethos.
14. The attitudes of pupils to lessons and their learning are good; they are better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. This reflects the quality of teaching they receive. In those lessons where attitudes are judged to be very good, this is characterised by well developed listening skills, very good concentration and enthusiasm and high levels of interest. This was particularly well illustrated in a Year 7 German lesson where all the pupils were thoroughly involved because the pupils paid very good attention and listened intently. This meant that pupils made good gains in their learning. Conversely, where pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory and occasionally poor, their listening skills are poor, they lose interest and this seriously affects on their ability to learn and sometimes has a negative affect on the learning of others. In many lessons, the pupils have learnt how to hold low level conversations which go unchallenged because the teachers' management skills are insufficiently sharp to engage and keep the pupils working.
15. The pupils' attitudes to what the school has to offer outside the classroom are very good. This was shown during the inspection by the good number of pupils attending a 'Valentine's Disco'. Good numbers of pupils take part in clubs and activities after school and also in trips organised both to support what they are learning and to promote their personal development, such as the Year 7 residential trip.
16. The pupils' behaviour overall is good. They are very aware of the school's clear policy, which is discussed with them regularly. They understand the principles behind it because the provision for moral development is good. In most lessons, behaviour is good because the teachers set high expectations to which the pupils respond well. There are few incidents of really disruptive behaviour within lessons; should these occur, they are handled well. Outside the classroom behaviour is generally very good. The pupils move between lessons sensibly and behaved very well at the lunchtimes seen, despite the sometimes cramped conditions on the site. The school has a relatively high number of fixed term exclusions, and boys are four times as likely to be excluded as girls. The rate of permanent exclusion is typical for a school of this size; the actual number of cases is small. Exclusions are generally short, sharp reminders to pupils who misbehave; they usually do not misbehave again. Internal exclusions are particularly well used. Appropriate arrangements are made for the re-induction of externally excluded pupils.
17. Parents view behaviour and discipline as strengths of the school, and are particularly pleased with the strong line taken on any form of bullying; this is confirmed by the view of pupils. This pleasing lack of any form of bullying or harassment within school is because the pupils are taught to treat others with respect, and this generally happens.
18. The personal development of pupils is good overall. However, they are not given sufficient responsibility or opportunities to use their initiative around the school or in many lessons. There are some good examples where initiative is developed well, such as in ICT. The understanding that

pupils have of the effect of their actions on others' beliefs is only satisfactory; comments can sometimes be thoughtless. The school provides all the pupils with planners to help improve their organisational skills; many pupils use them well for this purpose. Some pupils show good levels of initiative, such as the Year 7 pupils who produced their own Newsletter and the Year 11 pupils who organised an auction for charity. The school shows high levels of trust in the pupils' honesty to which they respond very well. The school readily celebrates success, both academic and personal, helping the pupils to develop self-esteem and belief in themselves. The pupils are polite, helpful and friendly, helping to create a welcoming and calm environment.

19. Relationships across the whole school are very good overall. In and out of lessons, the pupils are supportive of each other and they work and socialise happily together across the whole community, regardless of any differences in sex, background or disability. Most pupils find the staff very helpful and usually ready to listen to their concerns. They generally feel well supported by the school's staff and their peers, and this enables them to concentrate on their learning. The attitudes to learning of most pupils with special educational needs are positive. They are appreciative of the additional support they receive and show growing self-confidence and self-esteem. For this reason they are willing to participate in lessons, as when all the special needs pupils in a Year 8 mathematics lesson presented their findings on geometrical structures to the rest of the class. Those in a Year 8 French lesson made a good attempt to speak French to describe the weather. However, the 75 minute lesson length can sometimes prove too long for sustained concentration.

Sixth form

20. The students' attitudes to the sixth form are good. In lessons, there are few occasions when their attitudes are only satisfactory and this is because their knowledge about their own learning is not sufficiently discussed with them. Thus they are unable to focus accurately on what they need to do to improve. Otherwise, their attitudes are good and often very good. For example, in a general studies lesson on developing trust and confidence to speak within the group, the students were very motivated, eager to take part and worked in mixed groups. The good gains they made in their learning reflected their very good attitudes. These positive attitudes mean that behaviour is good; exclusions from the sixth form are rare.
21. Personal development in the sixth form is good. Students are able to undertake personal study and organise themselves to move between the different consortium sites. They set very good examples through their behaviour around the school and in keeping their social area neat and tidy. They are involved well in the school orchestra, in running the school council, in organising charity events in school, such as the recently held successful fashion show, and in talking to parents at the open evening for entry to the main school and the sixth form.
22. Relationships in the sixth form are very good; the students welcome new members and build new friendships across the consortium. Relationships with staff are particularly good, with many students commenting very positively about how they are treated as adults by teachers. The strong support they receive helps to ensure that the number of students completing their courses is high.
23. Attendance is good. The students know how important it is to attend regularly to cover the work required of them.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good; learning is also good. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen since the last inspection. In 1997, one lesson in eight was unsatisfactory; that figure has been almost halved. There has been a slight improvement in the proportion of teaching that is good or better, although this still falls some way short of the national level, but particularly so in Years 10 and 11. Most of the teaching that is less than satisfactory is across the age range in art; the other cases occur as isolated examples within a few subjects.

25. Teaching is good at all levels in citizenship, design and technology, specialist ICT work, and religious education. It is also good in Years 7 to 9 in English, mathematics, science, geography and modern languages, and in Years 10 and 11 in history and music. In all other cases, teaching is satisfactory overall, except in art, where teaching at all levels is unsatisfactory because it fails to provide pupils with the skills that they need to achieve satisfactorily in the subject.
26. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall, but this masks variations from subject to subject, and between the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Staff incorporate good opportunities into their lesson planning to use computers in a wide range of subject contexts. That they cannot always then gain access to ICT facilities is a source of frustration, and is the main reason why achievement in ICT amongst non-specialists is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The effectiveness of numeracy is satisfactory overall, and teachers in most subjects are now increasing opportunities for work with number in an agreed manner. The impact of the school's initiatives to promote literacy is unsatisfactory overall because there is no clearly agreed detailed practice that is then delivered rigorously and uniformly across all subjects. The good practice evident in some classrooms is not being promoted into others. This contributes to the underperformance at examination of some pupils, especially older boys, who have problems with reading and writing. However, some practice is of high quality, as in a Year 9 English lesson on *Macbeth* that focused on the pupils and how they were learning. The use of wide vocabulary was rewarded with stamps, and there was good use of praise in this fast-paced lesson. All of those volunteering to read parts were boys; indeed, boys - anxious to do well - were far more likely to make good contributions than were girls.
27. A major strength of the teaching is that much of it is done by specialists who have good subject knowledge. Most teachers also manage lessons well; potential problems are nipped in the bud. This creates a good learning environment in which pupils can gain the knowledge and understanding that they need. Much of the teaching, particularly in Years 7 to 9, is marked by good expectations of what the pupils should be able to do, backed by teaching methods and tasks that reflect the range of needs in the class. As a result, pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, show a good pace of learning over the lesson. However, teachers are better at meeting the needs of all pupils in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. This is the main reason why teaching in the upper years is satisfactory rather than the good of Years 7 to 9.
28. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good in all years. Strengths include well prepared and well structured lessons that build systematically on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and the provision of writing frames, for example to help them independently to write their own poetry appreciation in a Year 7 English lesson. There is very good support by teaching assistants, for example that of a special needs pupil in a Year 7 science lesson, ensuring that the pupil could contribute to discussion and explain why an experiment might not have been a fair test. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher and the teaching assistant encouraged special needs pupils to rehearse their ideas orally to ensure good understanding before committing them to paper. Year 10 and 11 pupils benefit from the individual support given in integrated studies lessons to help them research and prepare, and therefore keep up in, other GCSE subjects. Good starter activities in Year 8 conducted at a good pace in mathematics and French ensured that all pupils were willing to 'have a go' without feeling exposed if their answers were incorrect. Where teaching is less effective teachers could offer a wider range of approaches to reinforce understanding, for example helping pupils to visualise their calculations in mathematics. Opportunities are also missed for consistently reinforcing literacy across subjects by encouraging pupils to plan and draft their writing, providing and encouraging pupils to use dictionaries, or referring pupils to classroom wordlists when they ask for a spelling.
29. The features of the best teaching are not concentrated into a few bright spots within the school. The very good lessons seen during the inspection were spread evenly across the year groups, involved about a third of the teachers, working with a balanced mix of groups of high, middle and low attainers as well as mixed ability classes, and covered a wide range of subjects. There is plenty of good practice in the school; however, the modest rate of monitoring of teaching by senior

and middle managers is not making this invaluable resource available in order to improve teaching elsewhere.

30. Very good lessons tend to have common threads. The purpose of the lesson is made clear so that the pupils know what they have to do; in the best cases, this is done by identifying the learning objectives rather than listing the activities. "By the end of this lesson, you will be able to....." allows the teacher to return at intervals to check on progress. Although the use of assessment is often a weakness, good examples were seen in a Year 9 German lesson on rapid reading and a Year 7 ICT class on spreadsheets. In the former, the teacher kept challenging pupils to aim higher by referring regularly to National Curriculum level descriptions, and how work could be improved to demonstrate higher level capabilities. The ICT lesson had previously flagged the learning outcomes that were to be expected. Throughout the session, the teacher constantly asked questions - sometimes closed, sometimes open - to check on the progress that the pupils were making. This was informal assessment being used well; the very different learning needs of all pupils in the group were being met well. Good use of questioning is also a characteristic of work in drama. A Year 11 geography lesson illustrated effective lesson planning. The lesson plan identified different tasks being done by higher and lower attainers in the group, resulting in all pupils being engaged with the work. This was backed by a range of well produced materials and other learning resources. A Year 8 design and technology lesson also had a strong plan behind it. All activities were timed and driven forward at a good and challenging pace. The range of tasks to be carried out was a varied one. Once again, this was a lesson that focused on learning rather than teaching. "What do *these* pupils have to be able to do? What is the best way for them to learn this?"
31. Unsatisfactory teaching is relatively uncommon, but once again, there tends to be a common core of features at work. Overall, the lessons tend not to take sufficient note of the learning needs of the pupils present; assessment is not well used to target learning. There is almost always a mismatch of expectation. In some cases, the teacher assumes that pupils have skills that they do not, in fact, possess. As a result, they make few gains in knowledge or understanding. On other occasions, teachers pitch their expectations too low; the pace of learning drops and, on isolated occasions, pupils become bored and begin to misbehave. The pace of learning also falls when teachers talk too much, or try to maintain too much control over learning. On very rare occasions, class control was ineffective; this is not usually the case and indeed, several cases were seen when behaviour remained very good in spite of unsatisfactory teaching.
32. Teaching which is satisfactory rather than good tends to be slightly more common in Years 10 and 11 than in the earlier years; there is also less very good teaching at this level, particularly when compared to the national pattern. The key features at work tend to be similar to those that make for unsatisfactory teaching, but to a lesser degree. Whilst most lessons have a statement of objectives for the lesson, these are often given in terms of what activities will be carried out rather than considering learning outcomes: what all pupils will be able to do, most should be able to do and some might be able to do. Further, because assessment data have not been used well to set targets and to monitor the progress over time of individual pupils against them, the work that is set tends to be the same for all. There are often no plans for meeting the rather different needs of pupils at both ends of the ability range. Even if there were, the progress that pupils make within the lesson is not being assessed well enough; questioning can be narrow and limited to a few pupils, for example. As a result of these shortcomings, a significant minority of the pupils can drift away from the productivity that characterises much of the work in the school. This rarely results in major misbehaviour; rather a background murmur of social chatter, and a sagging of the pace of learning. Overall, the expectations of what pupils should be able to do in a lesson are not quite high enough so that, over time, pupils show adequate rather than good achievement. Yet these lessons are usually taking place in the same subjects where good teaching is to be seen. The lack of regular monitoring of teaching, including the observation of teachers by their peers, means that good practice goes unremarked.

Sixth form

33. The overall quality of sixth form teaching is good. Teaching and learning in mathematics were judged to be satisfactory, but all other focus subjects where teaching could be seen had good

teaching and learning. A key strength of the teaching is the very good knowledge and understanding that teachers have of their subject. This means that in the relatively small groups, there is ample opportunity for teachers to question students carefully, and thus promote greater understanding. In a few cases, some pupils are relatively quiet, and the teacher does not always bring them into discussion sufficiently. In addition to subject knowledge, there is a considerable reservoir of knowledge about how the examinations work, and how subjects are assessed. Coupled with generally good expectations, this means that the students are encouraged to work that bit harder, to refine coursework just that bit more, in order to secure a better grade. It clearly works, as overall, achievement in the sixth form is good.

34. The relationships between students and staff, and between the students themselves, are good and this promotes an atmosphere of trust and support. Students are thus willing to take risks without worrying about being made to look foolish. As a result of this positive atmosphere, and the demands placed on them, students work hard and behave well.
35. In a few cases, teachers talk too much, or try to control the lesson too much. This means that students do not always develop enough independence as learners. A more general weakness is that teachers rely too much on the informal knowledge that they have of the students. Overall, the use made of assessment information is unsatisfactory. They assess work against examination criteria accurately and regularly, and give helpful feedback. But they play no part in setting target grades for the students, based on GCSE performances, or in monitoring the progress of students over time. The value-added approach at the level of individual students is little used at the school, particularly when evaluating performance and identifying how teaching and learning methods could be refined. Such analyses are done at the level of the whole sixth form, and demonstrate that male and female students, high, middle and lower attainers, and those from minorities all make appropriate progress over time in their learning. The wide curriculum, and the range of learning styles offered, even in the same subject, mean that students' needs are met well.
36. After one year's experiment, the school has abandoned the formal teaching of key skills. There is no evidence that students lack the skills needed to work effectively, although it is notable that in business studies, where key skills work is integrated throughout the course, students possess skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT that match their subject standards.

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

37. The quality and range of the curriculum are good overall and meet statutory requirements. There is a good range of learning opportunities for pupils: all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, as is religious education. A satisfactory variety of curriculum pathways is provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and the school is seeking to meet the different needs of its changing clientele, especially with the provision of vocational courses, and with additional support for gifted and talented pupils. In this, it is successful, and has made good use of the recent opportunities to disapply some pupils from the National Curriculum after Year 9; disapplication is handled correctly.
38. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Statutory requirements for the delivery of religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are now met, and pupils use computers effectively in English, mathematics and science, though their use is patchy in some other subjects because there is insufficient access to computer rooms. Several departments have rewritten their schemes of work since the previous inspection. The English schemes have been revised to incorporate the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy, for example, and the newly written geography scheme for Years 7,8 and 9 is well prepared and provides good information on tasks and resources.
39. The amount of time spent on teaching courses is average. The balance of time between the different subjects of the curriculum is appropriate. The structure of the school day has been changed since the previous inspection, and pupils study in blocks of time of 75 minutes. This cuts down unnecessary movement around the school so that the maximum time is devoted to learning

but, in some lessons, the time is not fully used and the pace of teaching and learning slows. Lower attainers in particular find it hard to concentrate for the full time.

40. The impact of the school's strategy for numeracy is satisfactory, and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in their day-to-day lessons in subjects such as business studies, geography, ICT and science, as well as in mathematics. The impact of the school's literacy strategy is currently unsatisfactory in that it does not do enough to raise the standards of all pupils to where they need to be. The school has made a good start in implementing the National Literacy Strategy in English; all departments are required to incorporate elements of literacy into their schemes of work, and there are some examples of good work; for example, in science and history. A literacy group has been set up under the good leadership of a knowledgeable co-ordinator, so that several initiatives have been put in place. Work sampling has been undertaken, but the cascading of the strategy to include all departments and to involve all year groups envisages too long a time scale. As a result, the pupils' standards, particularly in writing, are hampered.
41. The school has good, constructive links with the wider community and partner institutions, and these enhance the quality of learning opportunities. For example, the history department is involved with three partner primary schools. Pupils start work on Victorian schooling in Year 6 and bring the work to Mangotsfield to complete in Year 7. Liaison is good in supporting pupils with special educational needs; learning support assistants as well as teachers visit them in their primary schools so that they will make a smooth transition to secondary school. There are good arrangements with post-16 institutions through the Kingswood Partnership, and the school has good links with higher education providers.
42. Curricular opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are good. In 2002 all pupils with special educational needs were entered for the national assessment tests in Year 9, and all pupils were entered for at least one GCSE subject in Year 11, and over half of them for five or more. Pupils benefit from additional support for literacy designed for their individual needs. Year 10 and Year 11 pupils benefit from, and respond well to, vocational courses and the integrated studies course, which makes good use of Certificates of Achievement.
43. The schools' provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory although the whole school policy is dated and does not take full account of recent developments in social inclusion. The school confirms its commitment to equal opportunities and has successful strategies for promoting positive relationships and managing behaviour. Records are kept on all racist incidents and this information is regularly shared with governors. Boys' underachievement has been recognised and addressed through the sharing of strategies and staff training, while underperforming pupils are identified and offered additional support from senior staff. However, analyses of data in terms of different groups such as ethnicity and ability have not yet been fully explored beyond whole-school level. Gifted and talented pupils have recently been identified and a programme of support such as involvement in mathematics and science challenges, as well as master-classes, has been organised, although provision for more able students within the classroom is more limited.
44. Issues of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are suitably addressed through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programmes. For example, the subject of prejudice is covered in religious education lessons and multiculturalism is highlighted in Year 7 English lessons through work on poetry. However the school does not sufficiently celebrate and promote understanding of diverse cultures, languages and ethnic groups, so that opportunities to more fully prepare pupils to live in a diverse society are often missed. The school is not designed for pupils with physical disabilities and wheelchair access across the school is difficult, although future building programmes do include better provision for wheelchair access. In the short term, the school has also made some improvements from its own funds to aid access.
45. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, music and drama. Analysis shows that the provision is popular and take-up is good. However, there was no scope for pupils to suggest other activities that are not currently provided. There is a good range of

trips and visits available, including residential visits. For example, there are regular opportunities for pupils to travel abroad and to use their modern foreign languages in a residential context.

46. All pupils study a satisfactory PHSE and citizenship course as part of the curriculum. It is relevant to the needs of the pupils and covers topics such as sex and drugs education, personal hygiene, bullying and personal relationships. There is an effective head of department who has recently incorporated the teaching of some aspects of citizenship into the programmes of study. The area is well supported by a number of visitors to the school such as the police, nurses and a prison officer. Provision for careers education is good, and falls within the PSHE programme. It starts in Year 9 when the pupils make their choices for the following year. The school holds a number of meetings to help with this and parents and pupils are invited to a 'World of Work' fair. Most pupils in Year 10 undertake work experience; the school makes good arrangements for this. Discussions take place with the local careers adviser and there are opportunities to discuss staying on post-16, either at the school or elsewhere, or going out to work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

47. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory. There is no overall, whole-school, policy for the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and no audit has yet been carried out to see where the provision is working well, where there are overlaps, and where there are gaps. Consequently, heads of department have not considered in any depth how their particular subject areas might contribute to the provision. There is no formal monitoring of these areas of the pupils' development to ensure that they are systematically threaded through the general life of the school and that these important dimensions are made explicit in departmental planning and practice. There is relatively little reference to provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within subject schemes of work. Thus, in spite of examples of good work in some areas, the consistency of pupils' experiences cannot be assured across the school as a whole.
48. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are unsatisfactory. Some teachers do take advantage of opportunities to make pupils aware of the spiritual dimension to life, in poetry and music, for example. However, aesthetic aspects of spiritual development are not well served by the weaknesses in art. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The criticisms made at the time of the previous inspection are still valid.
49. There is good provision for pupils' moral development. Teachers and other adults in the school continually reinforce moral principles throughout the daily life of the school. Adults provide good role models for pupils, treating pupils with respect and kindness, discussing issues of right and wrong, and trying to explain why one course of action is more acceptable than another. The highly visible presence of senior staff about the school, including the headteacher, is reassuring and welcoming to pupils. In subject areas, pupils in religious education come to an understanding of moral codes in several different world faiths, while in health and social care they have discussed the ethical implications of organ transplants or cosmetic surgery. In science, pupils consider sexuality and the need to behave responsibly.
50. The provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory and is underpinned by the PSHE programme. The visible presence of staff around the school, and the genuine interest they show in pupils, encourage positive relationships and interaction. Observation of pupils outside lessons, in corridors, at lunchtime and in extra-curricular activities shows a generally harmonious community in which most pupils show consideration for one another. They are usually courteous and co-operative with their teachers. There is no prefect system, although the school provides some opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility through the student council. Pupils are actively involved in raising money for charities, in helping at events such as parents' evenings and in reviewing the code of conduct and the school uniform. During the week of the inspection, for example, the student council was discussing plans for Comic Relief.
51. The provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. The main weakness is that, because the school does not plan or monitor its provision, the consistency of pupils' experiences is uneven and

opportunities are often missed or under-developed. Opportunities are missed in many subjects, including - unusually - art and design, but also in mathematics and music. Some good practice exists in modern foreign languages, where pupils have the chance to make foreign exchange visits, in religious education, and in English, where pupils in Year 7, for example, study poetry and stories from a range of cultures. In religious education, pupils study some of the different faiths represented in Britain. Classical music is played in the school corridors during the ends of the day and at breaks. Although the school provides some opportunities, therefore, for pupils to explore their own cultures and to be brought into contact with some traditions and values of other cultures represented in Britain, this is not done systematically or consistently enough to enable pupils to be fully prepared for life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. There are missed opportunities in assemblies to develop pupils' awareness of religious celebrations such as Muslim *Eid*, taking place during the week of the inspection. On occasions, teachers and pupils make comments that demonstrate this lack of awareness.

Sixth Form

52. The curriculum in the sixth form is very good. A broad range of Level 2 and Level 3 courses is offered through the consortium arrangements of the Kingswood Partnership, a grouping of five local schools together with a college of further education. This breadth is far wider than would normally be possible for the size of school. Students have a good choice of academic and vocational courses so that they can build well upon the courses available in Years 10 and 11. As a result, the percentage of students staying on in education or training, including modern apprenticeships, is broadly average. This is a good figure, given the entry profile of most students.
53. Students have a choice, not only of the subjects they study, but also of the learning style they prefer. For example, they can choose AS/A-level or AVCE courses in art and design, business, ICT and performing arts. The multiple learning pathways offered mean that students are well motivated to succeed: for example, some students on the Level 2 business education course have as their goal Level 3 AVCE courses, starting from a low GCSE base.
54. The courses usually meet the needs of the students well, and the completion rate is some 95 per cent. Mangotsfield School has the best completion rate of all schools in the consortium. Moreover, the courses offered show a very good responsiveness to local circumstances. For example, the aeronautical industry is a major local employer, and the school is seeking specialist status as an engineering and science college to build further partnerships with this significant local employment sector.
55. The school confirms its commitment to equal opportunities and the sixth form curriculum is designed well to meet student's individual needs through the consortium provision. Issues of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are addressed through the general studies component on life in multicultural Britain. However, there are insufficient opportunities to celebrate and promote understanding of diverse cultures, languages and ethnic groups, so that opportunities to more fully prepare students to live in a diverse society are often missed. The school is not designed for students and visitors with physical disabilities, and wheelchair access across the school is difficult, although future building programmes do include provision for wheelchair access.
56. The careers advice the students receive in the sixth form is good, and builds well on the work carried out in the main school. Teachers take care to make sure that students entering the sixth form follow appropriate courses, and that they have a reasonable chance of success on their chosen courses. The curriculum also makes satisfactory provision for enrichment activities. Students, particularly in Year 12, are frustrated that their full timetables offer little time for them to become involved in additional activities, and eight out of every ten students also have part time jobs. The school council is chaired by members of the sixth form, and they also take the lead in speaking to Year 11 pupils and parents at the school's post-16 evening, help with the Year 11 taster day and act as senior guides to parents on open days.
57. Overall, the picture of unsatisfactory spiritual, moral social and cultural development in the sixth form is the same as that in the main school. The school does now provide religious education for

all students within the general studies programme, but it still does not meet the requirements to hold a daily act of collective worship. As in the main school, individual teachers take opportunities to promote personal development, but as this is not planned into schemes of work in subjects, and the provisions are not audited, students cannot be assured of a consistent level of experience.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

Main school

58. The school's policies and procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils and students are very good. Members of staff are aware of the very good arrangements for child protection; the designated teacher is well trained. The school has very good relations with the relevant authorities. The health and safety of pupils is very well promoted through regularly reviewed policies and risk assessments; procedures are very effective.
59. The educational and personal support and guidance available for pupils is very good, and these contribute very significantly to the academic and personal progress that the pupils make through a good working atmosphere, positive attitudes and good attendance. The pupils are very well known individually to a number of members of staff, and this means that they are able to give the support and advice needed. Strong relationships develop between teachers and the pupils or students in their tutor groups and these foster very good levels of trust and support in most cases. Group tutors have an overview of the pupils' and students' development.
60. The school has very good procedures to promote and monitor attendance; these have improved considerably since the last inspection. The school takes a particularly strong stand over holiday leave for those pupils about to take public examinations. Whilst this raises the level of unauthorised absences, it still commendably remains below average. The rigorous use of a 'first day' contact system means that the reasons for absences are obtained and parents quickly become aware of the importance the school places on good attendance. This is further reinforced with the pupils through good attendance awards. The school is very well supported by an educational welfare officer. The effect of these good levels of attendance is that the pupils have the opportunity to learn effectively.
61. The school has very good and effective procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and for the elimination of bullying or any form of sexual or racial harassment. The pupils are regularly reminded of the behaviour policy, which is applied consistently and rigorously across the school, ensuring that pupils do not receive mixed messages. For example, pupils do not like being placed in internal exclusion, and so few re-offend. The system of levels and stages that may lead eventually to permanent exclusion are very clear. Pupils are able to work their way back down the scale and are well supported and encouraged in doing this. Where specific help is required from outside agencies for pupils experiencing difficulties with their behaviour, the school organises this support in order to try to keep pupils as fully involved in the work of the school as possible. Parents are kept fully informed of their child's behaviour record; their support and involvement is sought if necessary to show the pupil involved a united front from home and school. The reward stamp system in school that leads to the awarding of certificates takes full account of, for example, improvements in behaviour. Pupils and parents note that any form of bullying or harassment is very well recorded and action is taken quickly and effectively.
62. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory overall. Heads of year oversee the pastoral aspects particularly well; some promising mentoring practices are evolving. Heads of department are responsible for monitoring pupils' progress in subjects and ensuring that teachers keep accurate records. The system of termly progress checks provides useful information on individual pupils' attainment against national benchmarks, which the school supplements with its own grades for effort and behaviour. It is currently in the process of setting up a central, computerised recording system, which has the potential to improve the tracking of pupils' achievements as they move through the school. The senior management team undertakes some relevant data analyses, which provide the foundation for advice to departments on target setting. However, there is no one with overall responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring

assessment throughout the school; the various broad guidelines and schedules for assessment have yet to be collated into a single, coherent policy. Accordingly, there are shortcomings in monitoring consistency across the school.

63. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good and the monitoring of their progress is good. Liaison with primary schools is very good, as are the identification and diagnosis of pupils' special needs. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need are very well supported. Individual education plans are detailed and specific. They include targets to be achieved, success criteria, and guidance on how the targets might be reached. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teaching assistants, class teachers, parents and the pupils themselves are all involved in reviewing progress against targets. There remains one area for development that the school has recognised: at present, the individual education plans do not contain enough targets or specific guidance for improving pupils' numeracy skills.
64. Overall, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, with tests at entry and in Year 9, and regular assessment tasks in English, mathematics and science to monitor progress. Such tasks are not yet features of the work in all subjects, although there are examples of good practice. For example, in drama, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own work. In modern foreign languages and ICT, teachers translate assessment criteria for their classes into action points. However, assessment in art is poor. Some subjects are more rigorous than others in assessing pupils' work and evaluating standards against national measures. Departments have yet to compile portfolios of pupils' assessed work to assist with accurate levelling and moderation of standards across teaching groups. Implementation of the school's marking policy is variable both within and between departments; teachers rarely indicate what the pupil needs to do to improve. In 2002, the school complied satisfactorily with the statutory requirements to assess and report on pupils' National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9. However, these same pupils did not receive a progress report on ICT in their annual report. The school acknowledges the error; appropriate procedures will be in place for 2003.
65. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. Its most common use in subjects is to determine setting arrangements. Some successful measures include targeting underachievers for additional help, disapplication from the statutory curriculum where appropriate, and the introduction of some short examination courses in Year 10 and 11. However, strategies to take account of assessment information when teachers plan lessons are underdeveloped. For example, the design and technology department does not use the very good information it records on pupils' attainment in each project in Years 7 to 9 to plan challenging lessons. This restricts the opportunity the highest attaining pupils have for gaining the highest grades by the end of Year 9. The analysis and use of data at whole school and subject levels lags behind general practices seen elsewhere. Whilst the senior management team distributes the results of their own analyses appropriately to middle managers, the use of value added factors is not yet embedded across the school as a whole because middle managers and teachers need further training in their use.

Sixth form

Assessment

66. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. There are appropriate analyses of GCSE data which provide the basis for setting target minimum grades for each student at the start of Year 12. However, these are not well understood within the school. Common consortium procedures include useful termly progress checks linked to qualification levels. Marking is usually regular and in line with the consortium guidelines, for example in physics, chemistry and biology. Good features of marking which some subjects have yet to develop sufficiently include: accuracy in grading in business education; clear guidance on how to improve in ICT; and the use of exemplar solutions in mathematics which help the students to understand how to raise standards.
67. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. Record keeping is not yet as systematic as it might be. The head of ICT is aware of shortcomings in this area and as a result of recent training, is currently introducing an appropriate central computerised system, which has the capacity to link the sixth form records efficiently with those of the main school. To date, the use by subject teachers of all the available prior attainment data to check individual students' progress against their potential, and to set challenging targets, is not yet as rigorous or consistent as it might be. For example, in business education, there is no diagnostic analysis of whether individual students achieve well enough.

Advice, support and guidance

68. The sixth form students are given very good support and guidance, including on personal issues. They are very well known to staff, who are available to give them advice and support. The information for students applying to join the sixth form from both the main school and from outside is of good quality. Interviews help students to decide where their needs can be best met. Induction at the start of the sixth form is good; the students quickly settle and renew old, and make new, friendships. These factors are reflected in the high retention rates at the school.
69. Careers advice available to students is of good quality. Information in the library includes prospectuses from universities and colleges, as well as information about other forms of training and about specific jobs. There is good support for those students wanting to enter higher education, including visits to universities and practice interviews. Some Year 12 students indicated through the questionnaire their concern about the level of careers support they had received. At that point the process had not started, but it is now underway and early indications are that it will meet their needs.
70. The reporting of progress is satisfactory but could be improved; the quality of annual reports is relatively weak. Reports in the sixth form follow the termly system common to the consortium, with appropriate links to national benchmarks. The two interim reports provide limited information to students at this stage of their development. While there are useful references to current and target minimum grades, the student's average points score is not always included in the relevant heading box with which to judge progress. A five- point scale indicates attendance, punctuality, effort, organisation and whether the student meets deadlines. There is rarely sufficient detail in teachers' comments to indicate clearly the standards achieved in the subject, or whether they are good enough based on the student's prior attainment. The consortium format imposes unhelpful constraints. Similarly, the full report at the end of Year 12 is neither as detailed nor informative as is usually the case at this level because the consortium format limits what can be said. Thus, guidance on what individual students need to do to improve in each course is limited. Students compile appropriate personal statements in Year 13.
71. Although there is no requirement to monitor attendance in the sixth form, a very close watch is maintained. Should a student's attendance give rise to concern the head of the sixth form contacts them and discusses the matter. Difficulties in registering attendance can arise with the students

attending courses at different places within the consortium; to help to keep a closer watch on who is where, swipe cards are to be introduced in the very near future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72. The parents' views of the school are good. It is clear that the school enjoys strong support from, and the confidence of, all sections of its community. The parents are particularly pleased with the personal and academic development and progress that their children make, together with the quality of teaching at the school. They express confidence in the leadership and management of the school. The main concerns raised by parents are the range of activities outside the classroom, the amount of homework set, the school not working closely enough with parents and the information they receive, especially about progress. This last point was reinforced in written comments made to the inspection team and at the parents' meeting, the concern mainly relating to the lack of discussion with subject teachers in Years 7 and 8. Inspectors looked at all the concerns raised by parents. The range of activities outside the classroom is judged to be good when trips, visits, residential visits and the enrichment day activities are taken into account. The amount of homework and its use is found to be satisfactory. The school tries hard to work closely with parents through a satisfactory range of meetings and events. It has previously held subject based meetings with teachers for parents of pupils in Years 7 and 8, but these were not as well attended as the academic reviews with group tutors. However, parents are always reminded they can make an appointment to meet a particular teacher if this is desired.
73. The information that parents receive about the life of the school and what their children are learning, is satisfactory overall. Information in both the prospectus and the governors' report to parents contains sufficient details for them to get a flavour of the school. The records of pupils' progress available to parents in the autumn and spring terms give parents a general outline of how their children are doing, and about their attitudes, behaviour and effort. They are used well to inform and support the academic review meetings. However, the annual report contains little more information. Comments made alongside subject grades are too frequently about attitudes and do not give parents sufficient idea of what their children can do or where they need to improve. The targets set are mostly too general and open ended, such as 'keep up the good work'. The general comments made by groups tutors are, by contrast, well informed and, where needed, hard hitting.
74. The links with parents are good. The school is seen as approachable by most parents and this was found to be the case. Generally any concerns are handled quickly and efficiently. Nearly all parents attend the regular academic reviews with group tutors and tutors and heads of year try very hard to accommodate parents' schedules. Meetings are held to discuss some aspects relating to what is being taught. The attendance at these is usually good, showing a good level of interest amongst parents.
75. The impact of the parents' contributions to their child's education is good. Parents are encouraged to attend events such as concerts, drama productions and sporting events; these are usually very well attended. The school issues pupils with a planner with space for parents to sign and make comments or send messages. However, whilst they are sometimes signed they are rarely used as a means of communication. All parents sign the home-school agreement when their children start at the school. The parent-teacher association provides good support for the school, not only by raising money for purchases such as the benches and picnic tables used at breaks, but also through its attendance at meetings, where it provides refreshments.
76. Liaison and communication between the school and parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is always available and attends all parents' evenings. Parents and carers liaise over the targets in the individual education plans and attend annual reviews for pupils with Statements. The school also supports parents well when appropriate by putting them in touch with other agencies such as the school nurse, educational psychologist and medical, welfare and social services.
77. The students' views of the sixth form are generally good overall although responses to the questionnaire show dissatisfaction in some areas. Most students appreciate the accessibility of

their teachers, the way they are treated as young adults and the encouragement they receive to be independent learners. They also appreciate how welcome they have felt in the sixth form. However, the questionnaire indicates that many pupils feel there is not a good range of worthwhile activities and enrichment courses, their work is not thoroughly assessed and they are not kept fully informed about the progress they are making. The information about careers' advice has already been covered earlier in this report. The inspection findings on the other aspects agree with the students' concerns to some degree, especially about the information on their progress and how they can improve. This is found to be very variable between subjects. Written reports are judged to be inadequate.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

78. Overall, the quality of leadership and management is good. The picture of strengths of the school noted at the last inspection has largely been maintained, and appropriate action has been taken to tackle most, but not all, of the areas for development flagged in 1997. In the intervening period, the school's management has been continuing to meet the needs of a steadily expanding, and changing, school population against a background of relatively tight financial circumstances. Additions have been made to accommodation, the curriculum has developed further to meet the pupils' needs and there has been a steady growth in resources.
79. The governing body shows good effectiveness in discharging its responsibilities. It is supportive of the school, helping it to identify the strategic directions for development, but is also active in evaluating its effectiveness. A strength of the governing body is that its members come from a wide range of backgrounds, and bring a diverse family of approaches to their work. Most of the detailed work by governors is done in a sound range of committees, which have clear terms of reference. Overall, governors are good at meeting their statutory responsibilities. Since the last inspection, almost all of the areas of statutory non-compliance have been resolved. The provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is the one outstanding statutory requirement yet to be met. Governors play an appropriate part in mapping the future direction of the school, for example in drafting the school development plan, or in the recent discussions surrounding the school's proposed bid for specialist status.
80. The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher keeps governors well informed on the school's work, and on how problems are being resolved. Thus governors are well informed about current weaknesses in some subjects, including those identified in this report, and of the steps that the school is taking to improve matters. Within limits of time imposed by their jobs, governors seek to learn for themselves about the school's work, for example by discussion with heads of department or visits. All governors are members of committees, and thus get to see a more detailed picture of the school.
81. The headteacher provides very clear leadership for the school. He is very much a head who walks his patch frequently and confidently, chatting with parents, pupils and staff as he does so. His knowledge of the pupils and their circumstances is remarkable. Staff feel thoroughly supported by the headteacher's clear confidence in the school and its work with pupils. The members of the school's senior management team work well together; the frequent meetings mean that each of its members are aware of the wider situation in the school.
82. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and is, in turn, well managed by the deputy head teacher with responsibility for pastoral matters. There is a clear policy and a special needs handbook, so that teachers all understand referral procedures. All teachers have received training in the new Code of Practice and all the relevant documentation is in place. Each department has a named special needs link teacher, and they meet each half term with the co-ordinator to discuss specific pupil needs, policy issues and good practice. Teaching assistants liaise well with subject link teachers and have helped to compile a good bank of resources. The special needs governor is well informed and meets regularly with the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator's high teaching load means that she has little opportunity to support other teachers, or to monitor with any regularity the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. In ICT, the head of department carries too many competing demands on his time. Although the

subject has satisfactory leadership, his wide-ranging, and growing, responsibilities make it difficult for him to pay proper attention to the needs of the subject within the curriculum.

83. The leadership and management shown by middle managers is satisfactory overall, but varies considerably in quality. In general, pastoral management, including that of heads of year, is more consistently good than that of curriculum areas. Leadership and management are good in English, science, modern languages and citizenship. They are satisfactory in all other subjects except physical education, where they are unsatisfactory, and art and design, where they are poor. In physical education, the split responsibility for the subject means that, in practice, many important aspects of subject management are not being carried out. In art and design, structured support on a wide range of matters was put in place by senior managers, but this has not led to the required improvements, and the weaknesses identified still remain.
84. The school's arrangements for development planning remain good. The priorities in the whole-school plan now take a longer-term view of development. They are then echoed closely in departmental development plans. In preparing its bid for specialist school status, the school is having to focus more sharply on how targets will result in improved outputs by its pupils; at present, school and departmental plans tend to focus initially on resources and other inputs rather than the expected outcomes.
85. Overall, the school's arrangements for monitoring the implementation of plans and policies, and for the evaluation of outcomes, are satisfactory. Evaluation is better established than monitoring, although analyses of results still tend to be at the whole-school level rather than looking at the progress that individual pupils, and groups of pupils, make within subjects and even different classes. Senior managers carry out observations of teachers in the classroom as part of the school's satisfactory arrangements for performance management, which contribute well to overall school improvement. Overall, however, the level of observation of teachers is less than usually seen. In particular, few middle managers undertake regular observation of their teams. The lack of monitoring means that good practice, which exists in most subjects, is not being propagated across the rest of the school as swiftly as the pupils deserve. Moreover, the limited scale of monitoring means that there is too much inconsistency in the delivery of whole-school policies. For example, there is no sharply-focused approach across all subjects to raising standards of literacy; the pace of implementation is thus too slow.
86. The school's focus on issues of equality is satisfactory. At one level, the school shows a good level of concern and care for the individual. This is seen in the very careful pastoral care of pupils. There is also a very clear general commitment to promoting racial harmony. However, the school's written policy in this area, although meeting requirements, is rather dated. The shortcomings in the school's assessment arrangements mean that those responsible for monitoring the progress that pupils make are not using data as effectively as possible. The tools to do so have been available for some time, but the school's data management systems have not kept pace with demands. In general, however, the school's use of new technology has been satisfactory.
87. Overall, the school makes satisfactory strategic use of its resources. It also has satisfactory arrangements for best value, comparing its performance on a range of factors, seeking improvements and having appropriate arrangements in place to obtain optimum value for money from purchases.
88. At the end of the financial year 2001-2002, the school had a deficit, caused mainly by the movements of pupils during the school year. Plans to recover the position in the current financial year were upset by a fall in the funding for the sixth form under the revised formula, and also a considerable rise in the number of pupils admitted to the school after successful appeals. The six-form entry to the school provides 180 places, but at present the school has 21 more pupils than this. Given the pupils' weaknesses in literacy and numeracy, the governors decided that the school should, in effect, staff an additional form of entry rather than have very large class sizes in Year 7. Costs therefore rose disproportionately to income. The school is in discussion with its local education authority over increasing the school's size to an eight-form entry to cope with local population growth. The local authority is aware of the current financial position at the school, and

is working with governors and managers on an action plan to manage income and expenditure through a period of potentially rapid growth and change.

89. The arrangements for setting the school budget, including the use of specific grants, are satisfactory. The balance of spending between the sixth form and the main school is in line with income patterns, but there is a slight bias towards spending in Years 7 to 9 at the expense of Years 10 and 11. Given the rise in numbers outlined above, and the longer-standing relative weakness in basic skills at entry, this bias is a reasonable one, and is reflected in the higher than expected outcomes that the pupils reach by Year 9. Governors have relatively limited flexibility when setting the budget, since the school's staff contains a substantial number of mature staff, some of whom enjoy relatively generous allowances for historical reasons. In spite of this, they seek to enhance the school's learning environment, for example, by using in-house labour to make attractive and necessary improvements. The area of greatest financial squeeze has been on learning resources. Spending here is below average, and the year on year shortfall means that there are too few computers for pupils to have appropriate access to ICT, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This has an adverse effect on standards.
90. The school has a good match of suitably qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. This is a strength of the work in most subjects. However, the school has only recently emerged from a period of considerable difficulty in obtaining sufficient staff, especially in English, mathematics and modern languages. The effect of these past shortages is still being seen in the more limited standards and achievement of the older pupils. The specific skills of teachers within physical education limits what can be taught. The overall cost of teachers per pupil is broadly average. The school has slightly fewer teachers than average for its size, and they spend a greater proportion of their time in the classroom; these limitations arise because of the relatively mature staff profile.
91. The teachers and pupils receive good support from academic and administrative support staff. Learning support staff are generally deployed well. The librarian provides a good service to staff and pupils alike. All members of staff are covered by good induction and appraisal systems. The school has been re-awarded Investors in People status for the quality of its work with the whole of its staff.
92. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory, and in most respects meets the needs of pupils. There has been a recent building programme, including a humanities suite and extending facilities for design and technology, the sixth-form and the learning resource centre. The main problems now arise from the steady rise in pupil numbers. The new buildings have reduced outdoor play space, whilst indoor social areas are limited to the hall and dining room. The narrow corridors in some older buildings are congested at lesson changes and the ends of the school day. Rooms are generally well grouped according to subjects and are of an adequate size. However, rooms in the 1950s main block, housing English, modern foreign languages and mathematics, are very cramped when accommodating classes of 30 pupils; this limits learning opportunities. There is also no disabled access to the higher floors of this block, and many minor changes of level make wheelchair access difficult, in spite of the school's own efforts to improve matters.
93. In English, history, geography and religious education, some lessons have to be taught in non-specialist rooms, limiting access to specialist resources for the pupils concerned. When art is taught in the dining room or science laboratories, accommodation is unsatisfactory. The art rooms themselves are too untidy to be as effective teaching spaces as they might be. In vocational subjects, standards are affected adversely by the lack of sufficient specialist accommodation. The heating system, criticised in the previous report, still leaves some rooms cold in severe weather and the drumming of rain on the metal roofs of the music rooms produces a serious distraction in careful listening work. The good outdoor sports facilities are open to the community after school hours, accommodating the Rodway Hill Tennis Centre, the Avon Under-18 Netball Team and several junior football clubs. Indoor sports facilities lack flexibility and changing rooms are cramped. The school is currently working on plans to extend facilities further as part of the plans to move to an eight-form entry school.

94. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory overall. The lack of adequate resources for ICT makes it difficult to deliver all aspects of the subject; for example, there are fewer computers than normally seen in schools of this size, and there are few data projectors and digital cameras. There are shortages of equipment in some areas of science and not enough textbooks in modern languages. Resources in the otherwise good quality library are inadequate; there are not enough books in some subjects.
95. Overall, the school gives good value for money. After many years of relatively low funding, it currently receives a broadly average income. The money is spent well to provide a school which is popular, where pupils do better than one would expect from their standards on entry, where they receive very good pastoral support, and which is a calm and orderly place, characterised by very good relationships. It is also an attractive environment in which to learn. The school has the capacity to continue to improve.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

96. Overall, leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The school's sixth form is a small one, but thanks to the consortium arrangements, students have access to a far wider range of opportunities and styles of learning than would usually be seen. This means that the strategic use of resources, including special grants, is good. The proportion of spending on the sixth form matches the income available for this purpose, and its needs are considered properly in the context of whole-school funding. These arrangements, and the good achievement by the students, means that overall, the cost-effectiveness of the sixth form is very good. Unusually, the head of sixth form is not a member of the senior management team. However, this reflects the fact that many of the aspects of the role are carried out by the consortium co-ordinator, the costs of whom are shared equally between the participating centres. The strategic management of the sixth form is good. The curriculum has evolved well to meet the needs of the students and also the local area. The common policies and practices across the consortium are effective in ensuring that students achieve well, whilst the consortium co-ordinator is skilled in setting targets for students and evaluating their academic results. Within the Mangotsfield sixth form, monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory, but there could be better use made of lesson observation and the available national data to ensure that achievement is maximised for all students.
97. The governing body provides good direction for the sixth form, and also evaluates its effectiveness appropriately. Apart from the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship, the governors fulfil their statutory requirements. The governors and other staff with responsibility for the sixth form have a satisfactory understanding of the principles of best value; membership of the consortium rather than going it alone is, of course, a prime example of this.

Resources

98. The sixth form is well staffed with subject specialists. Although the sixth form is small, the consortium arrangements mean that staff can be deployed well to meet the needs of the students in all seven participating centres. Accommodation for the sixth form is good. Smaller classes at this level reduce the impact of many constraints noted in the main school. Furthermore, the well-designed sixth form centre, next to the learning resource centre, computer suites and careers advice, provides a well-integrated learning environment. Resources for learning are good overall, particularly in terms of access to ICT facilities, in contrast to the main school. However, the range of sixth form books in the library is small in some subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

99. In their plans to improve standards and achievement at the school, the governors, headteacher and others in positions of responsibility should bear in mind the following points when drawing up the action plan. Elements of those items marked * were contained as key issues at the time of the last inspection. Elements of those marked + appear in the current development plan. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant paragraphs in the main report.

- (1)*+ Take a more urgent view of the work being done to develop the literacy skills of the pupils across all subjects in the school, particularly in Years 10 and 11, with particular reference to:
- making sure that there is clear guidance on how literacy skills will be developed in a consistent manner in all subjects; and
 - monitoring, frequently, the work of all subjects to ensure that the stated plans, policies and procedures are being used, and are working effectively.
- (2,7,8,26,28,40,85)
- (2)* Make better use of the data available on the pupils' performances to improve teaching further at all levels, but most urgently in Years 10 and 11 by:
- organising and using the data on value added by pupils to better diagnose strengths and weaknesses of provision;
 - using these data to set an appropriate range of work for the pupils in each class;
 - ensuring that the planning of lessons focuses clearly on the *learning* outcomes that are required of the pupils; and
 - monitoring these arrangements, regularly, frequently and by means of direct classroom observation, by senior and middle managers.
- (31,32,35,62,64,65,86)
- (3) Raise standards and achievement in art and design by:
- making sure that teaching is directed at improving pupils' skills;
 - providing clearer links between theoretical study and their practical work;
 - making more use of sketchbooks; and
 - developing assessment procedures, including the effective marking of work, in order to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and to give advice about what to do to improve standards.
- (130-134)
- (4)*+ Ensure that pupils of all ages have sufficient access to ICT facilities in all subjects to support learning.
- (7,26,89,94,161,126)
- (5)+ Ensure that all pupils experience proper provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, by auditing, planning and monitoring formally the delivery of work in this area across all subjects of the curriculum.
- (44,47-51,55,57)

Sixth form

- (1)* Make better use of the assessment data available to monitor the progress that individual students are making over time.
- (66,67)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 to 11	159
	Sixth form	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		68

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 to 11

Number	0	16	66	62	11	1	0
Percentage	0	10	42	40	7	0	0

Sixth form

Number	0	5	8	11	1	0	0
Percentage	0	20	32	44	4	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 [enter Years the sixth form] as each lesson represents four 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	895	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	93	-

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16	-
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	100	-

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	9.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	1.2

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	99	92	191

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	78	78
	Girls	75	62	58
	Total	153	140	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (72)	73 (72)	72 (65)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (27)	45 (40)	32 (24)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	78	78
	Girls	75	66	58
	Total	153	144	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (50)	75 (69)	62 (67)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (18)	40 (38)	24 (34)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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
	2002	82	76	158

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	29	74	81
	Girls	38	76	76
	Total	67	150	157
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	42 (32)	95 (97)	99 (100)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	34.5 (33.6)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	n/a
	National	n/a

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

NOTE: At the time of the inspection, validated data for the school, and also national comparators, were not available for the 2002 examinations.

2001 data only		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	12	20	32
	Average point score per candidate	14.3	15.5	15.1
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18.0	17.5

2001 data only		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	11	18	29	2	8	10
	Average point score per candidate	13.5	10.2	11.4	12.0	15.8	15.0

National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6
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Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	937	97	3
White – Irish	-	-	-
White – any other White background	6	3	-
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	-	-
Mixed – White and Black African	4	-	-
Mixed – White and Asian	3	-	-
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	-	-
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	-	-
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	1	-
Black or Black British – African	0	-	-
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	-	-
Chinese	3	-	-
Any other ethnic group	2	-	-
No ethnic group recorded	4	-	-

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	56.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	460

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.9
Key Stage 4	22.5

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	2,672,660
Total expenditure	2,742,028
Expenditure per pupil	2812
Balance brought forward from previous year	58,478
Balance carried forward to next year	(10,890)

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	18.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	975
Number of questionnaires returned	159

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	50	8	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	48	6	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	64	7	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	54	17	5	2
The teaching is good.	26	63	4	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	48	22	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	39	10	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	26	50	17	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	46	4	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	61	5	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	48	16	2	11

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

- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and leads to most pupils achieving well.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects.
- The national strategy for promoting literacy has helped to raise standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Most pupils have good attitudes, behave well and are keen to learn

Areas for improvement

- For some pupils, standards in reading and writing are not high enough.
- Learning objectives are not sharp enough and sessions are not always rounded off with a review of what has been learned.
- In some lessons, work is not matched closely enough to the learning needs of the pupils.

100. Pupils enter the school with slightly below average standards overall. Standards at entry in reading are higher than in writing: a significant minority of pupils has weak literacy skills. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 since the last inspection, 1999 saw a sharp fall in results, but recovery was swift and the result of improvements put in place since the previous inspection. In the 2002 tests, the overall results are average. Pupils gain higher results than would be expected from their standards at entry; achievement is therefore good. Girls do slightly better than boys, but they do less well than do girls nationally.

101. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11, results have fluctuated since the last inspection, but have been broadly average in most years, including in 2002. Boys perform markedly less well than girls. Pupils tend to do less well in English language than in the other subjects that they took, mainly because of the underperformance of boys. In relation to the pupils' test results at the end of Year 9 in 2000, the average points score of the pupils taking the examination in 2002 was broadly average; achievement is therefore satisfactory overall. However, the proportion of pupils gaining at least grade C was well above the level expected for this particular year group, showing very good achievement for the pupils concerned.

102. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good overall. Pupils achieve well through Years 7,8 and 9, mainly because of the National Literacy Strategy, which has helped to improve teaching. There is now more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. In addition, standards on entry to the school are rising. By the end of Year 11, standards are broadly average, and achievement is satisfactory. The range of attainment is wide, and a significant proportion of the pupils, mainly boys, do not write fluently or show a well developed vocabulary, because they do not read widely and have limited understanding of how language works.

103. Higher attainers and most of the average attaining pupils speak confidently, adapting their talk appropriately to their audience. However, a minority does not speak well. These pupils lack confidence and speak in short bursts, with a narrow vocabulary that prevents them from expressing their views, or exploring issues in depth. Listening skills are good overall: pupils are interested, they listen intently to each other and to their teachers. Again, a minority finds it hard to listen for more than a short time, and their minor inattention has to be firmly dealt with by teachers, who mostly do this well, and without interrupting the flow of the lesson.

104. By the end of Year 9, pupils have read a satisfactory range of texts. The school's provision for silent reading builds concentration, providing a good climate for reading. Most pupils settle quickly and become absorbed in their books. This was particularly marked in a Year 9 lesson; there was silence in less than a minute of the pupils entering the room and everyone was reading. Younger

pupils show an interest in words: a Year 7 class looked at dialect, accent and pronunciation and showed that they had a good understanding of imagery in poetry, defining accurately metaphors and similes. Another Year 7 class performed a poem, *'Jamaica Market'*, using accents, and varying the pitch of their reading to create interesting effects. Boys and girls alike volunteer to read aloud. In some lessons, particularly where there are higher attaining pupils, the impact of wide reading is evident, as it was in a Year 8 lesson, where pupils deduced from the text the age of the narrator and the period in which the story was set. They identified key themes from the book, justifying their answers with evidence. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils have continued to develop their reading, but other pupils do not read widely enough.

105. The pupils' standards in writing at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are weaker than in other aspects of English. Higher attaining pupils write fluently and confidently, using quotations to support their arguments. They control tension well, and use varied sentence structure, but few write with a wide vocabulary. Average attaining pupils vary the content and the structure of their writing, but make elementary errors in spelling and grammar. Lower attaining pupils struggle; their writing is not well structured, imaginative or clear. Pupils use computers satisfactorily, but not extensively, in their writing.
106. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject, and they know and manage their pupils well. As a result, the pupils work at a good pace in most lessons, and listen carefully to their teachers so that they acquire new knowledge and skills. Where teaching is good, lessons are brisk, and teachers change activities frequently to sustain momentum. In the best lessons, the pupils were given a high degree of independence, and teachers resisted the temptation to give too much information, devising challenging questions, instead, to make the pupils think.
107. Teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, when teachers talk too much and miss opportunities to challenge pupils, but particularly the higher attaining pupils. In these lessons, all are given the same work and, in their marking, a minority of teachers does not tell higher attaining pupils how to improve. When the class is set a substantial task, or is reading silently, teachers tend not to use the time to talk to individuals about their work, hear them read, or discuss targets. Sometimes, the objectives of lessons are lists of activities or content, rather than explaining what the pupils will learn. Teachers do not always ask pupils whether learning objectives have been reached, missing opportunities to help pupils understand their own learning.
108. The leadership and management of the department are good: the head of department and her deputy work hard to overcome the problems of working with a number of teachers who teach in more than one department. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Drama

109. Pupils, especially girls, gained better results in their GCSE drama examinations in 2002 than in most of their other subjects. Standards in work seen are average overall: there have been changes in staff that have affected the continuity of the subject this year. By the end of Year 9, pupils reach average standards. Achievement is good. Their practical work is above average, and they speak confidently. Higher attaining pupils learn scripts well, and perform with good expression, remaining in character throughout. Lower attaining pupils show less understanding of the characters they play. Their evaluative comments on their performances are perceptive and relevant because such evaluation is a regular part of their drama work from the start, so that by Year 9 they listen carefully to comments and incorporate improvements into their own work with skill.
110. By the end of Year 11, standards are average and pupils show good achievement. The evaluative skills that were developing in Year 9 are evident in their writing: average attaining pupils produce thoroughly competent pieces that explore issues well. Higher attaining pupils try to show complex ideas in their devised drama pieces. Lower attaining pupils are hindered by their weak writing skills, which negatively affect how well they complete their tasks.

111. Teaching and learning are good overall. Good routines have been established so that lessons make the best use of time, and teachers supplement the pupils' evaluations of their performances by probing and extending their answers. The marking of written work is encouraging and, on the whole, also gives pupils pointers as to how they can improve.

Literacy across the school

112. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when there was no clear planning to tackle weaknesses in literacy systematically across the school. Most departments introduce important subject vocabulary carefully, though not all *teach* pupils how to spell new words, nor do they give visual reinforcement by writing words down, or making the pupils repeat the words themselves. However, the impact of the school's strategy for literacy across the curriculum is currently unsatisfactory, because there is inconsistency in the degree to which literacy is systematically taught and reinforced in all subjects of the curriculum. Reading and writing are still barriers to many pupils, and prevent them from expressing effectively what they know and understand. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to read or to develop extended writing skills. During the inspection, good examples were observed in science, in history, and in ICT, for example.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The teachers' good subject knowledge.
- The positive and productive working relationships between teachers and students.
- The curriculum, which offers good continuity from Year 6 into Year 7

Areas for improvement

- Teaching does not always cater for the spread of abilities in classes, including stretching the most able.
- There needs to be greater monitoring to ensure greater consistency across the subject.
- The pupils' literacy skills need further development.

113. In the 2002 national tests in mathematics, standards were average and in line with similar schools. Boys perform significantly better than girls in the tests. Results over the last four years have remained in line with national averages and improving at a rate similar to those seen nationally. On entry to the school, standards are below average, so that achievement is good by the end of Year 9, and well above expectations for pupils achieving Level 5 and above, given their above average performance.
114. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, standards were below average and well below similar schools. The proportion of A* to C grades has continued to fall over the past three years. In 2002, boys performed significantly below national averages and the attainment of girls was better than that of boys. Boys and girls alike tend to do less well in mathematics than in the other subjects that they take. On the basis of pupils' prior performance in the national tests in Year 9 two years earlier, however, achievement is satisfactory.
115. On the evidence of pupils' work and lessons observed, standards at the end of Year 9 are average and standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. Achievement in relation to earlier standards of the groups concerned is good and satisfactory, respectively. The standards observed are similar to those in the 2002 examinations. The work covers all attainment targets and suitably develops and extends the work undertaken in the primary school. However, algebra skills are weak and common errors such as $3x+1=4x$ are not anticipated or addressed. By the end of Year 9, pupils can use circle properties to find angles in circles and identify correlation from scatter graphs, while higher attaining pupils can solve quadratic equations with confidence. By the end of

Year 11, pupils can solve simultaneous equations while higher attaining pupils can find lengths and angles using the sine and cosine rules.

116. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Lessons start promptly using a variety of starter activities, which quickly engage pupils and provide a good recap of earlier work. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and manage their classes well. They enjoy positive and productive relationships with their pupils, which support and encourage their learning. Homework is regularly set, but marking is often cursory with little detail provided on how to improve. In classes, too little attention is given to the spread of ability and lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, lack pace and rigour. Insufficient use is made of available data to target pupils and check progress against potential. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to mathematics across all years and enjoy positive and productive relationships with the teacher and with each other. However, in a significant minority of lessons, especially in Years 10 and 11, they rely too heavily on the teacher and have considerable difficulty concentrating for the whole 75 minutes in a lesson.
117. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good so that these pupils progress as well as others in the school. Teachers have a good awareness of their specific needs and teaching assistants, when available, make a positive contribution by encouraging their application and involvement. Individual education plans provide a good focus for developing pupils' learning, but rarely mention numeracy or include numeracy targets. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped so that teaching is not sufficiently focused on their individual needs, and able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in the classroom.
118. The provision for literacy within the department is unsatisfactory and literacy skills are not sufficiently supported and practised. Pupils' writing skills are marred by incorrect spellings, and technical vocabulary is not sufficiently stressed. Reading skills are low so that pupils have difficulty accessing written work while poor listening skills mean that they do not comprehend what is being said. The provision for ICT is satisfactory and, although there are some inconsistencies in the use of ICT, statutory requirements are being met.
119. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The head of department has a good awareness of the strengths of the department through informal monitoring opportunities but these are not sufficiently broadly focused to identify and act upon inconsistencies across the department. The department has responded well to recent curricular changes but changes to GCSE schemes of work are slow being developed. Opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are being missed, although a few aspects are covered in the subject. Staffing is adequate, accommodation is satisfactory and resources appropriate although the provision of books in the school library is inadequate.
120. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards remain similar to those in the last inspection report while teaching is now good in Years 7 to 9 with strengths in teachers' subject knowledge and the relationships between teachers and pupils. Activities are more focused but lessons still lack challenge especially for the most able. Leadership is more purposeful although monitoring and evaluation require improvement.

Numeracy across the school

121. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils make good use of number skills for calculating proportions in food technology and algebraic skills are used in science for substituting in formulae. In geography, pupils are confident with grid references for maps, but their spatial skills are poor in art because the department does little to develop them. Charts, tables and graphs are used appropriately in science, geography, and history, although these are rarely interpreted so that in history, population graphs are described as going up and down with no real understanding of what the graph is illustrating. The school has a whole school numeracy policy, and numeracy guidelines are used well to support good practice in notation, units and the use of calculators.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The leadership of the subject is good, resulting in effective teamwork.
- The department is receptive to new initiatives.
- As a result, teaching and learning are particularly good in Years 7 to 9.
- There is a good working relationship between teachers and pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient monitoring of the work of the department means that there are inconsistencies of practice.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning,
- The overall level of learning resources is unsatisfactory.

122. When they enter the school, the pupils' standards in science are below average. Their results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were average, as they were in relation to schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. This improvement over time represents good achievement during Years 7 to 9. Boys performed better than girls, as they generally do at this level. Results overall have shown consistent improvement in the last four years. Test results are higher than teachers' assessments.
123. In the 2002 GCSE examination at the end of Year 11, there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades. Moreover, all pupils taking the examination gained at least a grade G; this is well above the national figure. Overall results were average. Girls performed much better than boys, even though these boys had gained better results than the girls when in Year 9. Girls' achievement during Years 10 and 11 was therefore very good, while the boys' was satisfactory, giving good achievement overall in relation to the pupils' earlier Year 9 test scores. Pupils' results in science are similar to those in the other subjects that they took.
124. The recent improvement in results in national tests was reflected in the standards of work seen during the inspection. Standards are average for the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. Given that entry standards remain below average, achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 can use chemical formulae to represent the reaction of an acid with a base. Lower attaining pupils study the reaction of a metal with an acid, but they find difficulty in recalling the test for the hydrogen gas that is produced. By Year 11, there is a wider range of attainment; higher attaining pupils show an understanding of the difference between static and dynamic friction, and their impact. By contrast, lower attaining pupils have difficulty in explaining the difference in the structure of solids, liquids and gases. Pupils in Year 7 are placed in mixed ability classes; from Year 8 onwards they are placed in sets according to attainment. Even so, there is still a wide range of attainment in each class.
125. Pupils' listening skills are generally good, but vary according to teacher expectation. Teaching is not so effective when teachers talk for too long; this reduces the opportunity for pupils to learn by doing, and occasionally even distracts them from their work. Even in a very good lesson in Year 8 about testing for starch, the teacher interrupted the pupils' work too often in order to give further instructions. They become too dependent on their teacher as a result. In Years 10 and 11 especially, pupils do not always show the necessary powers of concentration, particularly in the last quarter of lessons. Teachers are often too slow, and occasionally ineffective, in correcting the low level of social conversation, which detracts from their learning.
126. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers possess a secure knowledge of their subject, and often add interest to the work with relevant background information. The management of pupils is particularly good, with positive relationships between teachers and pupils leading to pupils adopting a good attitude to the subject, and good

learning in the majority of lessons. Time is also well used, with effective liaison with the technicians leading to prompt starts to lessons. The planning of lesson content is good overall, and in the best lessons, teachers also give careful thought to the activities through which pupils will learn. In most classes, teachers provide the right level of challenge for all pupils, as in a Year 8 lesson when pupils investigated how the length of a spring depends on the force applied to it. The tasks were such that lower attaining pupils could obtain creditable results while higher attaining pupils could use their initiative to improve the accuracy of their work. In a minority of lessons, however, there is insufficient differentiation of the tasks set, especially in Years 10 and 11. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on the reflection and refraction of light, pupils were all given the same written task, with no graduation in the difficulty of the questions. Furthermore, the answers were provided too readily by the teacher, so there was insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. All pupils study a wide range of topics across all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. Practical tasks are provided in a high proportion of classes; in the best lessons, some responsibility for planning the practical work is given to pupils. In a Year 8 lesson about the energy released by different foods, for instance, pupils were required to think about organising their practical work, and how to present their written work. This allows higher attaining pupils to use their initiative in order to improve their standards.

127. The science department has reacted positively to recent national initiatives. For instance, the development of writing skills has been given a high priority in many science lessons, and pupils are gaining confidence in their ability to express themselves as a result. This is particularly noticeable in Years 7 to 9. In many lessons, pupils are also taught how to pronounce new scientific words. There is also a good contribution to pupils' numeracy development, especially in the drawing and analysis of graphs, and in Years 10 and 11, the use of formulae. Less progress has been made in the integration of ICT into the curriculum of all pupils, mainly due to a lack of resources, and this remains a priority for the future.
128. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has developed a good team spirit, and there are regular meetings to discuss policies. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the performance of the department, the implementation of agreed policies, and of teaching. Overall, there is insufficient reference to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the schemes of work. There is some inconsistency in practice across the department, and the best features of teaching, many of them developed by less experienced teachers, are not being adopted across the department. A number of other factors affect pupils' learning. In Year 7, inflexibility in the timetable means that most classes have more than one science teacher, making continuity of learning more difficult. The overall level of resources is unsatisfactory, with a lack of equipment having a negative effect on the quality of learning in a significant number of lessons. This shortage applies to basic equipment such as metre rules, thermometers and ray-boxes, as well as more expensive items such as microscopes and dataloggers.
129. Since the last inspection, the department has made satisfactory improvement. Standards are at about the same level, having remained roughly in line with national averages, but they are now beginning to improve in all years. Teaching has certainly improved, and appropriate training has upgraded teachers' computer skills, and their management of pupils. The evaluation of the work of the department is still given insufficient time and priority, but there is now a development plan in place with targets for the future. The planned improvement in recording the results of pupils' assessments in order to track the work of individual pupils will also provide data against which department performance can be measured.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- National Curriculum requirements are now met in department planning.
- The Year 10 Vocational GCSE group is beginning to achieve satisfactorily.

Areas for improvement

- Poor departmental management has led to a very significant decline in standards and achievement.
- Standards are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Planning of the curriculum is not sharply focused on how to improve pupils' weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, leading to unsatisfactory achievement over time.
- Marking is poor and does not lead to assessment that shows pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not learn how to link research and historical studies with practical exercises.
- Sketchbook work is poor, and lacks marking.

130. At the end of Year 11, the GCSE results fell sharply after the last inspection and have remained well below average since then. In 2002, a very small proportion of pupils took the full GCSE art course. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C is well below average, with pupils achieving much less well in art than in their other subjects. Boys in particular gain results that are significantly below their potential.
131. Pupils' skills are weak when they enter Year 7. Standards do not improve fast enough and are well below average by the end of Year 9. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory overall, with particularly poor progress in written and analytical work. Although the department now uses an early benchmarking test, neither teaching, nor the curriculum, is good enough to improve the weaknesses that this clearly identifies. Teaching of painting and drawing, for example, is not rigorous, so that most pupils make unsatisfactory progress in these areas. Some non-graphical work such as collage or ceramics is nearer average, but the standards in understanding contextual and historical work develop only poorly. This is partly because of weak literacy, which the department does too little to improve. There are no effective means of assessment for tracking the pupils' progress over time, so that neither they nor their teachers have a realistic view of what is good or weak about their work. The gap between where pupils should be and their actual standards widens between Years 7 and 9. This is particularly so in their understanding of how research, and their study of artists' work, link with practical exercises. Because Year 9 does not use sketchbooks, work is unsystematically recorded. Annotation of visual experiments is poor, and any research pupils do is disconnected from practical work, both in their minds and in folders. Sketchbook use in Years 7 and 8 forms a poor record of the pupils' progress.
132. Standards in the current Year 11 are also well below average; achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils start their GCSE courses with the low levels of skill described above. They lack the beginnings of the critical thinking processes required to develop work-journals or sketchbooks that reflect their learning of contextual and historical work. They cannot link this into a practical, personalised response to coursework or examination questions. Because most basic painting and drawing is weak, the pupils' final outcomes are mostly below average. Those whose practical work is likely to attract higher grades, are often pulled down by a lack of critique or personalised annotation of their preparation work. The short GCSE course, where standards were also below average until 2002, has been discontinued, with a vocational GCSE replacing it in Year 10. Achievement here is broadly satisfactory for the pupils following the course.
133. The quality of teaching has declined significantly since the time of the last report and is now unsatisfactory. Although some satisfactory lessons were seen, teaching is not sufficiently good enough to enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. Lessons in Years 7 to 9 do not direct pupils well enough towards how to do things, with insufficient demonstration or explanation of the processes or techniques to be learned. The facilitating style used is ineffective for younger pupils, who need to be taught more directly. Because pupils do not learn skills well enough by Year 9, the methods employed in Years 10 and 11 are also ineffective, because pupils have only weak skills to apply to GCSE work. The poor planning of the curriculum does not give inexperienced teachers a strong enough framework from which to plan lessons. Contextual and historical work was missing from the curriculum at the time of the last report, but is now loosely

planned to match practical tasks. However, pupils do not learn how to unite these elements, so work lacks “connectedness”.

134. The leadership and management of the department are poor. Standards have declined very significantly since the last report. Most criticisms raised then still remain. Assessment is poor. The department’s contribution to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of pupils’ lives remains unsatisfactory. The school’s senior management has recognised this decline and organised support for the department, which accurately defined actions required to effect improvements two years ago. These have not been followed, and all aspects identified then have remained weak. The use of ICT is still inadequate; pupils do not use computers creatively in their work. The department has deteriorated significantly overall since the last inspection.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to pupils achieving well.
- Pupils receive a broad curricular experience because learning opportunities are well planned and supported through visits from outside agencies.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good, so that pupils and teachers know what is expected of them, and the relevance of the learning.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment is not used sufficiently well to measure the progress that the pupils are making.
- There are too few opportunities for the training of teachers in this new subject.

135. The introduction of the subject into the PSHCE course and into subject curricula has resulted in the development of a coherent programme of study that enables pupils to develop their understanding and improve skills of good citizenship.
136. In work seen the standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 9 are average; achievement is good. They know about a range of issues in a local, national and global context. Personal development and relationships are very good. They work well in teams both in class and in the wider community such as the regular fund raising activities to support the disadvantaged in society and to improve road safety in the immediate locality. Pupils’ literacy skills are sound. In Year 8 for example, pupils researched information about animal welfare and reported their findings to the class. They were aware of the responsibility of owners for the care of animals and know about the role of RSPCA inspectors. Pupils used ICT to visit Websites such as the RSPCA to research information, but the wider use of computers is not yet identified in planning.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers are well supported with learning materials and guidance by the subject co-ordinator. The lesson objectives are clear and shared with pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. Learning is relevant and pupils enjoy the opportunities to debate topics.
138. The leadership and management of citizenship are very good. The co-ordinator has prepared a clear programme of study and ensured that other subjects are fully aware of the contribution they make to the development of pupils’ citizenship skills. The subject has also identified appropriate opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The curriculum is well organised and enhanced by contributions from local people such as magistrates and the police service. Teachers regularly monitor the effort that pupils make but the planning of procedures and use of assessment to measure the standards reached are at an early stage of development and thus currently unsatisfactory. Although some teachers have undertaken training for organising and teaching the new course, there has not been a whole school focus to support and develop teachers’ skills in citizenship.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The use of ICT in the subject.
- The quality of teaching, and the impact that it has on achievement, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

Areas for improvement

- The lower than expected standards for higher attainers.
- The effectiveness of schemes of work.
- The limited use of assessment data in planning work.
- The limited monitoring of lessons that takes place.

139. By the end of Year 9, the teachers' own assessments of standards are broadly average overall; above average at Level 5 and higher, but below average at Level 6 or better. Given that pupils enter the school with below average standards, this represents good achievement overall. At the end of Year 11, the full GCSE course in the 2002 examinations gave below average results at grade C or above, but above average for grade G and above. Girls performed better than boys; boys tended to do less well in the subject than the others that they took. In the short course, results were average at grade C or better and above average at grade G or higher. These results are an improvement on recent years, including 2001. In relation to the pupils' standards two years earlier, these results show satisfactory achievement.

140. In work seen during the inspection, standards are average for the end of Year 9 and achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Standards are also average for the end of Year 11; achievement is satisfactory. Year 9 pupils in a food technology lesson were able to prepare a recipe and recognised the need for quality control points when cooking. They understood a variety of testing and evaluation methods such as star diagrams and product profiles, which developed their understanding of how to make improvements to their work. In another Year 9 lesson focusing on textiles, the pupils could produce transfer prints onto calico cotton, and could explain what they needed to do to improve the quality of their projects which helped their understanding of the process and developed their own evaluative skills. Year 10 pupils could assemble and test electronic circuits to test the levels of moisture in soil. They had a reasonable understanding of the factors that influence whether a design is successful or unsuccessful and achieved good quality outcomes. Pupils' literacy development is satisfactory, with an effective focus on key words, sentence construction and technical vocabulary in lessons. The pupils' progress in numeracy is less well advanced, but the development of the pupils' ICT skills throughout the design and technology curriculum is good. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to improve their expertise.

141. The quality of teaching is good across the department. A real strength of the teaching is the teachers' subject knowledge and the relationships that they have with the pupils. This ensures that the pupils listen attentively when their teachers are demonstrating techniques or processes, or providing explanations and this supports the pupils' learning. Another strong feature of the teaching is the high level of lesson preparation. Rooms and resources are carefully prepared prior to the lesson so that the learning can begin as soon as the pupils enter the room. The way that teachers record pupils' attainments across Years 7 to 9 is also very effective because it provides a clear check on pupils' progress for each project. However, teachers do not make good enough use of this information when they are planning lessons, which means that they are not always pitched at the correct level for all of the pupils in the room whatever their ability. At times this results in a lack of challenge for the more able pupils which restricts the opportunity for them to achieve higher grades at the end of Year 9. Some aspects of lesson planning, and in particular the clarity of learning objectives and the use of rounding-up sessions need further development. In some lessons the learning objectives tend to be activities rather than clear statements about what the pupils are going to learn and pupils leave the room without their learning having been summarised

or consolidated, which means that they are unsure what their achievement has been during the lesson. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic about designing and making things. In some lessons there can be a constant chatter, which affects the learning of a small minority of pupils.

142. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. However, schemes of work are currently unsatisfactory and need to be revised to ensure that computer aided manufacture, structures and SMART materials are all covered in enough depth. Learning objectives, strategies to meet the learning needs of all pupils, and literacy and numeracy developments should also be included to support teachers' lesson planning and pupils' learning. Overall, there are few opportunities within course planning to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Departmental development planning is minimal and needs further development, and there is very limited monitoring of teaching and learning.
143. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during this inspection, and teachers' marking is now consistent. Additionally pupils' skills in graphicacy have improved and they now have a reasonable understanding of the design process.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards are rising because of good teaching.
- Recent planning of the subject curriculum has been good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and this helps them to make good progress.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils; higher attainers in particular could make faster progress.
- Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to monitor progress and to raise standards.

144. Results in the 2002 full GCSE examination at the end of Year 11 were average, and pupils reached broadly similar standards in geography as they did in the other subjects they studied. These results are a significant improvement on those of recent years. There were insufficient numbers to compare the results of boys and girls with statistical reliability. Results in the GCSE short course were below average.
145. In work seen during the inspection the standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement given their broadly average standards on entry to the school. Pupils possess an appropriate range of geographical skills, such as locating places on maps and plotting graphs. The work is mostly accurate but poor attitudes of the minority result in lower than expected standards because maps and diagrams are untidy and left incomplete. Pupils know a range of terms such as 'condensation' in studies about weather, whilst Year 9 pupils use computers well to research information about global issues arising from growth in world population. Lower attaining pupils understand why people migrate from one country to another whilst higher attaining pupils use examples well to explain differences in migration patterns. Many pupils are competent in written work, but the standards of others are weak because they do not punctuate and spell accurately and this reduces the clarity of writing.
146. The standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement given their broadly average standards at the start of the course. Standards in the GCSE short course, however, are below average. Pupils are knowledgeable about topics in physical geography, such as how mountains are formed and the work of the sea in eroding the coast. They use appropriate terms and understand about the earth's structure to explain why

mountains form in particular areas. Pupils know about alpine conditions and describe the use of the environment, but many do not develop their answers enough. Pupils in Year 11 understand why many 'cirques' form on north facing slopes and are able to plot and analyse data, but many write in general terms, without using examples to explain answers. The pupils' knowledge of places is a weakness on the GCSE short course, and answers are brief and too theoretical. Pupils in Year 10, for example, knew about measures to protect the coast from erosion, but did not make use of information on the Yorkshire coast to write their reports. Many make good use of charts and diagrams to illustrate descriptions, but others do not take sufficient care and work lacks accuracy and completeness.

147. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils learn well because teachers plan work to consolidate gains made in previous lessons and reinforce learning through a summary session. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are given additional adult support and materials are produced to meet their needs. Teachers are experienced and they manage pupils well. As a result, pupils are interested in learning, lessons proceed smoothly and they make good progress. Learning is very teacher centred however, and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to show initiative and self-reliance. As a result higher attaining pupils are not being stretched with more demanding tasks. The marking of work is regular but pupils are not generally well informed about how well they are doing or how they could improve further. The quality of teaching in Year 10 and Year 11 is satisfactory. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and explanations are clear. Consequently pupils improve their knowledge and understanding of topics and write accurate summaries. Learning is most effective when teachers have high expectations and set rigorous standards in lessons. In a Year 11 lesson on glaciation for example, progress was very good because the teacher set challenging tasks with time controls for completion. Pupils listened carefully, concentrated well and achieved the expected outcomes. On some occasions however, a combination of poor pupil attitudes combined with weakness in class management results in poor progress. Overall, the use of ICT in the subject is good.
148. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed head of subject has made substantial progress in a short time in preparing the curriculum and designing schemes of work for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Much remains to be achieved however, such as enhancing the GCSE schemes of work and the use of assessment data to monitor progress, setting targets for pupils and for curriculum design. Development planning is sound and well linked to the school's aims but lesson proposals for promoting pupils' literacy standards are not clear enough. Overall, there are few planned opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; moral development tends to be tackled more effectively within work than other aspects.
149. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The GCSE results have improved and standards in Years 7 to 9 are higher than previously reported. Weakness in the quality of marking remains and the use of assessment information still has to be addressed.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good because it focuses more effectively on helping the pupils to select, deploy and organise historical information.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work at a good pace.

Areas for improvement

- The lessons learned in Years 10 and 11 could be extended to Years 7 to 9.
- The use made of assessment information, and the nature of comments on pupils' work, need improving.

150. The teachers' own assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 were above average in both 2002 and 2001. Inspection evidence suggests that this was optimistic; current standards observed are broadly average for the end of Year 9. At the end of Year 11, the GCSE results in 2002 were below average; pupils tended to get similar results to those that they obtained in the other subjects that they took, and achievement was satisfactory. In recent years, although results have fluctuated, they have been broadly similar to the pupils' other subject grades.
151. From work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Achievement through Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, from pupils who had average standards at entry. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have basic knowledge and understanding of historical facts, situations and characters. They are aware that historical situations have both causes and effects and that these can be sorted into categories. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to make links between different types of causes. Average and lower attaining pupils provide much more detail in their oral responses than in their written work. They also find it difficult to structure and organise written answers so that unnecessary detail is excluded. This was evident in Year 7 research projects on how hard was life during the Middle Ages. Although pupils worked with great enthusiasm and made use of a wide range of sources of historical evidence, many did not keep to the key question and wrote descriptions of life without explaining how these were examples of life being hard or easy. There is scope to extend the range of strategies used to help pupils develop their skills in organising and deploying historical information so that their answers are more effectively structured. The subject makes good use of ICT. Pupils are able to make use of ICT to develop their history skills by, for example, using databases to research death rates during the Black Death. Most pupils are making satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of topics studied. Pupils with special educational needs also develop their understanding of topics at a good rate and therefore make good progress over time.
152. At the end of Year 11, work seen shows that standards are below average, but that there are signs of improvement. The pupils concerned show satisfactory achievement. This is because the department has developed a range of strategies designed to help pupils improve their skills in structuring answers to suit the requirements of the examining board. At all levels of attainment, pupils build up their knowledge and understanding of topics studied. Achievement in relation to prior attainment remains satisfactory; improvements in teaching have yet to make their mark fully. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of events and concepts is sound and their skills in analysing and evaluating sources of historical evidence are improving. Pupils in Year 11, for example, understand that cowboys' lives were dangerous, hard and sometimes boring: although all pupils could provide several pieces of specific evidence to support their answers, lower attainers were unsure of how to begin their introductions. Although the department has some very effective strategies to develop pupils' writing skills, there is scope to extend these by providing, for example, exemplar answers or displays of starter sentences.
153. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when a large proportion of teaching in Years 7 to 9 was judged to be unsatisfactory or poor. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 because it is now focusing more effectively and consistently on helping pupils to select, deploy and organise historical information. This means that pupils are starting to explain their answers rather than simply describing events. There is scope to develop more consistent use of such strategies into lessons in Years 7 to 9. In a lesson in Year 10, for example, pupils were asked to write down three pieces of evidence to support the view that the Great Fire of London wiped out the Plague; they then did the same to prove the opposite. This meant that their answers were balanced and well supported with detailed historical fact. Teachers rarely have time to watch each other teach – it would be particularly valuable for the non-specialists in Years 7 to 9 to observe the best practice. All teachers, however, plan lessons carefully and deliver them enthusiastically. As a

result, pupils are interested and work at a good pace. Marking of pupils' work is supportive and regular. However, it provides insufficient guidance on how pupils can improve, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Inspection evidence suggests that the assessment of Year 9 standards needs greater rigour.

154. Leadership and management are good, and have set in place changes to the teaching of the subject that are already improving achievement in Years 10 and 11. Good use is made in classrooms of displays of both pupils' work and other stimulus materials. Teachers work well together and are committed to raising standards. They also make effective use of opportunities to raise issues of social, moral and cultural development. Although the head of department does some monitoring of lessons, there is scope for more systematic sharing of good practice within the department. Departmental documentation is thorough and helpful and includes detailed lesson notes for non-specialists. Improvement since the last inspection is good, particularly in teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good; pupils show good achievement in Years 7 to 9 and in the GCSE classes.
- Teachers assess the pupils' work well in Years 7 to 9, and use this information effectively to provide the pupils with challenging work.
- The school's implementation of a new strategy for teaching the subject in Years 7 to 9 is helping to raise standards.

Areas for improvement

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the subject in Years 10 and 11 and, except on the GCSE course, pupils are under-achieving.
- The limited level of resources, including the below average number of computers, means that the pupils cannot use ICT enough in their other subjects.
- The management responsibilities for the subject are too complex, and this has slowed the rate of change in Years 10 and 11.

155. Standards in the teacher assessments for the end of Year 9 in 2002 were average overall; boys did better than girls. Fewer pupils reached higher levels than would be expected nationally. This is an improvement on previous years but similar to the standard at the time of the last inspection. Standards in the GCSE short course in 2002 were above average. Previous results in this examination have been variable but closer to the national average.
156. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. The attainments of boys and girls are now similar. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are able to create illustrated documents using information that they have researched using the Internet and present this for a specialised audience, for example, collecting weather data and showing how airports may use this information. Higher attaining pupils can use hyperlinks to connect pages and most pupils can create a display involving moving images. This represents good achievement since pupils come into the school with below average knowledge and skills.
157. By the end of Year 11 standards are below average overall, although in the GCSE class standards are average. Achievement in this small examination group is good as pupils began the course with below average knowledge and skills. Pupils have more limited opportunities to extend their ICT abilities in other areas of the curriculum. The skills they use in geography or science when using spreadsheets are fairly basic, whilst limited access to computers limits opportunities in some other subjects such as business studies. Overall, this represents unsatisfactory achievement across Years 10 and 11, and a fall in standards since the last inspection.

158. Teaching is good and leads to good learning in Years 7 to 9 and in the GCSE classes. Teachers plan and structure the lessons well, making effective use of the 75 minutes to keep up the pupils' interest. In one typical lesson for Year 7 the teacher used a flipchart, data projector and worksheets to present information and results in different ways, at the same time stimulating the wide range of pupils with well-aimed questions. This enabled them to build on previously learned skills and develop new ones. Pupils who needed to work more slowly were well supported so that all pupils learned how to "autofill" formulae in a spreadsheet. Higher attaining pupils had the opportunity to progress further and were able to create a 12-times-table grid in only 2 'moves'. Lessons for pupils with special educational needs are often very good because the teacher takes care to challenge and involve the pupils at an appropriate level. In contrast, there are less successful lessons where, for instance, teaching does not provide work at different levels for pupils of differing ability so that lower attaining pupils struggle to keep up and the more able are not stretched enough. In some cases pupils work well on their own initiative, such as in a Year 11 class where pupils drew on knowledge gained earlier to find information on the Internet, developing their knowledge of the Data Protection Act, thus promoting moral development. There is little evidence, however, of spiritual or cultural aspects in work. In all lessons, the pupils' interest, enthusiasm and good relationships enhance learning. Teachers manage any problems of discipline consistently and effectively, so that pupils are clear what is expected of them. Pupils are paired carefully, usually a boy with a girl, and collaboration is good, enabling teachers to raise the attainment of the girls. Teachers also make sure that pupils develop speaking and listening skills and learn to spell and use specialist vocabulary. Teachers take the opportunity to improve the pupils' skills in the use of number in most lessons.
159. The management and leadership of ICT are satisfactory. The recent improvements to the way that the curriculum is delivered in Years 7 to 9, along with the recruitment of a new specialist teacher, have helped raise standards. The ICT manager mentors this newly qualified teacher well. The school does not have enough computers and other hardware to make teaching and learning using ICT an integral part of the curriculum. Plans for the future development of the subject are good. However, the subject leader has wider roles in addition to the management of the subject, and this has produced a complex line-management structure. This has meant that the use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 is underdeveloped and standards have not kept pace with similar schools. There are no satisfactory procedures for measuring pupils' progress at this stage. Reports for parent of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory.
160. Providing that resources can be improved and the management of the subject re-focussed the school has a good potential for making further improvements and raising attainment. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

ICT across the school

161. Standards in ICT are average by the end of Year 9 but below average overall for non-specialists by the end of Year 11. Whilst most departments are developing relevant and interesting ways of using computers and other equipment to enhance learning, the pupils' experiences vary too much from subject to subject. The school has a below average number of computers so that not all demands can be met.
162. Training of all staff in the use of ICT has helped raised awareness of how computers may be used across the curriculum. Most subject departments make plans for the use of computers to enhance teaching and learning. There are good examples of research, for example to find out the effects of the First World War in literature, or the use of spreadsheets in science to explore the effects of heat loss on domestic electricity bills. Although some areas, such as geography, history and design and technology make good use of ICT, others, such as art and music, are missing opportunities to support learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Good teaching in Years 7 to 9, leading to improved writing skills

Areas for improvement

- The speaking skills of all pupils
- The need to encourage pupils to be more independent learners

163. In 2002 the teachers' own assessments at the end of Year 9 show standards in French and German to be significantly above average. Observations in the present Year 10 indicate that these were optimistic, particularly in speaking. Boys and girls performed equally well and since the last inspection there has been a trend of improvement for all pupils. At the end of Year 11 in 2002 the numbers taking the full GCSE in French were too small to make a reliable comparison with national standards. In German, standards for those taking the full course were broadly average. All pupils performed as well in German as in other subjects. In the short course, standards in French were average and in German slightly above average. Results in the German full course have improved since 2000 and there has been a trend of improvement in the short course in both languages. There are no statistical data available to evaluate the achievement of pupils in 2002 relative to their attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2000.
164. In work seen during the inspection, standards in German at the end of Year 9 are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, show good achievement. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils are consistently using the perfect tense in their written work, and many can write complex sentences with correct word order. Most pupils can write accurately in controlled situations, but only higher attaining pupils write accurately in more extended pieces of work. Pupils are also developing a good grammatical understanding. This reflects a priority of the languages department. All pupils can pick out details from recorded passages particularly when supported well by the teacher and they can all understand a broad range of classroom instructions. The listening skills of some of the pupils are being further developed when the teacher speaks German for all aspects of the lesson. Some pupils, whose concentration is not good, find listening to recorded German difficult. Both boys and girls are keen to speak in class in response to the teachers' questions but they do not speak at any length without the support of a written prompt or text. Pupils find it difficult to recall vocabulary and also to link topics and reuse language from earlier topics. This makes their oral progress slower than it could be. Pupils can read and understand short familiar texts and higher attaining pupils understand how to pick out key words to support their comprehension. Pupils do not read extensively and they do not use dictionaries to support themselves as independent learners. They are much happier to ask the teacher.
165. In work seen during the inspection standards in both French and German at the end of Year 11 are average. Achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory in both languages by the end of Year 11. Pupils understand a broader range of written and spoken language at this level, although some lower attaining pupils find it difficult to recognise anything other than very familiar words in passage of recorded language. The focus on written work has extended into Years 10 and 11 and the introduction of course work has helped pupils develop drafting skills and encouraged more pupils to write at length. The written work of the highest attainers is fluent and accurate. Speaking remains the skill that is underdeveloped. Although literacy and numeracy are sometimes planned for, there has been no consistent marked impact on standards. Overall, ICT is underused in the subject. However, some pupils use word processing effectively to draft their work.
166. Teaching is good overall. It is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, where it is satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully so that pupils can practise the language in a variety of ways in a lesson. All teachers tell pupils what activities they are to cover in a lesson, but they do not tell them exactly what they are going to learn. It is therefore difficult for both pupils and teacher to measure linguistic success at the end of the lesson. Teachers manage pupils well so that in the vast majority of lessons there is a good response and pupils concentrate well. Pupils are very clear about how teachers expect them to behave. Very occasionally, if the pace of the lesson is slow or there is a lack of variety, some pupils become disruptive and disturb their learning and that of others. This behaviour was seen in Year 7 and in Year 10. Most teachers pick up well on key

mistakes such as pronunciation errors, and make that a learning point. Pupils respond positively to such correction. An example of this was in the Year 8 French class when pupils were consistently confusing two common verb constructions. The teacher stopped the question and answer session and ensured that all pupils were clear on the difference.

167. The best learning occurs when teachers expect all pupils to be involved and to be working at a high level. A good example was seen in a Year 9 German lesson, where pupils willingly admitted they had not contributed as they knew that they would all be expected to participate with an extended and grammatically correct answer. In classes where the range of potential attainment is broad, teachers are providing materials that ensure all pupils are occupied. Whilst these are appropriate in that they provide additional practice, they do not extend pupils' skills. There were occasions where pupils were asked to produce extended answers, such as the Year 9 lesson where pupils responded to a recorded passage giving full sentence answers of what people could do in a German town. However, there were too many lessons where pupils were allowed to work at single word level. This, together with the number of activities that stress writing rather than speaking, limits pupils' opportunities for independent and extended speaking. Good use is made of a well qualified language assistant and teacher assistants. Teachers set appropriate homework and mark it regularly and carefully. Pupils respond by presenting their work well and taking care of their books.
168. Leadership and management of the department are good. The well planned curriculum is supported by a good range of visits to France and Germany, which allow pupils to use their language in a real situation, as well as promoting social and cultural development. However, planning for spiritual and moral development is not explicit and these areas are underdeveloped. In Year 10 there is a group of pupils studying French whose potential attainment is very wide ranging. This is having a negative impact on learning as the pupils' needs are so different. There are regular assessments which allow teachers and pupils to assess progress against the National Curriculum Levels. The process of standardising the results of these tests in Years 7 to 9 is not yet rigorous enough. A start has been made on the tracking of progress of individual pupils, but this is still underdeveloped. The head of department makes good use of funding, but the lack of books in Years 10 and 11 hinders pupils' progress. The work of the department is well supported by good organisation and clear documentation. There are good relationships in the classroom, which provide an excellent springboard for further progress.
169. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There has been a trend of improvement in examination results and in teacher assessment. After a period of staffing changes, the department is now fully staffed with specialist teachers. The head of department has concentrated on improving standards and there has been an improvement in writing skills particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Teaching is now good in Years 7 to 9.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Pupils show good achievement from Year 7 to Year 9
- Pupils taking GCSE are well supported

Areas for improvement

- Teaching could be more consistent
- In Years 7 to 9, more use of ICT is needed
- Too few pupils take the subject at GCSE

170. The teachers' own assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 are average, although with fewer than normal pupils reaching the highest standards. Boys performed better than boys nationally; the reverse was true for girls. The numbers taking GCSE in any one year are too small to allow reliable statistical interpretation.

171. Standards observed during the inspection in both Year 9 and Year 11 are average. Given that pupils enter the school with below average standards in music, achievement from Years 7 to 9 is good. In Years 10 and 11 their achievement is satisfactory. In Year 7 pupils sing unison songs and rounds confidently and with good tone. They perform on instruments by ear and using simple notation. They compose, developing their own ideas within musical structures. By Year 9 they have learned basic skills, with some degree of technical accomplishment, on tuned percussion instruments, guitars and keyboards and achieve growing success at co-ordinating melody and harmony, although many find the recognition of dissonance and consonance difficult to grasp. The highest attaining pupils are able to compose variations adapting textural, metric, tonal, rhythmic and melodic aspects of the music. Many use appropriate vocabulary well to evaluate music, but musical concepts are not always firmly grasped. Most pupils present work carefully. Pupils with special educational needs progress well. Year 10 and 11 pupils take individual instrumental or singing lessons, although many are still at a modest standard. They write scores of their compositions with growing accuracy, which also assists in the process of editing and revising work. Although they have covered most essential GCSE theory, they are insecure at relating this in aural appraisal of music. Many use computer software at a basic level to assist in developing compositions.
172. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. However, there is some good teaching in Years 7 to 9, and this has a disproportionate effect on standards, and helps the achievement at this level to be good overall. The best teaching is characterised by clearly structured lessons that systematically develop the progression and consolidation of learning. Good classroom management, based on confident subject skills and knowledge, keeps pupils focused on set tasks and ensures high levels of motivation. Where lessons are less successful, the individual activities do not follow a tight sequence, so that progression and reinforcement of the learning of skills and knowledge is only partially effective. Such lessons often have ill-defined opening activities, open-ended conclusions and inadequate strategies for holding the attention of the class, leading occasionally to some indiscipline. This, in turn, limits the ability of pupils to realise their own expectations in the subject, which, as a rule, are high. The positive attitudes of the majority of pupils do much to offset that teaching which is less well planned. In all teaching there is an insistence on learning technical vocabulary and extended writing. The teaching of standard notation actively encourages conceptual thinking, which has an effect on mathematical development. Most worksheets give clear expectations for pupils of different abilities, but teaching does not consistently demand the highest standard from the more able. Work in exercise books is well monitored and marked, contributing well to pupils' musical knowledge. Commentaries on Year 11 coursework are particularly helpful.
173. A lack of keyboards to enable the recording and editing of pupils' music and the poor computer provision in the department means that teaching using ICT is inadequate. The curriculum is otherwise well balanced and ensures progression in learning, albeit with a stronger tendency to western classical music than to popular and ethnic styles. A lack of rigour in embedding cross-curricular initiatives, such as gifted and talented programmes or spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, leads to lost opportunities for pupils to reach that realm of music which lies beyond technique and theory, including the wider cultural context of music. Nonetheless, the band of over 30 pupils and staff, the good provision for learning instruments and twice yearly concerts contribute much to the ethos of the school. Regular assessment helps teachers to track pupils' progress, but the bias towards assessing composition and performance over listening and appraisal skills, distorts the value of the information gathered. The system for assessment of new pupils is very thorough, helping to give a clear picture of every Year 7 pupil's ability and potential.
174. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards across the school have remained broadly in line with national averages and there have been some improvements in teaching. The leadership and management of the department, while satisfactory, is constrained by the fact that the head of department – also the head of the performing and expressive arts faculty – is given a substantial teaching load in an unrelated subject. This seriously constrains the opportunity to develop and monitor new initiatives to improve learning, for example in extending the use of classroom observation or the use of assessment data.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good attitudes and behaviour result from good class control.
- There is a good record in competitive games.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at GCSE are not high enough.
- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- Assessment procedures and data analyses lack rigour.

175. In 2002, the teachers' own assessments were that standards at the end of Year 9 were below average for both boys and girls; observation shows that this is too pessimistic. At the time of the last inspection, standards reached by pupils in the GCSE full course examinations were well above average. Since then results have fallen, being well below average in 2002, and achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in the short course were average, with small numbers of candidates. Very few pupils gained the highest grades in either course. However, results are broadly in line with those that the pupils gain in the other subjects that they take. Boys and girls reach good standards in competitive team games at district level. A few individuals represent the county.

176. By the end of Year 9, the standard of work seen during the inspection is average. Standards at the end of Year 11 are average overall in core lessons and examination work. At all levels, achievement is satisfactory. The mismatch with recent GCSE examination results occurs because of weaknesses in the preparation of examination candidates. By the end of Year 9, pupils know how to warm up and cool down from activity. Standards are average overall in games and health related exercise. Performance is above average in Year 8 top sets: girls have a good grasp of netball rules; boys are skilful in basketball. However, in the lower girls' set, work is below the standard expected in gymnastics; there was no boys' gymnastics during the inspection. By the end of Year 11, standards in National Curriculum activities are above average in boys' football and average in girls' basketball. Standards on examination courses are more variable, with better work seen in Year 10 than in Year 11. Overall, ICT is underused in the subject, although on the full course, the written work of the highest attaining pupils in Year 10 shows evidence of some individual research and use of computers; there were no practical lessons for this class during the inspection. By the end of Year 11, pupils make insufficient links between the practical and theory aspects of the subject. On the short course, the lowest attaining pupils do not organise their notes properly to help with final revision.

177. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in all years. Teachers have very good discipline and high expectations regarding uniform kit. This has a strong impact on the pupils' behaviour and response to supply staff or games coaches. Throughout the school, most pupils listen carefully to instructions and concentrate sensibly. In the lower school, when teachers choose to join two boys' classes together, good organisation and effective use of the sports hall facilities promotes sustained, vigorous activity. Good teaching encourages pupils to improve their games skills. However, inefficient use of the long 75 minute lesson limits progress in gymnastics. Fewer opportunities exist for pupils to learn independently of their teachers' direction than is usually seen by the end of Year 9. In the upper school, teaching across the range of courses is satisfactory overall and most pupils achieve appropriately. However, participation rates in core lessons are disappointing in Year 11. In a good football lesson, boys responded well because learning objectives were clear. With GCSE classes, teachers need to link the theory and practical aspects more explicitly to help pupils improve their overall grades.

178. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation, curriculum design and assessment have not been developed coherently because there is no one with overall responsibility for the subject. Communication between the separate boys' and girls'

departments has been disappointing. Planning for the pupils' wider spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is implicit rather than explicit; moral and social aspects are more evident than the others. Recent staffing problems have added further constraints to provision, particularly for girls and GCSE full course classes.

179. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Whilst there is some good games teaching in all years and standards have been maintained in competitive sport, there are fundamental shortcomings in the co-ordination of the subject as a whole. Standards in examinations have fallen. Boys still do not have access to dance. Opportunities for the oldest boys and girls to work together remain limited. National Curriculum assessment and moderation procedures are unsatisfactory. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is poor.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Full course GCSE results are above average.
- Teaching is good, enabling pupils to learn effectively.
- Good relationships, attitudes and behaviour result in a positive working environment.

Areas for improvement

- The pupils' literacy skills need further and more consistent development.
- More monitoring of teaching is needed in order to identify and share good practice.

180. Work seen shows that pupils' standards are below average on entry to the school. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average. Achievement in relation to prior attainment is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9; pupils with special educational needs make similar rates of progress to those of their peers. During Years 7 to 9, pupils learn about major world faiths and come to appreciate some of the ways in which such faiths affect daily life and practice. Pupils have a basic knowledge of world religions although average and lower attaining pupils find it difficult to recognise and use religious language in a meaningful way. Higher attaining pupils understand some of the similarities as well as the differences between religions, for example, in creation stories. Almost all pupils are beginning to show an understanding of religious perspectives on a range of ethical issues, for example, the existence of evil in the world. Pupils' writing shows a range of styles used for particular purposes, although literacy levels are below average and pupils often show a greater depth of knowledge and thought in their oral than in their written work. Although the department is working hard to improve literacy levels, there is scope to develop these strategies further so that lower attaining pupils are able to structure their written answers more effectively. Examples of existing good practice include the sharing of ideas as a whole class before committing pen to paper and regular opportunities to research project information on the Internet. Overall, however, opportunities for pupils to use ICT are limited.

181. At the end of Year 11, standards in the short course GCSE were below average in 2002. A small number of pupils took the full course GCSE, too few to allow reliable statistical comparison with national data. However, the pupils' results represent good achievement in terms of prior attainment. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in the current Years 10 and 11 remain below average in the short GCSE course and above average in the full course. Overall, therefore, standards are below average; achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, pupils studying for the full course have a detailed understanding of, for example, Christian and Sikh attitudes to the death penalty. Higher attaining pupils can support their answers with the detailed scriptural references necessary to gain the higher grades at GCSE. Pupils studying for the short course expand their knowledge and understanding through exploring Christian and Sikh perspectives on issues such as animal rights, the media and the environment. Although literacy levels are below average, pupils studying a unit on media attitudes towards religion are provided with effective guidance on how to structure their answers so that they show a reasonable understanding of the issues involved.

182. The quality of teaching is good overall, particularly in full course GCSE work in Years 10 and 11. There is no evidence of unsatisfactory teaching. Specialist teachers are very knowledgeable in all aspects of the subject. This means that explanations are clear with good quality questioning that builds effectively on pupils' responses. Non-specialist teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the subject, although occasionally they make mistakes with specialist terminology or concepts. Activities enable pupils to make effective associations between aspects of different religions, evident, for example, in work done on different creation stories. Teachers work hard to establish clear expectations of how to behave and activities are well structured to enable pupils to maintain levels of concentration and to feel more confident about their work. The atmosphere in classrooms is positive and teachers are good role models for the subject. Pupils appreciate the enthusiasm with which their lessons are taught and respond with interest and generally good behaviour. Marking is supportive and regular. However, it provides insufficient guidance on what pupils need to do in order to improve their work.
183. This is a well-led department with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Teachers work well as a team and show commitment to the subject. There is scope to develop more formal strategies to both monitor the teaching of non-specialists and to share good practice more consistently. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Statutory requirements to teach religious education to all pupils are now met. The department has made satisfactory improvement on the issues identified in the last inspection.

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

In the inspection, five subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses at the school 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. At the time of the inspection, no validated school results, nor national data, were available for the 2002 examinations.

GCE A level and AVCE courses (2001)

Subject	Number entered*	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	5	100	88	0	34	3.6	5.3
Business Vocational	6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	15.0	10.5
History	6	83	88	0	35	3.7	5.5
English literature	13	100	95	0	37	3.5	5.9
Drama	5	100	99	40	38	6.4	6.6
Communication studies	6	100	93	33	31	5.0	5.5

* only subjects entering at least five candidates are included here

Intermediate vocational qualifications (2001)*

Qualification	No in final year*	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Health and social care	6	83	64	17	21	0	2

* Only courses where at least five students were entered are included

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

184. The focus subject was mathematics. In addition, work in biology, chemistry, and physics was sampled. A small number of students entered the A2 examinations in each of the three science subjects in 2001; all students obtained a pass grade, but there was only one A grade. The number of entries increased in 2002; results in general improved, but the proportion of higher grades was still below average in all three subjects. However, most students performed as well as expected based on their GCSE results, with a significant proportion doing better than expected. Results were better in chemistry than in biology and physics.

185. Two biology lessons were observed. In a very good lesson in Year 13, students studied the flow of water through a plant. In another lesson about the passage of liquid through the human body, the teaching was good. Both teachers showed a good knowledge of their subject, and students were very involved and interested in the work.

186. Two chemistry lessons were observed. In Year 12, good teaching, with very thorough planning, gave students the opportunity to use their initiative during practical work on the chemistry of the halogens. There was less pace, and learning objectives were less clear, in an otherwise satisfactory Year 13 lesson on the chemistry of the oceans.

187. There is no physics group in Year 13. In a Year 12 lesson on resistivity, the teaching was satisfactory; however, the teacher did not clarify the usefulness of this concept. Students gained good practical experience in using electrical meters, and in numeracy through the use of formulae.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- The teachers' subject knowledge.
- The positive and productive relationships between teachers and students.
- The support that teachers give to students outside lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Catering for the spread of ability, and providing intellectual challenge for the most able.
- Encouraging more independent learning through less teacher direction.
- Greater monitoring and evaluation of the subject to ensure consistency.

188. The small number of candidates for the A-level examination in 2001 means that results cannot be compared with national data with any statistical reliability. However, all three students achieved a pass grade although no students achieved the higher A and B grades. The students gained results in line with those expected from their earlier GCSE profiles; achievement is satisfactory. Results were better in 2002, with all students passing and two gaining high grades. Retention rates in the subject are good.

189. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 13 are average; achievement is satisfactory. Students make good use of ICT but their algebraic and trigonometric manipulation skills are a relative weakness. By the end of Year 13, students can confidently identify arithmetic and geometric series, differentiate from first principles, integrate by parts and use proof by induction methods. In mechanics they have a good understanding of projectiles and, in statistics, they have a working knowledge of the Normal and Poisson distributions

190. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and enjoy positive and productive relationships with students so that interactions are supportive and good humoured. Lessons start promptly and end with an appropriate resume of the work undertaken although rarely identifying work for future lessons. Teachers talk too much, and their over-direction dominates the lesson so that there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills. Teachers have a good informal awareness of students' strengths and weaknesses but this information is not always recorded in mark books and insufficient use is made of available data to set challenging targets for students and check progress against potential.

191. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Students show enthusiasm and interest in their work and enjoy positive and productive relationships with their teachers and with each other. However, students rely too heavily on their teachers and they have considerable difficulty remembering work from earlier modules.

192. The curriculum in the sixth form covers modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics but, to date, there are no supporting schemes of work to provide a coherent overview of the work. The provision for literacy in the sixth form is satisfactory but reading around the subject is not sufficiently encouraged and the stock of available books in the library is inadequate. The provision for ICT is satisfactory and lessons make appropriate use of spreadsheets and graph plotting software, but less use of the Internet and graphical calculators.

193. The leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are satisfactory. The head of department has a good awareness of the strengths of the department through informal monitoring

opportunities but these are not sufficiently broadly focussed to identify and act upon inconsistencies across the department.

194. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards remain similar to those in the last inspection report and standards of teaching and learning have been maintained with strengths in teachers' subject knowledge and the positive and productive relationships between teachers and students.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

195. There were no examination candidates in 2002. In previous years, the small number of candidates entered gained pass grades.

BUSINESS

The focus of the inspection was vocational business courses at Levels 2 and 3.

Business studies

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

Strengths

- The good teaching helps students to achieve well
- The students have very positive attitudes to their work.
- The courses integrate work in literacy, numeracy and ICT well.

Areas for improvement

- More use could be made of value added methods of assessment to evaluate performance and to monitor progress towards targets.
- Teachers are given too great a teaching load.

196. The school offers a one-year Intermediate GNVQ course (Level 2) and a two year AVCE course, of either six or 12 units (Level 3). Some students with low GCSE results progress successfully to AVCE via the Level 2 course. In recent years, the AVCE business results (or their forerunners in Advanced GNVQ) have been the best in the sixth form. Those in 2001 were above average, and represented good achievement for the students concerned. The pattern was similar in 2002. Results for the Level 2 Intermediate course have been above average in recent years in terms of pass rates and the proportion gaining higher levels of award; again, achievement has been good. Retention rates on courses are good.

197. In work seen during the inspection, standards on both Level 2 and Level 3 courses are above average; in relation to prior GCSE performance, students show good achievement in both cases. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of the various strands of the subject, and are adept at applying this to local contexts, for example in their plans for establishing businesses. One or two lower attainers have a below average knowledge of the current business scene, however. Students succeed because they are also effective at evaluating the quality of their work, and working out how to improve it. Students benefit from the fact that the subject continues to integrate the key skills of numeracy, communication and ICT into assignments. Standards in their formal written work, in numeracy and in ICT are above average. Overall, however, many students lack confidence when speaking, even though their writing shows that they have a good command of technical and general vocabulary. Students are also less secure when producing handwritten work. In contrast to this picture, some Level 2 students write less well than they speak, and their limited literacy skills are a barrier to success. They are skilled at using the Internet for research, but also know that books or direct contact may be more efficient ways of gaining information.

198. The quality of teaching is good; some aspects are very good, and this leads to good learning overall. Students are very positive about their work and behave very well. Particular strengths are

the teachers' command of the subject matter; there is an easy fluency when linking quite different areas of the course. Subject knowledge extends to examination requirements; the criteria are well known to all. When coupled with very good expectations, this means that students are always being encouraged to do that little bit more to gain the next higher grade; it is seen to be within reach. Resources and time are used well, and the mix of learning styles, including direct teaching, works well for these students. Although the assessment of work for examination purposes is accurate, too little use is made of value added methods to evaluate how well students have performed in relation to prior attainment, to set them clear targets, and to monitor progress towards them.

199. The leadership and management of the subject are good, and there has been good progress since the last inspection. The accommodation enhances learning, particularly through ready access to ICT facilities throughout the day. In contrast, the subject is under-staffed; teachers have too many timetabled lessons to allow sufficient time for essential reflection on students' progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Students from this school are studying AS computer studies at a nearby further education college and this was the focus of the inspection.

Computer studies

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

Strengths

- The students' achievements are good because of good teaching
- Students enjoy their work on the course

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas for development

200. In the A-level examination in 2001 at the end of Year 13 one student gained a grade B and two more gained grade C. Results in 2000 were similar. The very small numbers of entries make comparison with national data statistically unreliable. In 2002 no student took the full A-level; in the AS examination, two students entered but both failed to gain a grade. Achievement is, none the less, satisfactory, and retention rates are good.
201. The standards seen during the inspection are average, which represents good achievement since only one of the students studied ICT in Years 10 and 11. Students make good progress as a result of effective teaching. All were able to create a simple relational database for a doctor's surgery that linked doctors to patients' names and addresses. The one student who had studied at GCSE was a little further advanced and was ready to test the effectiveness of his system, whilst the others still had some problems to sort out.
202. The students learn well because the teaching is good. Planning and organisation are also good and the teacher structures the lesson well. This means that although the sessions are long, students are able to keep up a good pace and maintain their efforts. Students are clear about what they have to learn and the teacher provides very good advice on how to prepare coursework and deal with examination questions. Assessment procedures are effective and accurate as the teacher has undergone recent training with the examination board.
203. Students enjoy the course and feel well supported by the teacher and the college's partnership with the school. The management arrangements for the subject are satisfactory. The college staff have to work hard to overcome problems in communication between the college and the students' 'home' school, for example over examination absences, but this does not appear to affect students' achievement. The large consortium of schools means that they have a very good choice of courses, both academic and vocational. Students are also able to combine their studies in

computing with both arts and science courses which produces a good social mix and opportunities to experience a wider range of cultures. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

204. The focus subject was drama, which is taught at another school in the consortium. However, because of staff sickness, no teaching could be seen in the inspection period. Judgements have been based on scrutiny of the students' work and discussions with them. In the vocational art and design course, standards at examination in recent years have been above average, albeit from very small entries.

Drama

Overall, the quality of provision in theatre studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The consortium arrangement provides good opportunities for students to follow the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Students need more opportunities to visit professional performances and to work with professional practitioners.

205. Students from Mangotsfield are taught AS and A-level drama at another consortium school. Standards are average. The results in A-level examinations in 2001 were average with all students gaining grade E or above and almost half gaining the highest grades. This indicates good achievement in relation to earlier standards. There were no entries in 2002 for examinations. There are currently six students in Year 12 following an AS course. Standards of work seen are satisfactory. More female students than male choose the course but there was insufficient evidence to compare achievement amongst the two groups.

206. All students show an individual, personal response in their writing. Higher attaining students write fluently, arguing a coherent point of view with close reference to plays studied. They are beginning to use the vocabulary and concepts of theatre, but are not yet relating their ideas sufficiently to drama theory and tradition. Lower attaining students tend to write more colloquially although there is evidence of growing precision of expression. Ideas are not developed as thoroughly as they could be. Students make satisfactory use of ICT in their work.

207. Students are given good guidance on the content and expectations of the course. Detailed prompt sheets help them form judgements on a theatrical performance. These include questions on plot and sub-plot; language; visual, aural and spatial elements; form and structure; the historical, cultural and social context. Each unit of work is marked and assessed in detail based on students' responses to these aspects. Students are also given good guidance for wider reading with references to useful web-sites. They all conduct independent research into the background of texts studied. For example, research into early 20th century army regiments and uniforms enhanced their understanding of John Arden's *'Sergeant Musgrave's Dance'*. Students' attitudes are positive. They enjoy the course and are appreciative of the opportunity the consortium allows. Although some opportunities are provided, the students interviewed had seen fewer professional productions and had fewer chances to work with theatre groups than are often encouraged. Because of staff absence through sickness, it was not possible to judge teaching quality, or to determine the arrangements for the management of the subject in any detail.

HUMANITIES

208. Work was sampled in history and psychology. In geography, the A-level results in 2001 were below the national average albeit from a low number of entries. The most recent results are an improvement on recent years with students achieving higher average points than previously. It was not possible to sample geography lessons during the inspection because of timetable reasons. The structure of the timetable also prevented observations in religious education during the inspection period. Few students have been examined in the subject in recent years.
209. In history, the numbers taking examinations in the subject are too small to allow reliable comparisons to be made. However, students achieve appropriately. In the one lesson seen, standards are below average, but achievement is satisfactory in relation to the students' GCSE results. Teaching is satisfactory. In psychology, results are broadly average at both A-level and AS. One lesson was seen. Achievement is good, and standards are average. Teaching is good.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subject was English. Work in German was also sampled.

210. At the end of Year 12 in 2002 standards in AS German were below average. In work seen during the inspection standards in German in Year 12 are also below average. The written and oral work of students shows a developing range of vocabulary but is marred by lack of grammatical accuracy and attention to detail. They have good pronunciation. Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching uses a suitable range of resources and activities. Some of these activities, however, challenge students without providing all the support they need.

English

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

Strengths

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Students achieve well, in relation to their prior attainment.

Areas for improvement

- The ends of lessons do not give enough time to reviewing what students have learnt.
- Some lessons do not involve students in enough independent learning

211. The department offers courses in AS and A-level English. Eleven students take AS-level in Year 12, and seven Year 13 students are taking A-level. A very high percentage of those who begin the AS course complete the year and take the examination. Seven of last year's twelve Year 12 students chose to continue with the subject in Year 13.
212. The school's 2001 results are significantly below average in English literature, and students tended to do worse in English than in the other subjects that they took. However, overall, the students show good achievement from relatively modest GCSE results. In 2002, all students entered gained a pass grade at AS, with one-third of them gaining a B grade. Of the 18 students who took the A-level examination in 2002, over half gained A-C grades. There are, as yet, no national data for 2002.
213. In work seen, standards are average by the end of Year 13. Achievement is good. Students show how a character changes through time, and make perceptive comments when comparing extracts from several plays. They did this in a very good lesson on attitudes to war in Shakespeare's plays, and began to make links with views expressed by poets writing between 1870 and 1914. Students in Year 12 acquire appropriate vocabulary to analyse Shakespearean language, though their own vocabulary is not wide or sophisticated. They showed good knowledge of the text of *Antony and*

Cleopatra, found plenty of examples to back the points they wanted to make, and communicated clearly some opinions on the characters in Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

214. Higher attaining students show how language shapes meaning. They understand motive and the link between characters and the language they use. Average attaining students show good understanding of texts, but do not develop ideas, or analyse language in depth. They quote from texts, but often do not fully explain their significance. Lower attaining students show some weaknesses in the structure of their essays, and topic sentences do not lead the reader through the work: an essay on Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, included interesting comments, but these were not backed up, followed through or fully explained.
215. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they use it well, asking telling questions to make students think. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, the teacher asked 'Where's Shakespeare's voice in all this?' and asked students to relate the views in *Macbeth* and *Henry the Fifth* to modern treatments of violence, such as the film 'Gangs of New York'. Where teaching and learning are particularly good, teachers use interesting resources – as one teacher did in a Year 12 lesson, using various maps of the Mediterranean to explain the significance of sea imagery in *Antony and Cleopatra*. In a minority of lessons, teachers talk too much, and do not include enough pair and group work to ensure that students develop a high level of independence. Teachers plan lessons well, though there is sometimes insufficient emphasis at the end of lessons for reviewing what students have learnt, so that some lessons lose part of their impact. Relationships and attitudes to learning are consistently good, though some lower attaining students are quieter than others and do not easily contribute, though they listen intently. There is satisfactory use of ICT. Students are encouraged to use the Internet for research, and some work is word processed.
216. Leadership and management are good; teachers are well deployed and results are carefully scrutinised, and weaknesses addressed. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.