

INSPECTION REPORT

SWAKELEYS SCHOOL

Hillingdon

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102450

Headteacher: Mr John Taylor

Reporting inspector: Robin Coulthard
11746

Dates of inspection: 25th – 29th November, 2002

Inspection number: 252405

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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 – 18

Gender of pupils: Girls

School address: Clifton Gardens
Hillingdon
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Kevin Munn

Date of previous inspection: 23.11.98

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities		Aspect responsibilities
			Main school	Sixth form	
11746	Robin Coulthard	Registered inspector			The school's results and pupils' achievements (main school) How well are pupils and students taught?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27501	Vera MacRae	Team inspector	English	English	
18178	Ian Matthews	Team inspector	Mathematics		
1522	William Keast	Team inspector	Science	ICT	
23880	Olivia Hall	Team inspector	Art Special educational needs		
30072	Joseph Skivington	Team inspector	Citizenship Religious education		
22491	Lorraine Small	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology		
17808	Susan Orpin	Team inspector	Geography		How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

10817	George Rayner	Team inspector	History	History	How well is the school led and managed?
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Team members			Subject responsibilities		Aspect responsibilities
			Main school	Sixth form	
32208	Derek Aitken	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	German	
8104	Joan Child	Team inspector	Music		
3726	Maureen Bean	Team inspector	Physical education		How well does the school care for its pupils?
18072	Joan Stephens	Team inspector			
30973	Geoffrey Hancock	Team inspector		Design and technology	
25073	Stuart Jordan	Team inspector Sixth form coordinator		Geography Business studies	Students' views How well does the school care for its students?
3242	Michael Newman	Team inspector		Biology Psychology	Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well is the sixth form led and managed?
2561	Tony Byrne	Team inspector		Drama	
32331	Peter Barnes	Team inspector			
27719	Paul Metcalf	Team inspector		Mathematics	
3525	Peter McGregor	Team inspector		Chemistry	
29742	Pat Fyans	Team inspector		Physics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
10761	Patrick Willan	Team inspector		Economics	
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector		Sociology	

4617	Roslyn Fox	Team inspector Registered inspector for Abbotsfield School for Boys			The school's results and students' achievements (sixth form)
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector			

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Swakeleys is the only girls' 11-18 foundation comprehensive school in Hillingdon and draws its pupils from a wide area and from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. It is popular and heavily oversubscribed each year. In Years 7 to 11, there are 888 pupils. Another 135 girls are educated at the sixth form centre which the school shares with the neighbouring Abbotsfield School for boys. All references to the sixth form in this report are to this joint provision. The school population is mainly white British. The principal racial origins of the other students are Indian, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African, and Chinese. There are five refugees from Afghanistan. Sixty-two minority ethnic pupils are supported through Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language, at around 22 percent, is well above the national average. Sixty-three girls have extra help with English, but only four are at an early stage of learning the language. Fourteen per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Just under 14 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. At 0.7 per cent, the number with statements of special educational needs is also below average. The principal special educational need is moderate learning difficulty. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average overall. Around ten per cent of pupils leave or join the school other than at the usual times of leaving or admission. The school has worked successfully to minimise the impact of staffing shortages. In the last two years, temporary problems have been encountered in mathematics, art, geography, ICT and modern foreign languages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Standards are above average overall at the end of Years 9 and 11. Teaching is good overall in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. The school is well led and managed, with a clear vision for the future shared by the headteacher and senior managers. Students' achievement is good in the main school and their attitudes to school are very good. The school provides good value for money. The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students and is cost effective.

What the school does well

- Pupils do very well in English, design and technology, geography, religious education and music, and their achievement is good in modern foreign languages and physical education
- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and they are willing to learn
- The school looks after its pupils very well
- The curriculum is good in range and quality, and provides very good extracurricular activities and opportunities for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The school is well led and managed

What could be improved

- Some teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- The development of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum

- The use of information from assessment to set targets for pupils and to improve teachers' planning

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 November 1998. Since then its improvement has been good. Most of the key issues have been dealt with effectively. Leadership of science is now good, standards have improved and are average. The curriculum is now governed by a good policy that results in a broad and balanced curriculum being provided for all pupils. The school week remains, at 24 hours, an hour below the length recommended. Monitoring of teaching by middle managers is now well established. As yet, however, the information gained is not analysed rigorously and used as a basis for raising pupils' achievement. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are systematically mapped across the curriculum and provision for spiritual development is good, although the requirement for daily collective worship is still not met. The governing body now receives regular presentations, in addition to much other information, on subjects and other aspects of the school and has an improved knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Though still reliant on the headteacher and senior managers to formulate strategic plans for the school's future direction, governors scrutinise and challenge planning appropriately. Planning has improved at subject level too. However, planning does not have clear enough criteria for success in some areas. These are often related to improving teaching and learning and raising pupils' achievement. ICT is now taught in Years 10 and 11, and in art and design and technology in Years 7 to 9, but the overall provision for ICT across the curriculum remains an issue. The sixth form has made satisfactory improvement since the 1998 full sixth form inspection.

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. Reliable data for students in the joint sixth form is not available for 2000 and 2002

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	B
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	C	n/a	

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the 2002 national tests at the age of 14, results were above average in English and in line with the national averages in mathematics and science. The trend of improvement in the national test results for the three core subjects over the five years up to 2002 was broadly in line with the national trend. Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 9 was average in comparison with all schools and above that of schools whose pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 6. It was average in comparison with that of schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Work seen in English was well above average and indicated very good progress and achievement. In mathematics and science, work was average, and achievement and progress were satisfactory. Teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that pupils' attainment was well above average in art, design and technology and geography, and above average in history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. In physical education, it was

below average. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' attainment was above average overall, but it was not as high in every subject in the work seen during the inspection as had been suggested in the 2002 teacher assessments.

In the GCSE examination in 2002, the overall results were above the average for all schools. The trend in improvement in the school's results is slightly below that found nationally over the past five years. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at A* to C was above the average for all schools. The proportion gaining five or more grades A* to G was well above average, and the proportion gaining one or more A* to G passes was average. In comparison with similar schools, that is, with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the school's results were well above average at five or more A* to C, and at five or more A* to G, and below average at one or more A* to G passes. In comparison with schools where pupils gained similar results at the end of Year 9, the school was average for pupils gaining five or more A* to C, above average at five or more A* to G grades, and below average for the proportion gaining one or more A* to G grades. These results indicate good achievement for pupils in examinations. Results were well above average in English, above average in science and below average in mathematics. In 2002, pupils exceeded the school's targets for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades and five or more A* to G grades. Pupils' average points score was also above the target level. Pupils' achievement in lessons and work seen was good overall, with very good achievement in English, art, design and technology, religious education and music. Pupils achieve well in geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory in science, mathematics, history and ICT as a subject.

The attainment of sixth form students is in line with national averages overall. In 2001, performance at A-level was broadly in line with that in other maintained schools and that of all post-16 providers. Standards were generally similar in 2002 and in work seen during the inspection. Achievement overall is satisfactory, with good progress in a number of subjects. Progress and achievement are unsatisfactory in a small number of subjects mainly because of inconsistencies in the teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Attitudes to work are very positive, particularly when lessons are lively and interesting.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most girls behave very well in and out of lessons. A very few find it difficult to follow school codes of conduct. The rate of fixed term exclusions is high.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Girls respond very well to opportunities to show initiative and contribute to the life of the school.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above average. Most girls attend regularly and arrive on time. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is inconsistent.

Sixth form students' attitudes to learning and their personal development are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Sixth form
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 in the main school; in Years 7 to 9, teaching is good, and in Years 10 and 11, it is satisfactory. One third of lessons observed in Years 7 to 9 were very good or better, of which one in three was excellent. Two thirds of the lessons seen overall were good and better. Very little of the teaching was unsatisfactory, and none was poor. In Years 10 and 11, while over half of the teaching was good and better, a lower proportion was very good and excellent than in the earlier years. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects. Teaching was very good in English, design and technology, music and religious education, and very good in art and physical education in Years 10 and 11. Teaching was good in geography and modern foreign languages, and in art and physical education in Years 7 to 9. Teaching was satisfactory in science, mathematics, history and ICT.

Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils, which encourages them to learn enthusiastically. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives. Time is used well so that learning takes place at a good pace. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and make good use of questioning to stimulate pupils' interest and to check their understanding. Teachers include purposefully in lessons pupils over the whole range of attainment, often adapting questioning to challenge different groups of pupils. Marking is carried out regularly but does not always tell pupils what they should do to improve their work. Resources are generally used well, but ICT is not used enough in most subjects.

Pupils work effectively both individually and in groups. They are keen to do well and are co-operative.

Literacy is well taught in all subjects, with an emphasis on accurate use of technical language and good standards of spelling, grammar and punctuation. The development of numeracy through different subjects is satisfactory.

Similar strengths to those outlined above were seen in sixth form teaching, but an occasional weakness was the inconsistent practice where teachers from both schools shared teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a varied curriculum that is particularly strong in provision for expressive arts. It offers a good quality, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, with very good provision for English, music, design and technology and religious education. The rich and varied range of extracurricular activities provided is very good. Not all statutory requirements are met in the teaching of design and technology and ICT across the curriculum as the use of computers is not planned well enough in subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers cater well for the range of needs within classes generally. In-class teaching support is well organised and effective. Well-planned activities enable pupils withdrawn from lessons for extra English support to make very good progress. Courses for older pupils in literacy provide them with useful reinforcement of basic skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Teachers plan effectively for pupils at different stages of English language acquisition. A good range of resources is available. Where necessary, pupils are withdrawn for individual and small-group work. Good learning support is provided for pupils at an early stage of

	English and how to assist these pupils is a regular part of staff training.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school fosters moral and social development very well. Its provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. The good provision for citizenship and personal, health and social education (PHSE) provides good opportunities for pupils to develop further their social and moral understanding. A daily act of collective worship is not provided for all pupils.
Aspect	Comment
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school cares for its pupils very well and actively encourages good conduct. Pupils' personal development and academic performance are regularly monitored. The use of information from assessment is not yet adequately used to develop teaching and learning.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Well. Parents find the school approachable. It provides a good range of written information about courses and activities and regular evenings throughout the year. Reports on pupils' progress, however, are not linked sufficiently closely to pupils' targets and advice is often not specific enough.

Sixth form curricular opportunities are satisfactory overall and meet the needs of most students. Provision for religious education in the sixth form is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head has a very clear vision for the future of the school, which is shared by senior managers. The newly-formed senior team have clearly defined roles. The good management results in a positive ethos and smooth operation. The management of subjects is generally good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. The governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but rely on information provided by senior managers. They play an effective part in developing and reviewing policies. They fulfil their statutory duties well, with the exception of providing daily collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The good analysis of the school's performance is not used sufficiently to raise standards. There are good procedures for senior managers to monitor classroom practice, but these procedures are inconsistently applied at departmental level.
The strategic use of resources	Very Good. Very good financial management ensures that resources are used effectively to support school priorities. Specific grants are scrupulously spent for their intended purpose. The school has regular, efficient procedures for consulting pupils and staff about the decisions it takes. It effectively applies the principles of best value and fair competition when tendering for resources.

Staffing, accommodation and resources	Despite some problems in recruiting staff, the overall match of teachers to subjects is good , with a good mix of experienced and younger teachers. New teachers are well supported. Despite the inconvenience of narrow corridors and the unsatisfactory condition of some parts of the school building, the school provides satisfactory accommodation for learning. The pupils' toilets are in poor condition. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. The learning resource centre is well stocked with books and resources for ICT. A lack of specialist resources prevents the teaching of some computer-aided aspects of design and technology.
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The sixth form is well led and managed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their daughters like school, make good progress and behave well. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good, and teachers have high expectations of pupils. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about pupils' progress. • The closeness with which the school works with parents.

Parents think well of the school, and the vast majority support its work constructively. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. They confirm that information about pupils' progress is not always as clear as it might be because reports are not sufficiently linked to agreed targets and national levels of attainment. Inspectors found that the school has good procedures for working closely with parents.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM ABBOTSFIELD AND SWAKELEYS SCHOOLS

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Approximately fifty per cent of pupils in the Year 11 groups of each school move into the sixth form, which has 192 students on roll with 124 in Year 12. There are many more female students, even though the proportion of boys entering the sixth form has increased significantly in recent years. A wide range of subjects is available at A-level. To follow such a course, students need to have gained a minimum GCSE standard of 5 A* to C grades. Vocational courses in business education at AVCE and intermediate GNVQ levels are popular with students. Students may also re-take GCSE mathematics and English. In Year 12 they are required to take up an extracurricular activity, for example paired reading or classroom support with younger pupils. Students are given comprehensive information and advice on which courses they should follow. Their progress is checked in the first term when they can choose another path. Approximately one fifth leave at the end of Year 12; some will have planned to do this and move into employment, others leave having not achieved their targets. The remaining students return to complete the second part of their course or take up more advanced courses. Attainment on entry, from the data available, is judged to be close to the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. Students' achievement and the teaching they receive are satisfactory. Students' attitudes are good overall, and very good in Year 13. Their learning is satisfactory, despite too few opportunities for, and consequently underdeveloped skills in, working independently. Leadership is satisfactory and day-to-day management is good, both of which have contributed to the good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum meets the needs of most students well, but provision of vocational courses is limited. Monitoring of the effectiveness of what is provided is unsatisfactory; liaison between the two contributory schools is ineffective in some subjects, leading to inconsistencies, and this inhibits development. Resources are satisfactory but the well-equipped learning resource centre is closed for part of the lunchtime. Financial management is good. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.

Strengths

- Students achieve well in a number of subjects, attaining above average results in English, business studies, ICT, drama, sociology and psychology.
- The sixth form has an ethos that promotes equality of opportunity and the belief that all students are valued and included. The personal support and guidance provided for students are very good. As a result, students' attitudes, values and personal development are good.
- The management team has worked well to bring about improvements, including financial management and the emerging development plan.

What could be improved

- Some unsatisfactory teaching resulting in inadequate learning and progress by students in some subjects.
- The collection and use of data to set targets for students and to guide teachers' planning.
- Management of subjects that use staff from both schools to ensure that provision is consistently good within individual subjects.

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 in line with national averages, and achievement is satisfactory, as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and awareness of examination requirements. However, too little attention is given to the spread of ability in classes and to challenging appropriately the highest-attaining students. There is too little use of computers in mathematics. Overall, teaching and learning are sound.
Chemistry	Unsatisfactory. Low A-level examination results represent poor achievement for some students. Effective teaching from knowledgeable chemists in Year 12 and in some lessons in Year 13 leads to good learning. Some poor teaching and shortage of time in Year 13 result in some underachievement.
Biology	Good. Results were broadly average in 2002, and in line with students' prior attainment. Effective teaching methods, including challenging questioning, motivate students and encourage active and independent learning. Literacy skills are well developed.
Physics	Unsatisfactory. Some good teaching takes place, but half of the course is planned and taught unsatisfactorily, leading to unsatisfactory learning, underachievement and student disillusionment. A-level results were well below national averages in both 2001 and 2002.
Design and technology	Satisfactory. Results in 2001 were above average, but lower in 2002. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Achievement is good over time. Work is carefully marked which leads to helpful individual target setting. Computers are not used enough to aid design.
Business studies	Good. Results have improved over the past four years and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and students work hard and have positive attitudes.
Economics	Good. Results were below the national average in 2001, but better in 2002. Teaching is good. Students learn and achieve well; they value and enjoy their lessons.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Students gained results which were in line with national averages in 2001 but which improved to above average in 2002. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. The teachers are committed to developing the subject and students' attitudes are good.
Drama	Good. Standards are good and above average results indicate good achievement over time. Teaching and learning are very good in lessons,

	but students do not always take on as much responsibility for their own learning as they should.
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Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Geography	Unsatisfactory. In 2001 and 2002, students' results were well below the national average. Current attainment is close to the national average, indicating satisfactory achievement. Teaching, though sound overall, varies in quality and this constrains students' learning in important areas. The management of the subject is not effective, resulting in inconsistent practices.
History	Satisfactory. Results were well below average in 2001, but slightly higher in 2002. Students are now achieving in line with course expectations in Years 12 and 13. Teaching is satisfactory and encourages students to develop appropriate skills. Recent results have not reflected the standards achieved in lessons.
Sociology	Good. Results were well above average in 2001, but close to the national average in 2002. Teaching and learning are good and achievement is satisfactory overall, from varying starting points. Students' attitudes are good and they link the theories they learn to topical issues effectively.
Psychology	Very good. Results were well above average in 2001 and higher in 2002. Students are enthusiastic and they learn and achieve very well. The very good teaching employs a good range of methods. The course makes a very good contribution to students' literacy and to their spiritual and cultural development.
English	Good. Results were well above average in 2001 and similar in 2002. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and they mark work constructively. This, along with students' positive approach, enables them to achieve well.
German	Satisfactory. Small numbers take German, but results have included high grades in 2001 and 2002. There are no Year 13 students. Standards in Year 12 are below course expectation, but students' learning and achievement are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory.

Work was sampled in other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning was good in advanced level art, vocational business studies, physical education and media studies, and very good in business (GNVQ Intermediate). Lessons were well planned to meet the needs of the students and provide interesting activities. As a result, students worked hard and showed positive attitudes. They are achieving well on these courses. Not enough religious education is offered to comply with statutory requirements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students value the support and guidance provided throughout Years 12 and 13. They receive very good advice on courses well before entering the sixth form. Their welfare is carefully monitored and they are well known to staff, particularly to the sixth form management team. Those who fall behind, whether as a result of absence or finding the work hard, are helped to catch up. Information from assessment is being used increasingly to predict examination grades, but procedures for monitoring

	students' academic progress are applied inconsistently across subjects. Students are well informed about career options and opportunities in higher education.
Aspect	Comment
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is well led on a day-to-day basis by the management team. The headteachers, coordination committee and governors are soundly planning the future development of the centre. Liaison between teachers from the two feeder schools is inconsistent and results, in some subjects, in unsatisfactory subject planning and choice of teaching methods. Cooperation has improved overall since the last inspection, and the finances of the sixth form are now efficiently managed. The centre functions as a strong social unit where all students are valued. Effective, consistent systems for monitoring the work of the centre have still to be adopted. Further development is restricted by a lack of systems for collecting and analysing information about attainment on entry, target setting or the attainment of students, including those from different ethnic groups, so that planning can be more closely related to students' needs.

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"> • They are well taught and challenged and treated as responsible young adults • The choice of subjects suits their talents and aspirations • They enjoy attending and would recommend it to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities and enrichments

Students are very positive about the sixth form. When consulted during the inspection, they were appreciative of the advice, support and guidance provided. The inspection team endorsed their views of the strengths of the sixth form. They felt that though a good range of AS and A2 courses is offered, the choice of vocational courses is limited. Inspectors agreed that the range of enrichment activities varies across subjects but is unsatisfactory overall. During subject interviews, students showed an awareness of shortcomings in some subjects. They recognised where the work failed to challenge them and, as a consequence, they were less enthusiastic about their learning in those subjects. Inspectors agreed with students that their social area is unsatisfactory, but felt that there is adequate space for private study and that the learning resource centre is under used.

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. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is average overall. As they progress through Years 7 to 9 they achieve very well in English. Standards are well above average and pupils develop their literacy skills very well. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and the standards they attain are average.
2. Work seen in Years 7 to 9 and evidence from lessons observed indicate that pupils' standards are average and above in all subjects. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 7 to 9. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment was not as high in every subject in the work seen during the inspection as had been suggested in the 2002 teacher assessments. This indicated that teachers' assessments were sometimes an overestimate. During the inspection, standards in work seen were well above average in geography, above average in design and technology, music and religious education, and average in art, history, ICT and modern foreign languages. Teachers, however, had underestimated attainment in physical education, where pupils' attainment is average.
3. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the overall results were above the average for all maintained schools and for schools in similar social circumstances. In 2002, 59 per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at A* to C, compared with 51 per cent nationally. The school's results were also above the average for girls nationally, which is 57 per cent. The proportion gaining five or more passes at grades A* to G was well above average, and the proportion gaining one or more A* to G passes was average. In comparison with similar schools, that is, with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the school's results were well above average at five or more A* to C and at five or more A* to G passes, and below average at one or more A* to G passes. Results were well above average in English, above average in science and below average in mathematics. Results were above average in sociology, French, German, art, physical education, and below average in history. Apart from mathematics and history, the 2002 results represent good achievement over pupils' time in the school. In lessons observed, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall, with very good achievement in English, art, design and technology, music and religious education. Pupils achieve well in geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory in science, mathematics, history and ICT as a subject.
4. The school exceeded the targets set for 2002 for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more passes at GCSE. The school gained 59 per cent A* to C passes, when its target was 51 per cent. The school slightly exceeded its average points score target, achieving 37.9, when its target was 37.4.
5. The school implements an effective literacy policy. Standards of writing, speaking and listening are well above average, and reinforced across the curriculum, for example by the thorough use of key technical terms in each subject and many opportunities to answer questions and discuss topics. Standards in ICT across the curriculum are below average, because its use is not systematically planned in all subjects, and pupils' overall achievement in ICT is therefore unsatisfactory. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory

6. Pupils with special education needs make similar progress to others in relation to their prior attainment. In art and design, geography and music, these pupils make very good progress, and results at GCSE are well above target levels. Pupils who are withdrawn from modern languages for additional literacy support make good progress. ASDAN courses are extending the standard of planning and presentational skills for older pupils and all achieve well. The achievement of pupils with statements and those on School Action Plus is good because they are well supported by teaching assistants and teachers.

Sixth form

7. The attainment of sixth form students is in line with national averages. In 2001, the school's performance at A-level was broadly in line overall with that in other maintained schools and in all post-16 providers. Students' attainment was well above average in English literature, drama, psychology and sociology. It was above average in design and technology and in line with national averages in ICT, mathematics, business studies and biology. It was below average in economics, well below in geography, physics and history and very low in chemistry. In some subjects, numbers entered were too small for comparisons to be made with national averages. Results, however, included the higher grades. For example, in German in 2001, half of the candidates gained A or B grades and the remainder C or D grades.
8. Results were generally similar in the current year, 2002. No national data is available for comparison, but indications are that results were better in German, ICT, economics, business studies, psychology and history. They remained the same in biology, geography, physics, and chemistry and were lower in design and technology, and in sociology, though still average. No students of mathematics from the AS course in 2001 continued with the subject to A2-level.
9. Standards in work seen generally reflect the examination results, with the exception of physics, where standards are currently below average, not well below, and geography and history, where current attainment is higher than both the 2001 and 2002 results. Students make good progress and achieve well in a number of subjects and particularly in English, business studies, economics, drama and psychology. This results from good or very good teaching, characterised by high expectations of students, good lesson planning and teachers' secure subject knowledge. Inspectors saw work of good quality in subjects such as business studies, drama, sociology, psychology and English. Students achieve less well and standards are lower in chemistry, physics and geography, and this is mainly because of inconsistencies in the teaching of the subject and, in the case of chemistry, because students receive only four hours teaching time in Year 13. Students with special educational needs, gifted and talented students and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The strengths in pupils' attitudes, values and personal development identified by the last inspection have been maintained and they remain very good. Attendance rates have improved and are now good, but unauthorised absence and unpunctuality still cause concern in individual cases. The level of fixed term exclusions has risen sharply.
11. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. Most pupils are happy to be here and willing to work hard. This is because they enjoy the opportunities to take part in a wide range of experiences that help them to develop confidence and to achieve academic success. The best lessons involve girls in stimulating activities that motivate them to do their best. For example, in a Year 7 music lesson, inspiring teaching encouraged all pupils to sing their hearts out with remarkable attention to clear diction and tunefulness, whatever their individual talents. Almost all pupils stick at the tasks they are asked to do, even if teaching is not as challenging as they

hoped. A few pupils lose interest and concentration very easily when teaching is dull or not focused sharply enough on their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.

12. Behaviour is good. Most girls behave very well in and out of lessons. They move around corridors and the school site in an orderly way and their behaviour at lunchtime is very civilised. Most girls are polite and helpful, particularly in response to adults who display the high standards of respect and courtesy they expect in return. Good behaviour contributes significantly to pupils' effective learning and the standards they attain. In a few less successful lessons, pupils' behaviour is not good enough to compensate for weaknesses in teaching. Ineffective management of individual girls' personal and behavioural difficulties results in interruptions to a few lessons. This is because girls lose interest in work when teachers are quick to find fault and slow to praise.
13. In the year prior to the inspection, one pupil was permanently excluded. The rate of fixed term exclusions has increased almost fourfold since the last inspection. In some cases, this is the result of inconsistent action to promote good behaviour, particularly where individual staff overlook links between dull or unsuitable tasks and pupils' responses. A few pupils have difficulty in accepting and conforming to the school's demanding codes of conduct. Some teachers use sanctions and referrals too readily. They neglect the chance to offer carefully-targeted, positive support to ensure that all girls can cope with the work. Bullying is unusual and dealt with well by girls from 'Swakeleys Against Bullying' (SWAB) and by staff.
14. Personal development and relationships are very good. Most girls relate to each other very well in an atmosphere that is harmonious and free from prejudice. This is because the school successfully promotes racial equality and social responsibility. Pupils show good levels of understanding of how their actions affect others. They respond well to high quality teaching about how others think and feel in subjects such as religious education and English, which helps them to develop good levels of respect for views different from their own. Pupils use initiative and take increasing responsibility within the life of the school as they get older, in response to a long tradition of community service fostered through the school council.
15. Attendance is good. It is above the national average. Most girls come to school regularly and punctually unless they have a genuine reason to be absent or late. A few girls miss odd days of school for no good reason or leave the site without permission. Their truancy contributes to a rate of unauthorised absence that is above average, particularly in the current Year 11, whose attendance dipped below 90 per cent from when they were in Year 10. Within school, not everyone has a sense of urgency and purpose, so some lessons start late, despite five minutes of movement time between some lessons. Most families understand the disadvantages of missing essential education and do what they can to ensure that girls avoid unnecessary absence and lateness.
16. The school has satisfactory arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance. It has recently introduced an electronic system for recording attendance, which has coincided with staffing difficulties that make it hard to track absence patterns as effectively as intended. Good records are maintained of reasons for absence, and the school is well aware of girls who absent themselves from lessons or miss school without good cause. The school has been slow to explore the link between rates of truancy and exclusion, and the quality of curriculum, teaching and management of behaviour, particularly in Year 11. Partnership with parents has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. The school has made a commitment to make contact between home and school as easy as possible, because it understands that girls achieve more with support from their families.

Sixth form

17. Students' attitudes to the school and their work are good. In the 54 lessons observed, attitudes were almost always good and often very good. In no lessons were they unsatisfactory. There were many examples of good student attitudes, such as happy and productive work in mathematics, very good group cooperation in biology, good relationships with tutors, very good relationships in some chemistry lessons, and good attitudes in physics, even where the teaching was unsatisfactory.
18. Students' personal development is good and flows strongly from the ethos set by the sixth form senior managers. Relationships observed in the vast majority of cases were good or very good, both between students and between students and teachers. Students feel well supported by tutors and teachers. The atmosphere of inclusion is strong and cooperation between individuals and all groups in the school community is good. Racial harmony was a good feature of the groups containing students from different ethnic backgrounds. Where students were critical of some aspects of teaching, or of variations in teaching quality, their comments were moderately expressed, reflected a mature attitude and were, in general, accurate. Students' views of the sixth form were very positive overall. In some cases where they were less so, for example in chemistry, their comments were perceptive.
19. The development of personal and learning skills was sound overall, and stronger in Year 13 than in Year 12. Various good examples were noted of students responding well to very challenging work because of their very positive attitudes. These included subjects such as biology and psychology, where students explicitly mentioned how they valued developing their skills in independent work. Such attitudes were evident in high quality presentations and essays. In a few cases, for example in mathematics, geography, physics and chemistry, some teaching hampered student development because there was not enough challenge and opportunity for independent work. As a result, some students lost concentration and initiative and were too dependent on the teacher. This was also the case in some otherwise satisfactory lessons, for example in English. Some students in Year 12 lack confidence and have had difficulties in making the transition from GCSE. Some others lack discussion skills. In some instances where students lacked practical skills, for example in ICT, this resulted in lower productivity than was desirable.
20. Attendance is satisfactory and well monitored on an individual basis. Records are kept using registers and signing-in sheets, and all subject teachers keep class records. Students are given a great deal of leeway for home study in 'verified periods', which they welcome, since it allows them the freedom to organise extended work at home. Tutors keep oversight of attendance and home study and can remove the privilege if it is not serving the interests of learning or if the individual's attendance falls below eighty five per cent. Students are generally punctual, but the start of some lessons was delayed by late arrivals. Despite some variation between tutors and occasional weak record keeping, the system works well for most students and they warrant the trust given to them.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 11. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Overall, one-third of the lessons were judged to be very good or excellent, and nineteen out of twenty lessons were at least satisfactory. No excellent teaching was reported in the last inspection, whereas, in this inspection, just below ten per cent of all lessons observed were excellent. A conspicuous feature of almost every lesson was the good, and often

excellent, relationships which existed between the teacher and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. The strong pastoral sense which is exhibited by teachers is a hallmark of the school, and is evident in the very good level of support that individual pupils received. This encouraged the pupils to learn with confidence. Teachers were very enthusiastic about their subjects, which was communicated well to pupils. Pupils' behaviour is well managed not only because of the high expectations the staff have of pupils' cooperation, but also because the school's ethos encourages active and willing learning and very good attitudes.

22. Teaching in both key stages is very good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. Teaching was very good in design and technology, music and religious education, and good in geography and modern foreign languages. In art and physical education, teaching was good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. In other subjects, teaching was satisfactory.
23. Literacy is developed well across the curriculum and is governed by a good policy. All subjects identify opportunities to develop pupils' use of language and encourage the development of proficient written work. Pupils have a good knowledge of basic grammar and maintain good standards of spelling and presentation. They take part confidently in discussions, for example in design and technology and physical education, because they know the subject-specific vocabulary. In design and technology, the written work of lower-attaining pupils is enhanced by the carefully-targeted support they receive. Pupils' knowledge and use of technical terms in each subject are good, and in various subjects, such as religious education, is stimulated by displays of key words. Pupils' accurate knowledge of key terms, as in history, is an important factor in the overall quality of their written work. Pupils discuss their feelings, for example in English. They discuss moral and spiritual issues in religious education and citizenship. In geography, they challenge each other's views skilfully. All pupils are well supported in developing their literacy, including those whose first language is not English. Teachers include them in discussions. In an excellent Year 9 English lesson, the teacher targeted pupils of all levels of attainment with questions at a suitable level for each. This ensured that all pupils were equally involved in the learning.
24. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, although pupils in both key stages are not confident about using basic number skills and do not practise these sufficiently. The teaching of numeracy is guided by a good policy, but teachers have not undergone sufficient training to support strongly the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum. The mathematics department has produced a useful resource book to identify opportunities, but these are not yet systematically built into teachers' planning. In mathematics lessons, teachers develop pupils' basic numeracy, particularly as part of the mental starter activities with which most mathematics lessons begin. Good opportunities exist in design and technology for pupils to develop skills in calculation, for example when working out the nutritional values of food products. Good opportunities were also observed in history, physical education and religious education.
25. Teachers plan their lessons very well. In all subjects, teachers cater well for the learning needs of pupils over the whole range of ability. The school is aware of those pupils who are gifted and talented and the very good policy for their development is already influencing teachers' planning. These pupils are identified and provision for them is satisfactory overall but varies between subjects. It is very good, for example in English and physical education, but the ablest pupils were not always challenged in art and design and technology.

26. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are made clear to the class. As a result, pupils are aware not just of the content of the lesson, but what is to be derived from it. Most subjects begin with a review of previous work in a topic. Teachers use searching questioning to confirm previous learning and to establish a good pace for the lesson. Time is carefully allocated to tasks to ensure that pupils work efficiently. Where teaching is best, teachers insist on tight deadlines being met. Lessons conclude with a useful review and consolidation of what has been learnt. Planning is very good in English. Tasks are imaginative and intrinsically interesting, which strongly motivates pupils. This was also the case in design and technology. In mathematics, lessons generally begin with a stimulating starter activity, and learning objectives are clear, and lessons are carefully timed. However, some pupils are insufficiently involved in question-and-answer sessions and teachers do not target those pupils adequately who are reticent but in need of assistance. In science, teaching was satisfactory or good in all the lessons observed and none was unsatisfactory. However, none was very good or excellent. Lessons are carefully planned, but teaching is only satisfactory overall, because pupils have too few opportunities to work independently and some teachers rely heavily on textbooks. In art, pupils are encouraged to work independently and to derive the maximum benefit from the first-hand experiences they encounter. In geography, while the content of lessons was always clear to pupils, the actual learning objectives were sometimes not specific enough.
27. The use of marking and other assessment information is insufficiently developed overall to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve. In English, ICT, geography, modern foreign languages and music, marking does not always give sufficient information about what a pupil should do to improve her work. Pupils could be usefully involved more regularly in assessing their own work in design and technology and art, while in history, insufficient use is made of information from assessment to guide subsequent planning. A good, new assessment scheme is not fully enough used yet in music.
28. Teachers use a good range of appropriate resources in lessons, including carefully-prepared worksheets and information sheets. However, the overall use of ICT as an aid to learning is unsatisfactory, and inadequate opportunities are provided for pupils to develop the range of skills envisaged in the National Curriculum. Despite a proportion of pupils to computers which is more favourable than average, computers are not easily accessible in all subjects. Where computers are available, as in science, pupils use them well to present their work. In art, good opportunities occur in both key stages, which lead to imaginative work, as happens also in design and technology. However, in English, mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education, too few opportunities occur. Generally, too little use is made of the Internet for research.
29. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and good in Learning Support. Some excellent teaching was observed for pupils on the ASDAN course. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides a regular bulletin for staff to keep them aware of pupils' specific difficulties and changing needs. Teachers in most subject areas use an appropriate range of resources and questioning to stimulate and motivate pupils to help them increase their vocabulary and feel confident. However, planning for special educational needs pupils is limited in design and technology and ICT. In lessons for which pupils are withdrawn from mainstream classes, teaching is well-structured and planned to meet the needs that are specified in their individual education plans. Good opportunities are provided for paired and group work and pupils benefit from the good range of teaching methods used. Teacher assistants were used well where support was seen. They were familiar with the lesson planning and helped their charges to become independent in their

learning. However, support for the mathematics lower set is weak because of the number of pupils with behaviour difficulties. Although improved since the last inspection, the support available in some subjects is uneven.

Sixth form

30. Sixth form teaching is satisfactory overall. It was at least satisfactory in more than nine out of every ten lessons. Just over half of the teaching was good, and nearly three lessons in ten were very good or excellent. Teaching was very good in drama and psychology, and good in biology, business studies, economics, English and sociology. It was satisfactory in the remainder, except for chemistry and physics, where some poor teaching led to an unsatisfactory picture. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when no excellent teaching was reported.
31. Students' conduct is managed at least satisfactorily in all lessons, and usually well or very well. Teachers' good relationships with students were a common feature and a strong motivating factor in many lessons. This was particularly true in drama, where the teacher's supportive manner encouraged students to be creative with confidence, for example when female students wrote monologues from a feminist standpoint. The friendly ethos of the lesson enabled students to accept the teacher's constructive criticism as a positive aid to their development. In an intermediate GNVQ business studies lesson, the good relationships helped students to achieve very well. Support was generally in the form of questions to elicit deeper thought and understanding about motivational theories in the workplace. Knowledge of each student's needs was thorough and assistance was laced with good humour, which increased students' confidence and willingness to learn. Carefully targeted one-to-one support and rigorous questioning were regular features of the more successful teaching. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, students were inadequately challenged or did not understand the material, a learning method was inappropriate or the lesson's objective was not achieved.
32. Students' learning is satisfactory overall. In the better lessons, teachers plan very thoroughly and make very good use of time. The inclusive nature of the sixth form means that all students are usually well catered for in teachers' planning. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds benefit, along with all students, from the individual assistance which teachers provide. Students work willingly, and, where teachers' planning includes careful time allocations, they maintain a good pace of work. In general, though, students lack the skills and confidence to work independently, preferring to respond to the guidance of the teachers and to conform to the pace of work set by teachers. Where teachers planned effectively and rigorously challenged students, there were examples of very good learning by students over the whole range of attainment, for example in biology and psychology. Gifted and talented students made very good use of opportunities to work independently in these lessons.
33. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent across subjects. Students' presentation of research results is effective in biology, and regularly carried out with the use of ICT. Key skills are developed well in business studies, both in lessons and in homework. Good group discussions in psychology enabled students to develop and express their views articulately. Opportunities for research and the selection and summarising of evidence made a good contribution to students' development of literacy skills. In physics, the development of key skills is an area for improvement; students usually present their work in note form with little explanation. Opportunities for using computers and developing writing skills in physics are not identified in a significant proportion of the planning. In sociology, students do not refine their key skills, for example by amplifying written work following feedback on assignments. This means that their work is not completed in a form appropriate for efficient revision.

34. Monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory. As a result, the qualities seen in the most effective teaching are not shared sufficiently. Where teachers from both contributory schools teach the same subject, teaching styles are, in general, inadequately coordinated. Information from assessment is not systematically used to set targets for students, and some students are given different target grades by teachers in the same subject. As a result, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are inconsistent and often not high enough. This inconsistency of approach means that in the substantial amount of teaching that was satisfactory overall, teaching had very varied strengths and weaknesses. In design and technology, a lesson was well planned and achieved a good pace, but the teacher dominated discussion excessively. In a geography lesson, despite good resources and clear objectives, the pace was too slow, which resulted in students being inadequately challenged. In English literature, the teacher's very good knowledge of a Jacobean drama and carefully phrased questions, in a lesson that was well-structured and where time was carefully apportioned, only received short answers from the group, because expectations were not communicated strongly enough to the students.

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

35. The school offers an interesting and varied curriculum, despite teaching time that is, at 24 hours, an hour below the recommended level. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, the school provides the full range of National Curriculum subjects, and provides very well for the expressive arts by the addition of dance and drama for all pupils. The school employs two specialist coaches of gymnastics and dance to enhance the quality of provision in those areas. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, the school provides a common core of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, design and technology, one modern foreign language, physical education, religious education and ICT. Pupils then have a good selection of subjects (history, geography, sociology, a second modern foreign language, art, dance, drama, music, and child development) from which to choose two. In Year 10, pupils can study both physical education and dance. In addition to these subjects, the school also provides careers guidance and work experience for Years 10 and 11. Personal, health and social education and citizenship are well provided throughout the school. The school teaches a good programme of sex education from Years 7 to 11.
36. Very good curricular provision is made for music, and design and technology. Provision for English, history for Years 7 to 9, geography, art, religious education and modern foreign languages is good. There is now a very good curriculum policy. This area of weakness from the last inspection has been effectively remedied. Literacy is well taught across the curriculum and provision for numeracy is satisfactory. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for ICT because it is not systematically taught across the curriculum. Aspects of design and technology cannot meet statutory requirements because of a lack of suitable computer equipment. Pupils do not take part in a daily act of collective worship. Other subjects meet statutory requirements, including provision for religious education, in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus.
37. The range of extracurricular activities provided by the school is very good. Sport and music are very well provided for. A variety of clubs, activities and workshops support curriculum areas such as English, geography, ICT, mathematics, design and technology and modern foreign languages. Pupils have opportunities to gain Red Cross certificates, Duke of Edinburgh awards and join World Challenge expeditions.

38. The school's inclusive nature means that it provides effectively for the academic needs of all pupils, including pupils of all levels of attainment, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers are now more aware of gifted and talented pupils and are beginning to provide appropriately challenging work.
39. Curriculum provision for special educational needs pupils is good. Teachers plan well for their needs within mainstream classes and sets. The ASDAN course for older pupils is an improvement since the last inspection and opportunities for vocational work on an afternoon release to the local college are being developed for a few lower-attaining pupils. The study skills support for Year 10 and 11 pupils who do not take a modern foreign language is helping them catch up on other studies, though there are limited opportunities for those pupils struggling with science to take a certified course. The quality of pupils' individual education and behaviour support plans is generally satisfactory, and their individual targets are related to key skills. The quality of the accommodation for special educational needs pupils is cramped. Lunchtime and after-school activities are limited because the room doubles as an office and interview space.
40. The school has a large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Sixty-three pupils receive help with English, of whom four are at an early stage. Provision is good and well managed and comprises a mixture of in-class support and group or individual tuition. Pupils learn satisfactorily in all subjects and make good progress where specialist staff are employed. Teachers' planning in mainstream English lessons is particularly good, and meets the needs of these pupils very well, because tasks are carefully adapted to suit them. Each year, one teacher, from different departments in turn, receives specific training funded by the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant, and works with pupils for five hours a week for one year. A teaching assistant also concentrates on working with this group of pupils in Year 7. A number of outside agencies have also contributed positively to this provision. The Refugee Service, for example, provides good support for the five unaccompanied Afghan refugees in the school. Worthwhile resources have been amassed to assist pupils with the acquisition of English, including books, posters and CD ROMs.
41. The school has improved provision for spiritual development by tracking and providing opportunities for reflection across the curriculum. It has produced a very good curriculum map that identifies where and how subject teachers can explore ideas, feelings and experiences with pupils. In practice, these opportunities have been used to great effect, particularly in religious education, English, drama and music. For example, in a lesson in religious education with Year 8, the teacher made excellent use of a sensitively-planned opportunity for girls to meditate on the effect that music can have on us. Planning in other subjects and in assemblies offers fewer opportunities for pupils to experience awe-inspiring moments and a sense of occasion. Tutor time is often concerned with routine form business, with no attempt to offer a 'thought for the day' or an act of collective worship.
42. Provision for moral and social development is very good. The school promotes a strong sense of moral principles, such as right and wrong, the value of the individual, human rights and equal opportunities for people of all races, cultures and beliefs. Some of this is achieved through direct teaching, as in a Year 7 English lesson where pupils explored the feelings of rejection and prejudice of a girl shuffled between relatives in Britain and Ghana. Many opportunities are offered for pupils to work together as members of groups and teams, particularly in physical education. Girls have the chance to take part in elections for the school council, which simulate the democratic process in the world outside school. This, and a longstanding commitment to fund-raising for charity, ensures that girls have very solid foundations for voicing opinions

within and beyond the school community and for understanding different roles and responsibilities in society.

43. The school fosters cultural development well. It encourages positive attitudes to cultural diversity and respect for its immediate and wider community through assembly themes and work within curriculum subjects. For instance, in a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher valued the ethnic diversity of the class, which helped create mutual trust. This led to a heightened understanding amongst pupils of a poem describing someone's sense of dislocation after moving from Pakistan to England. Religious education, English and drama make very strong contributions to pupils' levels of respect for different cultural traditions. Pupils' enjoyment of music, art and dance supports further awareness of the world's diverse artistic heritage. Departments organise visits such as those to the Loire Valley and Germany every other year for modern foreign languages, Italy for religious education, and North America for skiing, which support cultural development well for participants. The school is not well served by public transport and therefore makes fewer visits than might be expected to the rich range of cultural and religious centres and events in central and western London.
44. Provision for PHSE is very good, with a scheme of work that contains well-structured and appropriate topics. Emphasis is on active learning, for example brain-storming and decision-making. Pupils play an important part in assessing their own work; they reflect on and evaluate what has been learned in each topic. The PHSE handbook provides very good guidance for teachers on how to plan their lessons. Lessons are taught by form tutors who are not specialists in this area. Good arrangements, involving the more experienced teachers and outside specialists, are made for providing sex education; representatives from the police assist in the teaching about drugs awareness and bullying. Planning is very thorough and ensures substantial coverage of all topics. No observation of lessons was possible during the inspection. Written work scrutinised indicated pupils' understanding of the wide range of moral and social issues tackled. As a result their learning is very effective and their responses are very mature.
45. The very thorough careers education and guidance programme provides pupils with a broad range of relevant experiences over four years, which is well supported by an outside professional agency. In Year 8, the 'Real Game' project introduces pupils to an understanding of the world through a well-thought-out series of role plays and research projects. In Year 9, pupils learn about a wide range of careers resources, such as ICT programmes and college prospectuses. Year 10 students complete a fortnight's work experience and learn about the discipline of the workplace, during which they are closely monitored by the school and the employers. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn to write letters of application, to draw up CVs and to represent themselves well in interviews. Students perceive the course as an effective and confidence-building introduction to the world of work.
46. The school makes good provision for citizenship. The programme of work has been well planned and is an extension of the citizenship element that was formerly taught as part of PHSE. It emphasises knowledge, enquiry and debate. Although no formal teaching of citizenship could be seen during the inspection, pupils dealt with topics related to citizenship in other lessons, such as 'sustainable development', in geography in Year 11. Three Year 11 students, who had attended a meeting of the Hillingdon Youth Council gave clear and confident feedback to an attentive Year 9 assembly. Leadership of the subject is good and citizenship is well organised across the school.
47. The school council provides pupils with good opportunities to learn further about citizenship. In a meeting observed, senators and representatives from all years reported confidently on their

groups and sub-committees and discussed issues using precisely the target skills for this subject. Students organised their own meeting, ably chaired by a member of the upper school with pace and purpose and practical decisions were taken. All pupils contributed actively to the meeting observed.

Sixth form

48. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school currently offers seventeen A-levels covering a good range of subjects and students have access to other A-levels, such as law, through links with a local college of further education. Mathematics is offered at AS-level, but currently there is no Year 13 course. Opportunities are available to resit GCSE English and mathematics. The school also provides vocational courses in business studies at intermediate and advanced levels. Year 11 students not fully catered for by the sixth form curriculum follow vocational courses in hairdressing, catering, plumbing or motor vehicle studies at the local college of further education, or take up employment opportunities, often provided by the proximity of Heathrow airport.
49. Examples of very good planning of courses at departmental level were seen, for example in drama and psychology, and good schemes and systems were noted in sociology, business studies, biology and ICT. Some weaknesses in planning were apparent in physics and geography. Students have access to a well-planned course in PHSE. Planning for religious education provides for a one-day conference on aspects of the holocaust, but this does not meet statutory requirements and is therefore unsatisfactory.
50. Overall, key skills are developed satisfactorily and in a variety of ways. Eighty Year 12 students follow an ICT course. Many subjects use computers as part of their work but less use is made of these as a learning aid in mathematics and drama. Communication skills are supplemented through the personal development programme. This arrangement was working satisfactorily in the majority of areas, with strengths in psychology, English, business studies and biology and weaknesses in physics and geography. Most subjects make some contribution to the development of numeracy skills, in particular mathematics, physics and business studies.
51. Courses are planned for Year 12 so that no student has too much private study time. They have access to the learning resource area to work at these times, as well as the sixth form common room and other rooms nearby if they are empty. In Year 13, students can have permission to study at home for specified periods. Students from all types of sixth form courses felt that they had a lot of work to do and no-one thought that he or she had too much free time.
52. All Year 12 students undertake a worthwhile extracurricular activity. They choose from charity work, subject support or paired reading in the lower school, or sports coaching, at school or for local clubs. In addition there are opportunities to take part in a Young Enterprise scheme. Year 13 provides the executive members of the school council and students have the opportunity to participate in the UK Youth Parliament. Enrichment programmes within subject areas vary, but there are satisfactory opportunities to attend lectures and to join trips abroad, although costs prevent some students from participating.
53. The overall curriculum and development planning is undertaken jointly to meet the needs of the students of both feeder schools. Weaknesses remain in the planning for several subjects due to the shared responsibility for subjects and the resulting unclear accountability.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. Child protection procedures and arrangements are very good and comply with locally agreed procedures. The name of the designated person is published in the staff handbook, together with very helpful notes to staff of how to deal with possible issues. Appropriate training takes place regularly.
55. The procedures employed by the school to ensure the welfare of its pupils and to monitor their personal development are very good. Health and safety arrangements are very good. Careful records are kept of all issues and governors are kept well informed. There is a clear procedure for reporting accidents and first aid cover is published and well known.
56. Form tutors and heads of year know their pupils very well. The care systems are very good and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. For example, counsellors from two agencies outside the school are used to provide individual counselling for pupils experiencing a variety of difficulties, to help them to continue their education within the school. Peer counselling is also very effectively used. This has developed from the SWAB group of pupils, which was originally formed to help develop the very good anti-bullying policy. Members of the group are now trained as peer counsellors.
57. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Form tutors are responsible for setting targets with their pupils twice a year and are then able to keep track of their progress through the rest of the year. Further support and guidance are given through the PHSE programme. A regular weekly meeting between heads of year and form tutors provides a good opportunity to share issues and concerns about particular pupils and to review the effectiveness of the PHSE programme. The school works very conscientiously to ensure consistency in its practice of care.
58. In line with this good policy, the school ensures that the transition from primary to secondary education is smooth for both pupils and parents. Formal and informal meetings are held during the year, to allay the apprehensions of parents and new pupils, and so that parents can feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. Headteachers of feeder primary schools are invited to meet with former pupils in an informal setting and in this way share in their continuing development.
59. There are very good procedures for monitoring behaviour. The system of rewards is used well, and actively encourages good conduct. In common with other schools, the school has some pupils with complex behavioural difficulties, which have proved difficult to manage. This has resulted in an above-average rate of exclusions.
60. The quality of assessment, care and welfare for special educational needs pupils is good. Pupils are identified appropriately. The new Code of Practice levels are in place and progress is monitored regularly throughout the key stages. Additional reading and spelling assessments are completed though these are not recorded on pupils' individual education plans. Targets include communication and behaviour and social skills issues. Teaching assistants appropriately track pupils' behaviour, though their progress is inconsistently checked against specific targets. Annual reviews fully meet requirements and attendance of parents at review meetings is good. Parents and outside specialists are also effectively involved at all stages of assessment. Improvement in the quality of targets and the involvement of pupils in setting targets has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

Assessment

61. Good whole-school systems for assessment are in place and are used to set attainment targets for pupils. A range of national test results and information from teaching staff is used to assess pupil potential. As part of a twice-yearly monitoring day, tutors and pupils discuss and agree targets based on GCSE grades or National Curriculum levels. This good approach ensures that tutors can monitor individual progress. Pupils can sometimes recall their targets but they are not used systematically by departments to provide a reference point for subject improvement and targets are not sufficiently reinforced.
62. National test data is given to the heads of subject department and the school makes good use of data to assess the performance of the subjects. Some departments use the data to establish the teaching groups. In mathematics, the results of the national tests are used to identify ability groups of pupils within the classes in Year 7. In modern foreign languages, the data is used to predict performance at the end of Years 9 and 11. Some departments make no use of the data. In general the data, although available to subject staff, is not used to influence teaching or to establish pupils' targets by subject departments. The school has however made firm plans to ensure that all staff are trained to understand the nature and significance of the data from national and other tests and are able to use it directly to influence teaching.
63. The school has a whole-school marking and assessment policy, which each subject is able to adapt to meet its requirements. In some subjects there is a consistent approach to marking and assessment and good practice is found. In geography, for example, marking is regular, and tells pupils what to do to improve. English has a good marking system, which is used to provide overall information on progress every half term. In science, there is a good system for assessing progress that is also used to establish the class groups. The overall picture in the school, however, is inconsistent, and departmental marking policies are not fully applied, even within the department. Although some subjects provide levels and grades as part of the assessment process, the day-to-day work of the pupils is not related to these. Consequently the pupils are unaware of the standard of the work they have produced and cannot relate this to their target grades and levels.

Sixth form

Assessment

64. Despite good or satisfactory procedures in most subjects, the assessment and monitoring of students' academic performance is unsatisfactory overall because of inconsistencies in application. Some good practice was seen in mathematics, biology, design and technology, economics, drama, history, psychology and English. However, in physics, geography, and German, practice is currently unsatisfactory. This is because there is no commonly accepted marking policy, so practice and quality vary too much.
65. The use of data in predicting attainment and setting targets that are specific and attainable is not sufficiently developed. Information systems currently in place fail to ensure the reliability and usefulness of target setting. For example, in chemistry and mathematics, individuals can have as many as three different and conflicting minimum target grades. Target setting is unsatisfactory in geography and German. Inconsistent practices in these areas relate to the way subjects are managed and monitored.
66. The assessment, verification and moderation procedures of awarding bodies are met, for example in business studies and economics. The use made of assessment information in

guiding planning is satisfactory overall, but not all subject areas evaluate teaching and learning in any systematic and rigorous manner. Data from assessment is insufficiently analysed to be of assistance in planning developments in ICT.

Advice, support and guidance

67. Comprehensive advice and guidance are provided for pupils in Year 11 where staff take care to match the aspirations and needs of pupils to the sixth form courses available. Not all pupils are suited to the A-level courses and a relatively high proportion of students leave at the end of Years 11 and 12.
68. Tutors monitor and guide students in terms of both their academic and personal development. Each term, information on progress and attainment is made available to students and parents. However, while the personal support and guidance are good, the monitoring and support of students' academic progress is less effective because of inconsistent use of assessment systems.
69. In discussions, students were keen to draw attention to the important role played by tutors, even where tutors were less experienced in working with senior pupils or were new to the schools. They value the advice and guidance provided. Evidence from the PHSE lessons observed supports their confidence.
70. Senior managers know the students well and are able to supplement the work done by the tutors. They are very accessible to and supportive of the students. They have very good knowledge of agencies that might help in any particular situation and have established good links. The well-planned tutorial programme covers careers, examination techniques, financial management and citizenship; the latter provides many opportunities for students' moral and social development. Senior managers work well with tutors and subject teachers to monitor and support the students. Individual records are kept and shared with parents in reports or if there is a problem.
71. Careers education is good for all students whether proceeding to higher education or leaving and moving into employment or some other alternative. The UCAS procedures begin in Year 12 and involve visits to and by higher education providers. Students not intending to move into higher education or proceed with A2 courses are identified early and additional arrangements are made through the local 'Connexions' branch. Students expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made and feel they are well supported.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72. Parents' views of the school are positive and they think that it is doing a good job. In their view, the school has high expectations, their daughters like school, and make good progress. Parents find the school approachable. The inspection confirmed parents' positive views. One in four parents who answered the questionnaire did not feel well informed about their daughters' progress. Inspectors identified some gaps in this information. In written reports, particularly lower down the school, the outlines of progress in each subject are not linked clearly enough to targets agreed at pupil monitoring days. In addition, comments about what a girl needs to do to sustain or improve the standard of work are often far too general instead of specifying the action to take. For example, comments such as 'Keep up the good work!' are far more common than 'Read the examination question more carefully and relate the whole

answer to the situation described, using the mark scheme as a guide to the number of points required’.

73. The school provides a good range of information about its work, events and achievements, particularly through the monthly newsletter. The prospectus is lively and the governors’ report to parents is clear and readable, but they do not contain all the information expected. For example, the prospectus lacks information about special educational needs and religious education, including parents’ rights with regard to the act of collective worship. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory.
74. The school has effective links with parents as a result of a range of constructive contacts that include open evenings, parents’ meetings, social functions and productions such as the hugely enjoyable performances of ‘Guys and Dolls’ that took place during the inspection week. New parents and their daughters are helped to feel part of the school as quickly as possible through a well-structured induction programme that gives parents early opportunities to meet staff. As a result of the school’s efforts to build an effective partnership with parents, in most cases they are involved well in its work and with their daughters’ education. A few families respond less constructively to communication from the school, which is reflected in their reluctance to attend parents’ meetings. Overall, the school’s links with parents are stronger than at the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

75. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is very dedicated to the school and has a clear vision for its future direction. He is aware of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement. He balances assured leadership with a willingness to consult, and he is well supported throughout the school.
76. The team of senior managers includes the headteacher, two deputies, two assistant headteachers and a finance manager. A third assistant headteacher takes up an appointment at the start of 2003. The team has undergone some recent changes, due to the promotion of previous members to positions outside the school. It is developing quickly into a coherent body, benefiting from a good balance of staff with long experience of the school and newcomers with fresh perspectives. All senior managers have clearly defined roles. They share a high commitment to the school, have a unified view of its direction and work effectively towards it.
77. The school carries out its functions with a high awareness of its distinctive role as the only one in the local authority to provide the option of an all-girl secondary education. It is dedicated to ensuring that it meets fully the special obligation that this entails to provide a distinctive learning environment and thus a genuine choice for parents. The school places high value on the caring and secure environment that it is able to provide. It strives towards securing high achievement for its pupils and developing the whole person. This is achieved by presenting them with wide learning opportunities that develop not only pupils’ abilities but also a positive response to opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is a happy place in which to learn and work. A key aim is to value the contribution of all who work in the school, at whatever level. This it sees as vital to attracting and retaining the dedicated staff who are crucial to the achievement and care of pupils. An important and effective innovation in pursuit of this is a staff consultative committee, the membership of which includes teachers at all levels of seniority and experience and support and secretarial staff. The success with which the school achieves its aims is reflected in the extent to which it has

overcome severe national and local staffing difficulties, to secure a committed body of teachers and support staff, and in the well-ordered and productive ethos.

78. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements in the way it manages and supports the staff who are responsible for leading faculties and subject departments. It has developed a good curriculum policy to guide departmental decision making and change. It is achieving greater consistency in the definition of the responsibilities for middle managers and in the way in which they formulate their departmental development plans. Although the overall level of departmental leadership is good and sometimes very good, there is some variation within this. Generally, the main distinguishing characteristic is in the quality of longer term strategic thinking and leadership, which is not as strong as the day-to-day management in many departments. Leadership and management are very good in English, design and technology, music and religious education, and good in science, art and special educational needs. Leadership and management are satisfactory in the other subjects, except for cross-curricular ICT, where they are unsatisfactory.
79. The governing body has improved the effectiveness with which it carries out its responsibilities since the last inspection, so that this is now satisfactory. In spite of its best efforts, the school has not been able to fill several vacancies on its governing body. The governors it has are committed to their responsibilities and support the school strongly. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have benefited from regular training and good provision of information by the school, including regular presentations by senior managers and subject leaders. They have improved the way in which they carry out their role in scrutinising and helping to formulate policy, so that this is now generally satisfactory. Because of the comparatively small number of governors, it is not possible for all departments to have a permanent link governor. However, governors endeavour to ensure that all subjects are monitored at regular intervals. Governors carry out their statutory duties appropriately, with the exception of providing a daily act of collective worship and ensuring that all aspects of the ICT curriculum are taught. Some statutory elements are missing from the information that is provided annually for parents.
80. The school has established a satisfactory system for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching. This provides for regular monitoring by senior managers. However, good analysis at senior managerial level of the school's performance is not yet leading sufficiently to a raising of standards further. The school is aware that it has yet to secure effective and consistent participation in the process by all subject leaders. To address this need, the school's senior managers and governors have been developing a monitoring, evaluation and review policy that is to be launched at the start of the coming term. The schools' procedures for appraisal and performance management meet requirements and strike an effective balance between usefulness and manageability.
81. The school improvement plan is wide-ranging, covers the short, medium and long term, and contains worthwhile initiatives. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, there is now an effective procedure for regular updating of the plan. Since the last inspection, it has improved in the extent to which it provides a model for the subject areas to review their performance and identify improvements needed. However, there is still a need for it to encourage subject leaders to focus more sharply on improving teaching and learning and raising achievement. There is still some inconsistency in the extent to which different subjects interpret and use the whole-school plan and in the clarity with which they identify timescales and success criteria.

82. The school's finances are rigorously and efficiently administered. Good reference is made to the school's improvement plan when making whole-school spending decisions so that resources are used effectively to support school priorities. The school has accepted that it has needed to spend more than it would ideally have wished to in overcoming the staffing difficulties with which it has been faced, in order to maintain the quality of teaching and learning, but has gone about this in a responsible way. Good use is made of new technology for organising and managing the school's finances and assessment information. The principles of best value are applied well.
83. Management of learning support is effective and reflects the good improvement since the last inspection. The teamwork and commitment of staff contribute well to pupils' integration into mainstream groups and are very effective in promoting a caring and positive environment where pupils are made to feel secure. The departmental handbook shares good practice, and, by regularly communicating with staff, the co-ordinator has ensured that the new Code of Practice is effectively implemented. The organisation of files is weak because the department lacks administrative support. Resources are good and additional funding is effectively used to support special educational needs equipment in other areas of the curriculum.
84. Provision of staffing, accommodation and resources is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. The overall level and quality of staffing across the school is good. Departments generally have a good match of qualifications to subjects taught and this contributes well to the good quality of teaching. Teachers are mostly experienced, irrespective of their length of service in the school, and there is an appropriate age profile. Several departments, including ICT and modern foreign languages, have successfully surmounted recent staffing difficulties. English however has an acting head of department and two long-term supply teachers replacing colleagues absent on maternity leave or ill. The school has enjoyed considerable success in recruiting teachers, despite the national and local problems in appointing suitably qualified and experienced staff. The temporary and supply staff currently employed by the school are of good quality. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by strong provision for in-service training and the mentoring which they receive from their heads of department. The provision of courses for the continuing development of some more experienced teachers is an area which the school could look into further.
85. Accommodation is satisfactory. Although the quality of the learning environment varies considerably, it makes little adverse impact on the quality of education provided. The main building needs constant repair, and the flat roof leaks intermittently. Corridors are narrow, become congested between lessons and at lunchtimes. Toilet facilities are poor and inconsistent with the very high standards of care that the school provides for its pupils.
86. The school hall is small and limits the scope of expressive arts productions, which are a major aspect of the school's provision. Since only two year groups at a time can be accommodated, full school assemblies are not possible. The dining area is small and very crowded, but serious problems are prevented by the girls' sensible behaviour.
87. The learning resources centre is attractive and just large enough for current needs. The range of subject accommodation is satisfactory overall with some good specialist areas, for example design and technology, religious education, geography, history and science. In these areas, the accommodation has a positive effect on standards. The accommodation for special educational needs is unsatisfactory, comprising one small room for office work, teaching and parent interviews. The English department is short of storage space. Plans to build a new

mathematics block are well underway to replace the present accommodation, some of which is in a poor state of repair.

88. Departmental displays are often good and help hide the poor decorative state of some areas of the school. Wall displays add considerably to the appearance of the corridors.
89. A good health and safety policy is in place and general risk assessments are undertaken annually, and particularly in design and technology, physical education, science, and drama. Cleaning remains a problem because of difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff.
90. The amount and quality of learning resources are satisfactory and meet curricular needs generally. The school has provided an above-average ratio of computers to pupils. However, the school does not provide the specialist ICT resources in design and technology for pupils to experience work in control technology, computer-aided design and manufacture. The learning resource centre is used effectively to support pupils with their studies. The stock of books in the library is good and supports learning well in most subjects. Pupils are able to use a suite of networked computers in the library both during lessons and lunchtime and after school.

Sixth form

91. The sixth form is well led. The senior management team of the sixth form shares a vision and commitment to the centre's development. Pastoral leadership is strong and makes a very good contribution to the ethos of the centre, the inclusion of all students and the support and information provided to them.
92. The governors and headteachers have contributed to closer partnership through coordination committees. A wide-ranging conference about strategy has taken place, and a development plan produced, which addresses the future developments for the sixth form. However, despite improvement, there remain areas that need to be dealt with, so the contribution of the governing body is only sound at present.
93. Most subject leaders from both schools work closely together and relationships are good. They cooperate on resource acquisition and agree on choice of syllabus and on who should teach each aspect of the course. However, there is a lack of contact between some teachers on a day-to-day basis, partly due to communication difficulties, which the schools hope to resolve. Teachers from the two schools do not in general teach the same modules or the same year groups and can therefore sometimes work side by side without detailed discussion of teaching methodology. This can also happen between pairs of teachers from the same school. Some good examples were seen, such as art, where teamwork and good systems have compensated for staff changes, and in some subjects run solely by teachers from the same school, such as business studies, economics, psychology and drama. But in some shared subjects there is no subject overview or coherent philosophy, for example in mathematics, the sciences, history and geography. This was reflected in the inspection week, in that the information provided was not coordinated and overall analyses of student performance were hard to find. Despite improvement, management in this area is only sound.
94. Monitoring by governors and senior staff is not yet sufficiently effective to identify and improve inconsistencies in subject management and quality of teaching in some subject areas. Performance management is inconsistent between the two schools. As a result, while professional development is sound overall, in some cases there is a failure to identify the need for professional development in sixth form teaching. There is no effective sixth form overview of standards of teaching or achievement. Systems are not yet developed that would give clear information about attainment on entry, the value added by sixth form courses in different subjects, or the achievement of students by gender or ethnicity. Although the problem has been identified, the lack of information systems is still a weakness. Monitoring and performance management are unsatisfactory overall.
95. In 1998, the centre was described as a drain on resources with confusion over the contribution of the two schools. Since that time, due to good cooperation between the schools and the very effective work of the two finance managers, an equitable system has been implemented and the centre's major weakness has been thoroughly and effectively dealt with. This has resulted in increased sixth form resources and closer cooperation between subject heads in the two schools. Neither of the feeder schools now subsidises the sixth form and student numbers have risen since the previous reports to a viable and still rising number. The use of the principles of best value is now sound. Financial planning is very good and the strategic use of resources is good.

Resources

96. Overall, resources are good in quality and quantity and are much improved since the last inspection. Central resources are better, in particular the learning resource centre and its ICT facilities. Although this library and resource centre provides good facilities, their usefulness is limited because students do not have access during part of the lunchtime. Subject capitation has been increased and this has had a beneficial effect generally on provision, although deficiencies remain in physics, ICT and design and technology. Lack of sufficient storage in the sixth form centre means that books and other equipment have to be transported from elsewhere, as happens in English, which can be time-consuming and inconvenient. In addition, some resources are shared between the sixth form and the main schools. Not all subjects have improved subject library provision, for example mathematics and chemistry. In a number of subjects, such as ICT, biology and physics, students buy their books, which is unsatisfactory.
97. Some parts of the sixth form, such as the biology laboratory, have roofing problems, but these did not disturb teaching during the course of the inspection. Art has no large specialist area. Students complain about lack of space in the common room areas, which is a valid complaint during lunchtime, when pupils do not have good access to dining facilities. Students also complain about lack of access between the sixth form and Abbotsfield School due to locked doors, which necessitates an inconvenient detour. Nevertheless, accommodation is satisfactory with good laboratory facilities, specialist rooms for business studies, economics, history, geography and psychology. The learning resource area is of a good size.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

98. In order to raise standards for all pupils, the school should:
- 1) improve the quality and consistency of teaching, especially in Years 10 and 11, (*paragraphs 112, 115, 160, 166*)
 - 2) plan and teach ICT systematically across the curriculum so that provision complies with statutory requirements, (*paragraphs 105, 118, 141, 150, 152, 155, 164, 167, 168, 176, 192, 203*)
 - 3) develop further the use of data as a means of improving teachers' planning, setting targets for pupils and raising their attainment. (*paragraphs 117, 135, 155, 162, 166, 175, 180, 192*)

Governors may also wish to include the following issues in their plans for improving further overall provision for pupils:

- i) Reduce fixed term exclusions by analysing more closely the cases of misbehaviour; (*paragraphs 10, 13, 15, 16, 59*)
- ii) Improve punctuality and reduce unauthorised absence; (*paragraphs 10, 15, 16, 20, 255*)
- iii) Secure a full complement of governors to strengthen further their effectiveness; (*paragraphs 79, 94*)
- iv) Provide more administrative support for pupils with special educational needs; (*paragraph 83*)

- v) Provide more specific information about pupils' attainment in reports to parents; (*paragraph 72*)
- vi) Increase the school day to the recommended length; (*paragraph 35*)
- vii) Improve pupils' toilet facilities. (*paragraph 85*)

Sixth form

1. Improve overall standards of teaching and learning by:
 - strengthening aspects of teaching which will cater for all abilities and encourage students to achieve their targets and remain on the course; (*paragraphs 21, 22, 25, 53, 213*)
 - providing suitable opportunities in all subjects for developing literacy and key skills and ICT; (*paragraphs 24, 209, 229, 245, 250, 260, 268*)
 - enabling students to take more responsibility for their own learning and increase the amount of
 - investigative work; (*paragraphs 23, 24, 206, 214, 227, 231, 238, 240, 252, 257*)
 - remedying deficiencies in resources, particularly textbooks; (*paragraphs 96, 223*)
 - increasing opportunities for enriching the curriculum through visits; (*paragraphs 52, 262*)
 - opening the sixth form library at lunch times to encourage and facilitate students' independent study. (*paragraphs 97, 258*)

2. Improve the use of school and national data to set targets for students and to guide teachers' planning by:
 - marking students' work consistently, thoroughly and regularly; (*paragraphs 257, 260, 272*)
 - using information from students' previous results to set challenging targets; (*paragraphs 65, 66, 250, 259, 263, 265, 282*)
 - setting high expectations and monitoring students' progress rigorously. (*paragraphs 220, 227, 228, 231, 256*)

3. Improve the management of subjects that use staff from both schools by:
 - establishing better communications and coordinating the development of teaching more effectively between the staff from the two contributing schools. (*paragraphs 211, 216, 217, 224, 229, 259, 278*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	114
	Sixth form	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		87

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	12	24	36	36	4	2	0
Percentage	11	21	32	32	3	2	0
Sixth form							
Number	1	15	14	20	2	2	0
Percentage	2	27	26	37	4	4	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	888	135
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	128	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	61	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	200

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	47

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	6.5
National comparative data	8.1

School data	1.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	n/a	179	179

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	149	123	124
	Total	149	123	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (90)	69 (68)	69 (72)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (48)	46 (32)	37 (29)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	159	135	127
	Total	159	135	127
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	89 (83)	75 (70)	71 (60)
	National	66 (65)	67 (68)	66 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (29)	27 (18)	35 (24)
	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	n/a	177	177

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* TO G	1 or more grades A* TO G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	104	169	171
	Total	104	169	171
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	59 (62)	96 (94)	97 (96)
	National	51 (48)	87 (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	42.1 (42.5)
	National	34.6 (39)

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations	Year	Male	Female	Total
	2001	(33)	43	(76)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	(33)	43	(76)
	Average point score per candidate	(12.4)	14.4	(13.5)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

No of pupils on roll
665
0
31
0
0
0
0
0
143
51
10
0
20
10
20
10
30

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
46	1
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
0	0
1	0
1	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

No ethnic group recorded	13	0	0
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The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	58.91
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	491

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.1
Key Stage 4	20.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	3283901
Total expenditure	3280551
Expenditure per pupil	3251
Balance brought forward from previous year	136221
Balance carried forward to next year	3350

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	27.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	25.3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

1023

Number of questionnaires returned

236

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	53	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	56	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	55	12	4	1
The teaching is good.	28	61	3	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	42	22	6	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	49	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	38	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	19	52	18	2	9
The school is well led and managed.	31	58	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	58	3	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	52	9	1	8

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 **very good**.

Strengths

- Enthusiastic and very effective teaching by teachers who work very well as a team
 - Course work that is well presented, diligently marked and accurately graded
 - Teachers' very good relationships with pupils that lead to pupils' positive attitudes and a commitment to do well
 - Very good leadership and management which provide clear direction and establish appropriate priorities for further development
 - English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
-
- **Areas for improvement**
 - The regular use of computers
 - Some marking, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work

99. Results in 2002, in national tests at the end of Year 9, were above the national average and well above average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 5 was well above average, the proportion reaching Level 6 was average. Results show a rising trend.
100. Results in GCSE English language in 2002 were well above national averages. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was well above that of pupils who had similar prior attainment.
101. The attainment of pupils in English when they enter the school is above average. The standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are well above national expectations, with no variation between pupils of different cultural heritages. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their standards on entry to the school. Pupils speak confidently, and in response to searching questioning by the teacher, answer at length adding detail and comment. They are encouraged to voice their own opinions and give evidence to support their views. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of novels and other literature, and they benefit greatly from the reflective and critical comments they make in their reading logs, using the library regularly and reading privately for a short time as a routine in some lessons. Pupils write well in different styles, including diaries, letters, imaginative writing and poems. They write appropriately in both formal and personal styles. Their appreciation of written language is carefully developed in interesting tasks, such as rewriting a piece in a different style. For example, in a Year 8 mixed ability class, pupils firstly practised the technique of changing indirect speech to direct speech. Then, after carefully studying part of 'A Christmas Carol', were challenged to transform the power of the emotional language and imagery used by Dickens into dramatic scripts. Pupils' handwriting is well formed and they have a good knowledge of grammar and spelling. Pupils use language concisely. They practise persuasive writing and most can write figuratively with success. Pupils in another Year 9 class produced eye-catching posters using computer technology to present their views on the suitability of buying a pet for Christmas. Lower-attaining pupils produce a good range of writing with the help of a selection of writing frames to assist in sentence-building, grammar and word choices.

102. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their starting points, and are supported effectively, especially in classes where additional teachers work in partnership with teachers.
103. Pupils' achievement continues to be well above average in Key Stage 4 in all aspects of their English work. At the end of Year 11, standards of work are still well above national expectations. Pupils of all levels of attainment use the appropriate vocabulary of literary criticism, in both speech and writing, when analysing GCSE texts. Higher-attaining groups write extended essays, extracting full depth of meaning from increasingly complex texts and other media forms. In one exercise, pupils produced fluent well-structured writing based on cinema; they analysed how tension is built up in films, giving evidence to support views that showed a good understanding of the authors' intentions. Pupils in the mixed ability groups reflected on their work experience, described their work, discussed the skills they had acquired and analysed their feelings. The range of writing produced by lower-attaining pupils is narrower, but they achieve well in a variety of styles.
104. Pupils' views of English lessons are very positive. They enjoy very good relationships with teachers and each other. They discuss ideas enthusiastically and responsibly in small groups or pairs and, when giving presentations to the whole class, value the opinions of other pupils. They work with sustained concentration in almost all lessons.
105. The teaching was very good overall throughout the subject and pupils learn very well. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The teachers work very well as a team, sharing resources and ideas of good practice, and they are strongly committed to continually raising standards. Lessons are thoroughly planned for pupils of all levels of attainment, including the gifted and talented, and the interesting and imaginative choice of tasks strongly motivates pupils to do well. The marking of course work is very good. Pupils are informed of the grades and levels they have attained and are given clear directions for improvement. However, other written work, although carefully marked and conforming to the department policy, does not inform individual pupils of their current level of attainment nor give specific information of the next steps to be taken to improve. Pupils use ICT effectively, producing work of good quality. However, the sharing of computer rooms with other departments means that pupils do not have access to ICT as often as is desirable.
106. A considerable strength of the department is in the way teachers tackle current social, moral and cultural issues. In a Year 8 drama lesson, pupils, using role-play, explored the dominant and submissive behaviour of bullies and victims. Then, keeping in role, they described their thoughts and feelings which were then discussed by the whole group. This effectively developed the pupils' use of sensitive language. Teachers are aware of and value the contribution that pupils with different cultural heritages bring to the lessons, and they provide a wealth of excellent material to celebrate the diversity of British culture. In an excellent Year 10 lesson, pupils, studying Moniza Alvi's poem, 'Presents from My Aunt in Pakistan', were asked probing questions on the dilemma of a teenager torn between two cultures. This activity brought out the deeper meaning of the poem and provided an excellent opportunity for the development of pupils' multicultural understanding.
107. The department is very well led and managed by the acting head of department, who, in the absence of the head of department, is developing further the very good established practice. The staffing of the courses remains good, despite staffing problems, and continuity in teaching English is being carefully maintained. The supply teachers in the department are very well supported by the permanent staff. Classrooms are adequate for most groups, but some groups

are large for the rooms they occupy, and this limits the organisation of group work. Storage space for resources is small and inconvenient. The improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Drama

108. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught drama separately, in addition to practising drama techniques within English, where teachers used, for example, role-play and 'hot seating'. Drama is also taught as a GCSE option. All candidates passed in 2002 and three quarters of the candidates gained A* to C grades. Three lessons were observed during the inspection. Year 11 pupils, in a good lesson, showed thoughtful analysis and good understanding of the technical language and the devices used by authors. Pupils were inventive and articulate in a very good Year 9 lesson as they successfully assumed a variety of characters. In another very good lesson in Year 9, the teacher used the device of 'thought tracking' so that pupils understood how character roles are developed.

Literacy

109. The English department has played a leading role in developing and implementing the policy of literacy across the curriculum. Most subjects provide opportunities for extended writing and the literacy strengths of pupils are developed by providing glossaries of the technical language used in the subject. Pupils have a good knowledge of basic spelling and grammar.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The promotion of pupils' independent learning skills
- The high quality of the work in mathematical investigations

Areas for improvement

- Standards at GCSE
- Consistency in applying the National Numeracy Strategy
- The use of ICT

110. Pupils' attainment in mathematics on entry to the school is broadly average. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 are higher than in 2001, with more pupils gaining Level 6 and above. Pupils' results in mathematics are lower than in English and similar to those gained in science. Teacher assessments are generally in line with the results. The trend in the attainment of the pupils has matched that found nationally, but it is slightly lower than that of pupils in similar schools.
111. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 are average overall. Pupils carry out high quality investigations, with good mathematical content. These are well presented and show high standards of literacy. In Years 7 to 9, pupils work successfully at algebraic manipulation, including solving equations. Less well developed was the work on numeracy. Some pupils were not confident about using basic skills and do not practise these enough to reach the level expected.

112. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. A Year 9 group of higher-attaining pupils had worked very effectively on some difficult linear equations. Their learning was enhanced by effective and stimulating starter activities, followed by carefully-timed teaching of the main topic. Other pupils, particularly in classes where starter activities were poorly managed, or where teaching was over-reliant on the textbook, were not having their learning needs met, and their achievement was less than satisfactory.
113. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average and well below the results of both English and science. Given the pupils' attainment on joining the school, the results are well below expected standards. Although the trend in results is satisfactory over time, mathematics has not kept pace with the improvements in other subjects and, in 2002, declined from the previous year.
114. Standards now are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards in Year 10 are higher than in Year 11. Year 10 pupils in higher- and average-attaining classes had successfully tackled work on basic trigonometry and were developing algebraic skills, including identifying and plotting straight-line graphs. In some groups in both years, pupils found some difficulty in using basic numeracy, indicating a lack of routine practice. High-attaining pupils in Year 11 understand frequency distributions. They worked diligently at this difficult topic and attained the standards expected of the higher GCSE course. However, some high-attaining pupils were over-reliant on the calculator when performing basic computations.
115. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Staff generally implement the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. They plan and use the three-part lesson, with well-organised and carefully-timed activities. These lessons have clear learning objectives, which are reviewed at the end of the lessons. In a particularly good example, some lower-attaining Year 8 pupils efficiently calculated and measured angles. The teachers managed the pupils well with clear expectations of their good behaviour. A stimulating starter activity established a good pace of learning, and this yielded significant gains in their learning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good and enhance the quality of their learning. Many pupils learn well when working independently. Some staff had developed an effective system where pupils started the lesson by writing personal achievement targets for a lesson. This approach, when linked with the planned learning objectives of the lesson, had a good effect on pupils' learning. Some less successful lessons had no starter activity to establish a good pace of working. Sometimes pupils were inadequately involved in question-and-answer sessions to stimulate their learning. One-to-one assistance in lessons is usually effective, helping pupils to work at a good pace and developing their confidence. In a Year 8 lesson where the teacher did not target sufficiently the pupils who needed help, some less confident pupils worked very slowly and their motivation was reduced.
116. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. Due to difficulties in recruitment two years ago, the school decided to appoint two joint heads of department. This has proved effective. The recent changes of the published scheme of work and in the organisation of classes have established a good climate for development and improvement in standards.
117. Assessment is insufficiently developed to meet the needs of new courses. Marking is inconsistent. Currently, it makes too little reference to the National Curriculum levels at which pupils are working, and is insufficiently linked to target setting. Low-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. The use of a support teacher in a third of the lessons in Year 7 is helping lower-attaining pupils to raise their achievement. Gifted and

talented pupils are identified, and the department makes a satisfactory effort to provide suitable challenges for them.

118. As a result of the newly-established joint management of the department, appropriate plans are now in hand to improve provision for mathematics. The recent audit of provision produced an accurate analysis of needs and indicated the improvements needed. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT are inadequate. Since the last inspection, the staffing changes and difficulties in recruitment have impacted on the department's capacity for improvement. Nevertheless, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory
119. Numeracy is satisfactory across the curriculum. A good policy for developing this is being implemented and provision is developing satisfactorily. The mathematics department has produced a valuable resource book for use in other subjects, and good examples of the use of numeracy occur. For example, in geography pupils use block and line graphs, and map work in Year 7 includes work on coordinates. The science department uses distance and time graphs, and has introduced a system where pupils can do 'catch up' activities if their numeracy is weak. Some work on pie charts and block graphs is included in religious education.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The rising trend in results
- Consistency in teaching approaches
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning
- Good leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- Greater challenge to pupils through the teaching strategies used
- More freedom and less direction in teaching so that pupils develop more independence and make greater progress
- More sharply focused strategic planning

120. Results in the end of Year 9 tests in 2002 were in line with the national average. Overall, there has been no change from the previous year. A slightly smaller proportion gained at least Level 5, the expected level, while a higher proportion gained at least Level 6. Pupils' results were above those of pupils, nationally, with similar end of Year 6 results, indicating that pupils achieved well. Science and mathematics results were similar, but below English, when compared with all schools. Science and English results were similar, and above mathematics, when compared with similar schools. The science results have closely followed the national trend for several years.
121. The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 9 are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' recorded work shows that they are developing their knowledge and understanding in all aspects of their work equally. Higher-attaining pupils were able to draw and interpret distance-time graphs well. Their recorded work shows good knowledge of reactions, with pupils describing them through word equations and chemical formulae. Pupils have made a good beginning in scientific investigational work. Lower-attaining pupils have followed similar content but in less depth. Their work shows lower attainment in that their

answers may be shorter or less well explained. Their investigational reports are being usefully supported with a writing frame.

122. GCSE results in 2002 were above the national average for the proportion of the candidates who gained grades A* to C. These results are a little lower than in 2001. The school entered significantly more of the year group (96 per cent) than is the case nationally. Results were well above average for similar schools, and average when compared with all pupils who had similar Year 9 test scores. This indicates that pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Over time, results are rising in line with the national trend.
123. The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 11 are average and their achievement is satisfactory. The standard of work actually observed in Year 11 lessons was lower than that demonstrated in their recorded work. For example, in a second set, pupils were demonstrating a low level of work in a physics lesson. In their recorded work, however, higher-attaining pupils had produced well-argued, lengthy responses in modules dealing with adaptation or explaining nitrate pollution. Their science investigations show a high standard, being well presented using ICT. Lower-attaining pupils show less understanding in, for example, the module they have studied on force and speed. In Year 11, standards are higher in biology and chemistry modules than in physics modules. A weaker aspect is pupils' scientific drawing; a number of pupils, right up to Year 11, draw small, free-hand diagrams.
124. Pupils' attitudes are good and on many occasions very good. Pupils respond and behave well, and are generally keen to learn. Pupils from all backgrounds work well together and relationships are good. Their pride in their work shows through in the good quality of its presentation.
125. Teaching and the subsequent learning are satisfactory in all years. Teachers consistently use the departmental teaching strategy of sharing the expected learning outcomes with pupils at the beginning of a lesson and then, after the learning activities, bringing these together by reviewing what has been learnt. This helps pupils to focus quickly on what is expected from them, makes the start of the lesson calm and purposeful, and helps pupils recognise what they have learnt. Pupil management is good even when some pupils need continual attention to remain on task. Work is usually fully marked, following departmental guidelines and often with helpful, and sometimes challenging, annotation to help pupils make further progress. In the best teaching, activities were carefully planned to develop pupils' understanding and, by drawing information from pupils by their questioning, teachers were able to assess what pupils understood and could move forward from there. Good teaching required pupils to use language accurately and to explain terminology; satisfactory teaching missed this sort of opportunity. Some teachers rely too heavily on the textbook to prompt teaching activities. Satisfactory teaching could have been more effective if there had been less close direction and giving of factual information; more drawing upon what pupils knew; more requirement of pupils to do or find out for themselves; and a clearer understanding of how what was planned would achieve the required outcomes. There is too great a use of *cloze* procedures, where pupils put the correct words in gaps in a piece of writing, which does not challenge most pupils enough so that their achievement is not as great as it could be. Pupils with special educational needs make the same satisfactory progress as their peers because of the support they receive through the comparatively small group size and guidance given. Gifted and talented pupils make similar satisfactory progress overall as they are supported and challenged through an additional programme.

126. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has clear plans for the development of the subject, has many good management strategies in place, and is well supported by her colleagues. ICT is used well to maintain assessment records and to monitor both individual and group outcomes and progress. Good schemes of work are developing from the changes required by the National Curriculum. They identify opportunities for pupils to use ICT, to develop their literacy skills, to develop their understanding of citizenship and for their personal development. However, too little monitoring of teaching takes place to ensure these opportunities are taken, to recognise and share good practice or to identify problems. Strategic planning to drive the subject forward has not been sufficiently thought through and recorded.

127. The provision of accommodation and staffing is good. Learning resources are adequate although there are gaps and age is beginning to tell on some equipment. Provision for the use of ICT is good, with a computer in each laboratory and a good range of software. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and there is clear capacity for further development.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Above-average standards in Year 11
- Teaching and learning and pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11
- Teachers' skills, including the use of ICT
- The high quality of multicultural reference material used to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of different art cultures

Areas for improvement

- A* grades at GCSE and attainment in Years 7 to 9
- Analysis of assessment data to improve standards, and the involvement of pupils in evaluating their work
- Homework expectations for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and opportunities for them to use sketchbooks

128. The results of the 2002 teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 were above average, with 95 per cent of pupils achieving at Level 5 or above. Current standards in Year 9 are average, suggesting that teacher assessments last year were an overestimate.
129. Standards in art and design are average when pupils come into the school. Pupils in Year 9 are achieving average standards, despite good teaching, because of staffing difficulties last year. They have a good working knowledge of a wide range of media and materials and use them successfully to explore the formal elements of art. They show good gains in skill in mixing and controlling paint when they explore 'pop-art' images based on still life objects, water patterns based on the Japanese artist Hokusai and Islamic relief designs which combine painting, mosaic and modelling processes. The overall standard of planning, presentation and annotation of ideas is unsatisfactory because the use of sketchbooks to show work processes is inconsistent across teaching groups. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because they are encouraged to work independently.
130. GCSE examination results in 2001 for art and design were above average compared to all maintained schools. In 2002, results were well above average. The trend since 1999 has been above average. Pupils' results in art and design are higher than in their other GCSE subjects, although numbers gaining A* grades are comparatively low. Girls' attainment in art and design is also above the national average. Attainment in the A* to G grades has been maintained at 100 per cent since the last inspection.
131. Evidence from lessons, pupils' portfolios and discussions with pupils indicate that overall standards are above average. Pupils explain the research and investigation they carry out during their exploration of ideas. They revisit these in more depth through the use of a wider

range of materials and the study of artist techniques. Examples of above-average standards of composition and colour mixing in Year 11 were seen in a display of work based on natural forms. However, higher-attaining pupils have insufficient access to paints of good quality to boost their skills and prepare them for higher-level courses. ICT is successfully used to raise the standard of coursework in Year 11. For example, work by a high-attaining pupil on 'An Englishman in Moscow', after the style of the Russian artist, Malevich, successfully combined distorted images of unrelated objects, showing good evidence of selection and manipulation of materials.

132. Good opportunities for pupils' personal response to social issues were seen in the 'Green and Growing' project, based on a visit to Kew Gardens and in the 'War and Conflict' theme, with examples based on the study of Picasso's political painting, 'Guernica' and the effects of famine in Third World countries. Very good use is made of multicultural reference material in the experimentation stages of studies to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures. Annotation of ideas and the use of art vocabulary is developing well in pupils' sketchbooks and personal statements. However, some high-attaining pupils' work lacks rigorous analytical evaluation, which results in comparatively few pupils gaining A and A* grades. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. They receive good support and most attain well at GCSE.
133. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They are keen to learn, and the GCSE art option is popular. Good levels of collaborative learning and positive attitudes to work were seen in all lessons.
134. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Lesson objectives are made clear to pupils and are clearly linked to schemes of work and examination criteria. Teachers have good subject knowledge and computer skills. Activities are well planned and involve pupils well in first-hand experiences. Lesson objectives are shared with the class and clear explanations and demonstrations lead to well-focused working. Displays are used as an effective teaching resource. However, art vocabulary is insufficiently prioritised in Years 7 to 9, and pupils use sketchbooks too little. For GCSE pupils, the learning approach is very successful; a high level of interest is maintained through the very good relationships established between teachers and pupils. Pupils use the Internet for research and they work confidently on digital imaging when following up personal ideas. In the best lessons, skilful questioning consolidated understanding, building on pupils' knowledge of the formal elements of art and vocabulary. Occasionally, too little time is allowed to consolidate and evaluate what has been learned. Some lessons do not challenge gifted and talented pupils adequately. Homework expectations are generally low.
135. Leadership and management of the department are good. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good, with good development of the use of ICT in art. The shared commitment of staff during the temporary absence of the head of department is enabling the department to continue to function effectively. Data from assessment is not used rigorously enough to raise attainment in the highest grades. The analysis of GCSE results takes place, but plans to track pupils' progress and use levels from their entry to the school and to standardise teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 are less well developed. The department makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the use of multicultural resource material. Not many opportunities are provided for younger pupils to work with an artist-in-residence or visit a gallery to see original art. The range of courses on offer at GCSE level is restricted and does not fully reflect the expertise in the department. The

quality and range of painting materials are limited. The range of displays exhibited around the school contributes positively to pupils' learning and to the overall school environment.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- A well-planned programme of activities that build on previous work
- Leadership and organisation that are ensuring whole-school cooperation in establishing the subject

Area for improvement

- The monitoring of pupils' work

136. No citizenship lessons were taught during the inspection. However, elements of citizenship formed part of lessons observed in several subjects, for example in a humanities lesson in Year 11. Students were given the opportunity to respond to questions on 'sustainable development' and a discussion exercised their skills well in argument and challenged them to understand and explain ethical implications. A Year 9 assembly provided a good opportunity for a small group of Year 11 students, who had attended a meeting of the Hillingdon Youth Council, to give a clear and confident feedback to an attentive year group.
137. In a meeting observed of Swakeleys School Council, senators and representatives from all years reported confidently on their groups and sub-committees and discussed issues using the target skills for this subject precisely. Students organised their own meeting, ably chaired by a member of the upper school with pace and purpose, and practical decisions were taken. For example, the canteen menu was altered on health and nutrition grounds. The canteen manager took part in the discussion, noted the views expressed and subsequently implemented changes.
138. Good leadership has resulted in clear guidelines for teaching the subject. This course is planned well and in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum and built into the existing PHSE programme. Good planning ensures that the appropriate skills of enquiry and debate are practised and developed well.
139. The assessment procedures adopted by the school are based on a student portfolio which will record skills acquired and experiences of action and participation of pupils. Planning includes the involvement of pupils in their own evaluation. It would be helpful to the further development of the subject to monitor the pupils' work.
140. Good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of citizenship occur across the curriculum. For example, in religious education, pupils considered the ethical and social implications of euthanasia. Literacy develops well in citizenship lessons through the use of key words in each planned topic. A useful audit of the contribution of individual subjects to pupils' understanding of citizenship has been carried out to help develop provision across the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good, which leads to standards that are well above average and very good achievement by pupils
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and structure pupils' learning very well
- Lesson planning is very good and incorporates interesting projects that motivate pupils and enhance their learning
- There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers, and pupils are very well supported in their learning

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' involvement in assessing their work
- Opportunities for using control technology and for computer-aided design and manufacture.

141. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are well above average. When pupils join the school, standards are broadly average. The overall achievement of pupils at the end of Year 9, including those with special educational needs is very good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 reach well above average standards across a range of activities, including making and designing products in food, resistant materials, textiles, graphics, and electronics. Pupils follow the guidance provided by the teachers well, and generally respond very well to the well-structured lessons in specialist material areas within design and technology. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their own imaginative ideas. This was seen in a Year 9 resistant materials lesson, where pupils were designing storage boxes for valuable items. Within the context of the theme, pupils designed boxes of a variety of shapes and styles. These included traditional shapes and some based on gothic designs. However, all the designs included the requirements specified by the teacher, such as the type of joints they should use. This ensured that all pupils covered a range of basic skills and processes. They develop a very good range of drawing skills and apply them to different materials. The use of ICT is increasing, but remains underdeveloped in control technology and computer-aided design and manufacture.
142. Pupils achieve very well over time and develop skills that are well above average in designing and making a range of products in all specialist material areas. Their products are well designed and accurately made. Their design folders show very good plans and pupils record the processes showing how their products have been developed.
143. GCSE results were well above average in 2001. Although there was a slight dip in the results in 2002, they remain high. Results were highest in resistant materials. Standards in Year 11 during the inspection were well above average. Pupils following the GCSE courses show very high standards in all material areas. They develop a good range of research and investigation skills. The quality of their practical coursework is very good. It is imaginative and this is well supported with design portfolio work showing each stage of development. Pupils use a good range of analytical skills which support their final choice of materials and processes before selecting those most appropriate for their own designs. This was seen in a textiles lesson, where pupils were designing and making a range of clothing, such as nightwear for children, evening garments and clothing with cultural influence from Aboriginal and Indian designs. Pupils used a range of tests, for example checking the abrasive properties, flame resistance, absorbency and dyeing qualities of fabrics, and a range of finishing and decorative processes before deciding on their final options. Work showed a good range of specialist processes and a

good mix of modern and traditional skills. GCSE coursework in all material areas was of very good quality and well presented showing good use of ICT to raise standards.

144. All pupils achieve very well, including those with special educational needs. Pupils are competent at using the design process and produce very good quality products, with accurate and well-developed plans from higher-attaining pupils, and sound work from middle and lower-attaining pupils. Pupils of all levels of attainment meet the requirements of the courses very well as a result of the very good guidance from teachers.
145. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers structure the lessons very well and provide clear objectives to guide pupils. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, and pupils are confident in the guidance they are given. Lower-attaining pupils receive very good individual support from teachers, and, as a result, they are able to achieve levels in line with other pupils in the group. Teachers enable pupils to develop skills in literacy, including the development of technical vocabulary. They prepare a very good range of resources, which enables pupils to structure their writing effectively. This has a positive effect on the pupils' competence in literacy. Pupils with special educational needs benefit very well from this structured support with writing. Teachers involve pupils of all levels of attainment well in the learning activities.
146. The use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils use computers competently when processing and presenting data from surveys about the products they are making. All pupils use computers well to evaluate the products they make, and to present the result in the form of charts and graphs, which gives them very good practice in numeracy. In food technology, pupils use computers to calculate the nutritional values of food products. They apply the appropriate numeracy skills well when they measure and mark out materials and process information when calculating values in food textiles and resistant materials.
147. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department maintains very good working relationships within the department, and staff maintain high levels of efficiency. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that standards of teaching are very good. The very good technician support contributes very well to the efficiency of the department. The department has not the equipment needed to enable pupils to experience work in control technology, computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Results are well above average and pupils achieve well throughout the subject
- Teaching is good; teachers have good subject knowledge and manage the pupils well
- Pupils learn well, are interested in the topics they study and work well independently
- Geography makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures so that pupils know the levels at which they are working and what to do to improve
- Opportunities for fieldwork and for using ICT

148. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are average. In 2002, the results of the tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average compared to schools nationally. These results have been rising steadily over the last four years. Pupils' results in the tests at the end of Year 9 are better than those gained in most other subjects.
149. Current standards in Year 9 are well above average and in line with the test results. Pupils achieve very well and develop very good geographical skills. They interpret maps accurately, and understand and use geographical vocabulary. They use their map work skills to identify the distribution of population and develop their understanding, for example of natural disasters through observation of events in the news.
150. They confidently research, investigate and analyse information from a good range of sources. They have a good understanding of physical features, such as volcanoes, earthquakes, river basins and weathering. They made thorough use, for example of their study of the United States of America, to learn about physical features and climatic differences. They interpret from source materials how people live and the impact of a country's geography on society, for example in Japan. There are too few opportunities for fieldwork and for using ICT and these areas of learning are less well developed in Years 7 to 9.
151. GCSE results were very high in 2001. Although a little lower in 2002, they remained well above average. The standards attained by the current Year 11 are above those expected from pupils of this age, but they are not quite as high as those attained in previous years. GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. Over recent years, GCSE results have been well above those of other schools nationally, and there has been a general trend of improvement, despite the slightly lower GCSE results in 2002. Pupils' results in geography tend to be better than those gained in most other subjects.
152. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving well. They develop well their understanding of types of economic activity and pupils of all levels of attainment are developing the ability to think and research for themselves. They use their map work skills to extend their understanding and higher-attaining pupils analyse, for example, economic activities in a sophisticated way, and, through discussion, challenge each other's thinking. However, the lack of opportunities for using ICT means that pupils' abilities in research and independent learning are not developed as fully as they might be.

153. The teaching of geography is good, with some very good features. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and have very high expectations of their pupils. Their management of pupils is very good as is the use of time and resources. Although teachers plan their lessons very carefully, sometimes, though the content is very clear, the actual learning objectives are not specific enough. Pupils are very interested and keen to succeed. During their time in school, they have acquired enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject, together with the skills to work independently. Pupils of all abilities learn well, producing a good volume and quality of work.
154. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, giving constructive comments for improvement, but there is insufficient feedback to tell pupils what National Curriculum level or GCSE grade they are at, and precisely what it is that they have to do to improve.
155. Leadership and management of the subject are good overall. Following a period of instability in staffing, the new and temporary staff have a good capacity and shared commitment to succeed. There is a clear direction in new initiatives and developments. However, planning does not yet make full use of assessment information, and targets for attainment are not specific enough. At present, teaching is insufficiently monitored. Through its study of other lands and cultures, geography makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The accommodation for the subject is good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' quality of learning. Pupils' learning benefits from a good range of books and video materials available, but there is insufficient equipment for fieldwork, little software to support the development of ICT, and too few aerial and satellite photographs. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour
- A well-thought-out curriculum that includes very good extracurricular opportunities
- Good opportunities to develop literacy skills

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results
- Planning to meet pupils' differing needs
- The use of assessment data to guide planning

156. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were above average in 2002. Evidence from the inspection indicates that these assessments were an overestimate. The work of pupils currently in Year 9 is average. The great majority knows the main changes that took place during the periods that they study. For example, they are able to identify changes in agriculture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and understand how these were linked to the economic progress of Britain. They can identify and explain the role of significant individuals in events, such as that of James Brindley on the development of canals.
157. GCSE results were average in 2001. The A* to C results were below average, but all who entered gained at least a G grade, which is above the average for all schools. Most pupils gained lower grades in history than in their other subjects. In 2002, the proportions of pupils

gaining both A* to C and A* to G were lower than in the previous year. The department has investigated the reasons why the performance of pupils in the GCSE examination is lower than in their other subjects and does not reflect the standards they attain in their course work. This has led to a recent change of syllabus. All current students are following this new syllabus. The standards of pupils currently in Year 11 are average. Overall, pupils have a sound level of knowledge. For example, they outline the peace treaties at the end of the First World War, generally accurately, although a few pupils are not secure in linking specific measures with the conferences at which they were agreed. Most reach and justify valid conclusions about how fair the treaties were. Higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of how national perspectives influence how the evidence is judged.

158. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They enter the school with average standards and maintain these in all years. The achievement of those with special educational needs is in line with that of other pupils. Although they are not usually provided with different work or materials, they benefit from support from teachers who are familiar with their individual plans and targets. Higher-attaining pupils also achieve satisfactorily, responding well to the challenges of the work they tackle. Pupils whose first language is not English usually succeed well both in class discussions and written work.
159. Attitudes are generally good in lessons and behaviour is very good. Pupils are willing to answer questions and usually work quietly, with good concentration and pace. In a few lessons, however, they find it difficult to keep this up for the full lesson, so that they become talkative and concentration declines during the closing stages.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, effective questioning allows pupils to recall and reinforce their earlier learning. Teachers ensure all are involved in discussions by maintaining a balance between encouraging volunteers and directing questions at more reticent pupils. They help pupils to understand historical events and periods by clearly explaining key features and ideas. In Years 10 and 11, teachers provide good advice on how pupils can effectively use their knowledge and understanding to answer examination questions. Some lessons are satisfactory, but with scope for improvement. In these lessons, teachers tend to take answers and discussion points only from volunteers, so that some pupils are not fully involved. They do not clearly indicate when it is necessary to listen, so that some pupils continue with their individual work, therefore missing some important points. In the small number of lessons in which pupils' concentration and effort lapse, teachers' expectations are not high enough. Overall, work is inadequately planned to meet the varying needs of all levels of attainment within a class. Teachers compensated to some extent by providing individual support, based on good awareness of pupils' needs. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, but pupils are not fully challenged and extended.
161. History provides good opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy skills. In Years 7 to 9, they compile a glossary for each topic. In most lessons, teachers ensure that key terms are understood. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils' familiarity with key terms was a significant factor in the good standard of their written work about the League of Nations. Pupils have good opportunities to write at length, particularly in essays in Years 10 and 11. Activities in which numeracy skills are practised are usually satisfactory, for example when Year 7 pupils make charts to show imports and exports in Ancient Rome. However, opportunities for developing numeracy are not systematically included in the scheme of work. Opportunities to use computers have improved since the last inspection, and they are now satisfactory. Pupils sometimes word-process their work, or use CD ROMS, and teachers recommend useful Internet sites.

162. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Although GCSE results were below average in 2002, they have usually been average in recent years. This compares with results that were well below average in the year of the last inspection. Planning for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory, although the department is beginning to consider these pupils more in planning. The use of assessment information to help individual pupils has improved, but results are inadequately used to identify improvements to the curriculum.
163. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is well thought out and allows scope for teachers to adapt lessons creatively. There is a very strong commitment to extracurricular activities, with a very good programme of field visits and opportunities to take part in lunchtime workshops.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

However, the use of ICT in other subjects is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Attainment is in line with national expectations
- Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn
- Teachers plan systematically and share resources well
- Increased resources have made a good impact on learning

Areas for improvement

- The range of resources to meet individual pupils' needs
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the full range of required skills, including control technology and computer-aided design and manufacture
- Assessment procedures so that they become more constructive and are linked to National Curriculum requirements
- The use of computers in other subjects across the curriculum to comply with statutory requirements

164. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations. Teacher assessment of students' at the end of Year 9 suggests standards well above the national average. This however, did not match the average standard of work seen during the inspection and it is therefore an overestimate. Achievement is satisfactory when compared to pupil' attainment when they join the school. By the end of Year 9, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, master a good range of basic computer skills. In specialist ICT lessons, pupils use desktop publishing and databases, and process and present information using spreadsheets. In addition, they use a range of electronic resources, such as scanners and digital cameras. They use the Internet for research, but pupils do not have a school e-mail account, and work in this area is restricted. In Year 9, they create their own web pages. Specialist teachers have good knowledge of the subject and they structure the lessons well to ensure that basic skills are covered in all years. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow a structured scheme which provides fewer opportunities for more independent and open-ended work through individual projects. Lower-attaining pupils cover a good range of basic skills with good

support from teachers in lessons. Recent staffing difficulties have resulted in some repetition of work during Years 7 to 9. In the work seen during the inspection, tasks do not always match the specific needs of individual pupils and particularly those with special educational needs.

165. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work towards a qualification in key skills. Results in 2001 were broadly in line with the national average. Results were similar in 2002. Achievement overall is satisfactory, and current standards in Year 11 are in line with course expectations. Coursework folders contain evidence of a good range of ICT skills. Pupils increase their skills in the use of databases, desktop publishing, and spreadsheets to process and present data. Pupils use electronic resources such as scanners, digital cameras and use the Internet to gather information and present this as part of their coursework. When questioned, pupils speak confidently and explain the work and processes they use with accuracy. Their knowledge of technical terms and processes is good, and they use a wider range of vocabulary to describe their work. Work folders show evidence that pupils follow the examination requirements well and marking is linked closely to the examination mark scheme. However, a significant minority of pupils struggle with the basic processes and are often confused about what they have to do.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and pupils feel confident when they are guided with their work. Teachers plan and prepare work well and set clear learning goals. This gives the pupils the opportunity to work through tasks systematically, which leads to structured learning. In the main, pupils follow a commercially-prepared scheme. However, teachers are now beginning to include tasks where pupils can use their own initiative. For these tasks, teachers use worksheets well to guide pupils through the work. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher carefully guided pupils using a structured worksheet to evaluate various aspects of their project. Pupils used the worksheet well to structure their evaluation of the work and then used the information as a basis for report writing. However, there is inconsistency in the approach of teachers across the subject. As a result, pupils do not always get the support they need. The planning of individual lessons is satisfactory, but schemes of work provide insufficient guidance for teachers on important aspects, such as the need to plan full coverage of the National Curriculum, how to support pupils with special educational needs, and the marking and assessment of work. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and include them all effectively in learning activities. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good.
167. The use of ICT in other subjects across the curriculum is not fully developed and pupils are not receiving their full entitlement. ICT is not used in mathematics. A set of graphic calculators has been bought, but it is not yet in use. In design and technology, the department lacks essential resources to provide pupils with experience in computer-aided control, design and manufacture. This is an essential part of the subject. ICT is also underdeveloped in geography and physical education. Planning the use of ICT in schemes of work in other subjects remains inconsistent. In the work of pupils seen by inspectors during the inspection, there were some good uses of ICT, for example in history, where pupils used desktop publishing, CD ROMs, and recommended websites to research their work. In English, pupils used desktop publishing to produce a range of writing, including designing posters and using the Internet to find information. In science, there are opportunities for the use of ICT and pupils used sensors to log data. Although the department had limited resources to deliver essential parts of the curriculum, there was good use of ICT by pupils preparing examination course work. There was evidence of the use of spreadsheets, desktop publishing, scanners and digital cameras and the Internet for research. The digital camera is used in physical education. Pupils used desktop publishing, CD ROMs and the Internet effectively in religious education for researching and presenting work. Pupils with special educational needs use ICT well to support their learning. They use laptop computers in the department and specialist computer software to develop their reading and comprehension skills.

168. The day-to-day management of ICT is satisfactory. Planning documents and schemes of work are up to date, although guidance for teachers in specialist ICT lessons is insufficient to enable them to match the work closely to the specific requirements of pupils with special educational needs. The school has invested effectively in a good range of resources and the ratio of pupils per computer is 6:1, which is better than the national average. However, management of the subject school-wide is unsatisfactory. The network manager provides good support for management of the system. Improvement since the last report is unsatisfactory overall, but satisfactory improvement has been achieved in timetabled ICT lessons.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Improved results in Year 9 teacher assessments and GCSE examinations
- Good teaching and learning
- Teachers' consistent use of French and German in the classroom to promote the development of pupils' listening skills, particularly in Years 7 to 9
- Close adherence to systematic schemes of work ensuring that pupils work with increasing competence in listening, reading and writing in Years 10 and 11
- Courses tailored to pupils' abilities and interests that contribute to improved results

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for students to use languages creatively and independently in oral work
- The use of ICT
- Assessment procedures that are related to the raising of standards

169. Pupils' results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have been above the national average since 1999, although there was a slight dip in the results for 2002. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.
170. In work seen during the inspection, the standard attained by pupils in Year 9 is average. Pupils achieve well in French. Higher-attaining pupils achieve a good level of accuracy when giving opinions and using the future tense and simple forms of the conditional tense to write and talk about topics such as 'My ideal town'. Middle-attaining pupils are beginning to adjust to the increased complexity of vocabulary and structures this term. Lower-attaining pupils have sufficient knowledge to enable them to communicate meaning in exercises when close guidance is provided. Although the curriculum effectively opens up choice for all pupils, the limited time available for pupils learning two foreign languages restricts their attainment. This is particularly noticeable in the work of the German groups in Year 9, who started their courses only the previous year due to staffing difficulties. Pupils achieve well in German, although standards are below average.
171. Pupils' results in both GCSE French and GCSE German in the full and short course examinations were well above the national average in 2001. In French, pupils' results in the full course were slightly below what they gained in other subjects; in German they were just above. Although there was a slight dip in pupils' results in both languages in the combined figures for 2002, results remain above national averages.

172. Work seen during the inspection was limited, as pupils taking French in Year 11 were engaged in course work, and were not being actively taught. The scrutiny of work indicated that standards are above average in both languages. Higher-attaining pupils write extensively and accurately on a wide range of subjects, for example 'keep fit' and 'healthy eating', using a variety of past-tense verbs. Middle-attaining pupils cover the same work and communicate meaning effectively, although they sometimes confuse the tenses. Lower-attaining pupils write short sentences, using examples as guidance. Setting enables pupils of all abilities to succeed by allowing the top sets to work at a faster pace with more challenging textbooks, while the lower sets can concentrate on a smaller body of work with their own textbook. Worksheets to help pupils consolidate their speaking skills are well matched to the needs of all pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are generally well supported. Pupils' overall achievement in both languages is good.
173. Teaching is good, overall, in all years, and ranged from very good to one lesson where it was unsatisfactory. The best teaching was characterised by lively presentation, with language skills practised in a variety of ways. Activities of increasing difficulty are carefully planned and work is well matched to the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Occasionally pupils were inadequately prepared for a listening or speaking activity, which reduced their confidence and the effectiveness of their learning. The development of listening skills is a strength of the faculty and teachers use the target language whenever possible. The teachers feel secure working to schemes of work in both French and German that systematically develop pupils' listening and writing skills. In addition, carefully-selected authentic extracts in French and German develop pupils' reading skills in Years 10 and 11. However, insufficient planned opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking skills independently and creatively to consolidate the knowledge they gain in the classroom.
174. Learning is good overall, and in the best lessons it is very good. Effective teaching methods ensure a high level of concentration and participation. For example, in a Year 7 French class, the teacher used a colleague very successfully to act out dialogue for a listening exercise. Similarly, in a Year 7 German lesson, the teacher silently mouthed the words for pets, inviting pupils to guess what she was saying. In such lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to show what they can do. They are secure in their learning, because they methodically develop their understanding and show good powers of retention at the end of the lesson. In most lessons, relationships are very good and pupils respond well to challenging teaching and the frequent encouragement given. Pupils are very considerate of each other and, by settling quickly to all activities, they help to establish and maintain a brisk pace.
175. Leadership and management are good. The head of the faculty provides a very good model for teaching, and provides a good level of support for less experienced colleagues. An improvement in examination results has been achieved and good standards of teaching and learning maintained at a time of frequent changes in staffing. Monitoring of marking, however, remains an issue for development as the recording of marks is haphazard. Homework is regularly marked but marking is often uninformative. Assessment is insufficiently related to National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria to enable pupils to know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
176. The faculty organises a regular programme of trips abroad and the pupils are encouraged to participate in exchange programmes run by the local education authority. Teachers use ICT effectively to create attractive worksheets. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use computers in lessons. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching in all years
- High expectations that are made clear to pupils
- Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for
- Thorough and interesting schemes of work and very good lesson planning
- Good range of extracurricular activities

Area for improvement

- Planned assessment procedures are not fully implemented

177. Pupils join the school with skills that are average in music. Teacher assessments in 2002 indicated that standards are above average at the end of Year 9. This assessment was confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. Pupils achieve very well. In Years 7 to 9, pupils sing well, sometimes solo, frequently together in small groups or as a whole class. They show good listening skills, paying careful attention to each other's performances and compositions as well as to recorded music. Pupils' instrumental performing skills are good. Composing skills are slightly above expectation in Years 7 and 8 and average in Year 9. Pupils are familiar with a good range of technical terms and use them accurately.
178. Numbers of pupils taking GCSE music are comparatively small, and results have varied considerably since the last inspection in line with the abilities of the pupils. Results remained below the national average in 2002, but are improving. Standards vary amongst the pupils in Year 11, but Year 10 pupils are producing above average work overall, particularly in composing and performing. Overall, pupils achieve very well. Pupils who choose singing as their practical option develop their skills well and improvise confidently with or without accompaniment. Compositions are in line with expectations and pupils understand and use a good range of musical styles. Pupils accurately use technical vocabulary to describe and evaluate their practical work. Pupil's response to music is very good. They work with concentration and listen attentively to each other's performances. They show responsibility when using resources and settle down quickly to work individually and in groups.
179. Teaching is very good with some excellent features. Key strengths are teachers' very good subject expertise and good classroom management and high expectations of pupils. Lessons are well planned with a good range of activities to maintain the pace and stimulate pupils' interest. This enables pupils to learn very well. There is a good mixture of whole-class, small-group and solo activity, and all pupils are expected to make evaluative comments on the music played, sung or composed by others. Singing is a strength and considerable attention is given to the building of confidence by creating opportunities for solo and small-group performances with the class as audience. In instrumental work, pupils are constantly encouraged and given good advice on what makes a good performance. Tasks are matched to pupils' abilities so that pupils of all levels of attainment are challenged appropriately, including those who are gifted and talented. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the teacher and classmates, and often produce work in line with others in the class.
180. The subject is very well led and managed. Schemes of work are thorough and fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum and the examination board. They have clear aims and objectives and provide pupils with a good range of musical experiences. A good new

assessment scheme has been introduced which covers all areas of the music curriculum, but the scheme is presently only partly implemented.

181. Seventy pupils take instrumental lessons, which is a considerable increase since the last inspection. The range of instruments taught is good. Some pupils take advantage of opportunities outside school to further their interests, for example at the Hillingdon Music Centre.
182. Extracurricular opportunities are very good, ranging from a string group to school productions. At the time of the inspection, performances were taking place of 'Guys and Dolls'. Seventy pupils were involved and the performance standard was very good, in spite of the lack of a stage in the small school hall. School productions are key events in the plans of the developing expressive arts faculty; very good collaboration between dance, drama and music has enabled the school to build a good reputation for stage performances.
183. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory for teaching. The lack of soundproofing between the rooms creates some sound interference, but this has a minimal effect on pupils' learning. Access to ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Pupils use mini-disks for recordings and good quality keyboards. Provision of computers is limited. Only two have suitable software for use by GCSE pupils, and one of these doubles as an office computer.
184. The department has ambitious plans for expanding provision for expressive arts. The music department has a good capacity for further development. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- A good proportion of pupils achieve at the nationally expected levels and above in gymnastics and dance because of very good teaching
- Very good relationships between pupils and teachers
- The enthusiasm and commitment of teachers that motivate the pupils to work hard
- A very good range of extracurricular opportunities that cater for all pupils to take part and provide good opportunities for the gifted and talented to pursue excellence

Areas for improvement

- Assessment, by relating pupils' achievements in different sports to National Curriculum levels
- Use of assessment data at the end of Year 9 to predict GCSE results
- Monitoring of overall provision and longer-term planning

185. Pupils join the school with physical skills which are average. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that fewer pupils were achieving National Curriculum Level 5 and above than was the case nationally. In lessons observed, pupils' achievement was above average, and teacher assessments were an underestimate.
186. The standard attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 is average. Notable above-average attainment was seen in dance and competitive gymnastics. Pupils who excel in different sports

are encouraged and supported to pursue excellence, both in school and with sporting organisations in the community. Throughout the key stage, the standards attained in dance are above average overall, as is pupils' general level of fitness, as a result of the comprehensive fitness programme which runs as a specific module from Year 8 onwards.

187. GCSE in physical education has been introduced since the last inspection. Results in 2002 were for the first cohort of pupils from the school. They were above the national average for similar schools with 69 per cent of pupils gaining A* to C grades, as opposed to 54 per cent nationally. Since the number entered was relatively small, comparisons with national averages are of little significance. Standards of attainment overall in this key stage are at nationally expected levels, and this has been maintained since the last inspection. Overall standards in badminton are below average, where some pupils had difficulty in judging the flight of the shuttlecock. In gymnastics and dance, a high proportion of pupils achieve at an above-average level, and perform sophisticated group routines. GCSE results in dance were disappointing in 2002 and were well below those achieved in 2001. Results reflected the nature of the group rather than deficiencies in teaching, all of which was very good during the inspection. Standards are higher in the present Year 11.
188. The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 4 is generally good, and often very good. In both physical education and dance, extended tasks were given to higher-attaining pupils, while lower-attaining pupils carried out simplified tasks, were given longer practice times and more individual help. As a result, all pupils were challenged appropriately and achieved similarly well in relation to their abilities. Gifted and talented performers and those with special educational need are identified so that each pupil could be challenged appropriately. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
189. On the whole, pupils are keen and enthusiastic in their physical education lessons. They generally concentrate well and work hard throughout the lesson, well demonstrated in strenuous fitness sessions in Years 9 and 11. In dance and in gymnastics, all classes seen worked very well together in groups to complete the tasks given to them to create and perform routines and sequences, and this willingness to work hard is a key factor in the overall good achievement seen in this subject.
190. Teaching in physical education was good overall in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. In dance, it was very good in both key stages. Pupils achieve well in their lessons because of well-planned activities which progressively enable them to acquire and consolidate new skills. In netball, the teacher helped pupils with differing levels of competence to consolidate their skills by setting tasks of varying difficulty to different groups. The better-co-ordinated and skilful pupils were therefore challenged equally with lower-attaining pupils and all achieved well.
191. This good and very good teaching led to learning that was similarly good and very good. The only unsatisfactory learning resulted from teaching which did not follow a logical progression. This was identified in the last report in one activity and has not yet been fully remedied. Policies for the inclusion of literacy and numeracy are in place and many examples of them were seen in practice. Literacy is particularly well developed through physical education. Pupils in both key stages are constantly helped to extend their vocabulary in relation to different sports. Their understanding of words was frequently challenged. In the theoretical aspects of the GCSE syllabus, pupils were required to read aloud, their comprehension of passages was checked, and they were encouraged to listen to each other's views and articulate their own. Other cross-curricular themes such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development and citizenship were clearly in evidence. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils are a strength of this department and teachers' expectations are generally high. A very good range of extracurricular activities extends opportunities for all pupils to take part in exercise and also caters for the pursuit of excellence for gifted and talented pupils.

192. Leadership and management of the department are good. The staff handbooks for both physical education and dance are comprehensive and provide good guidance to new teachers on the policies and practices of the department. However, assessment criteria, particularly for Key Stage 3, are not yet in line with National Curriculum levels. Assessment data available is not used systematically, for example to predict future GCSE grades or as a motivating factor to encourage higher achievement, or to inform curriculum planning. The department's work and effectiveness are insufficiently monitored and provision for in-service training is inadequate. The action plan for the department is limited to short-term aims and does not indicate a sufficiently longer-term vision. The use of ICT by pupils is limited. As teachers become more proficient, they are employing computers more for handling data. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good and well matched to pupils' capabilities, which leads to very good learning
- Lessons are very well planned, with an interesting range of activities
- The very good assessment procedures are used positively to raise standards
- Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- Access to computers

193. Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly average. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. All students in Year 11 take the short course GCSE and, for the last two years, results have been well above national averages. In 2002, 43 per cent of students gained A* or A grades and 76 per cent gained A* to C grades. Pupils achieve very well throughout the subject.
194. In Years 7 to 9, pupils recognise religious symbols and know their significance, and understand religious terms. They learn important facts about Christianity and other religions, such as Judaism and Sikhism. They reflect on the connection between belief and behaviour. They have opportunities for reflection and spiritual experience, for instance through meditation in class, using music as a stimulus. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged to produce work of increasing thoughtfulness while lower-attaining pupils are helped to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of key words and concepts.
195. Current standards in Year11 are above average. By the end of Year11, pupils explain the different ways that faith groups express their beliefs. They compare and contrast Christian and Muslim marriages, and respond to a range of contemporary moral issues, relating them to their own and others' experience. Pupils of all levels of attainment are included in discussion, and their contribution valued. Higher-attaining pupils readily take the lead in developing arguments.
196. Pupils express very positive attitudes to religious education and to their teachers. They respond well to their teachers' high expectations of behaviour because they feel secure and valued.

The written work of pupils is generally of good quality, presented with care, as is the high standard of project work on display. They work purposefully in pairs or groups, gaining confidence in expressing their own views. They share their own experiences in a variety of ways, for example through art work in Year 7 and very insightful poetry in Year 9. A Year 9 class discussed the sanctity of life with evident understanding, using value judgements and appreciating the complex moral dilemmas.

197. Teaching is very good overall, and sometimes excellent, and this is matched by the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers adopt a good range of stimulating teaching methods and are very skilful at questioning that encourages the pupils to think further and deeper than they intended. Visual and musical aids are used to motivate and interest the pupils, as well as games, for instance the 'Days of Creation' dice game which succeeded in getting a Year 7 class to memorise their sequence and significance. The game helped pupils to understand reasons for evil in a world that Christians believe was created by God.
198. The very good assessment procedures combine pupils' own self evaluation and the teachers' judgements. Every pupil knows her level of attainment and what she needs to do to improve. Assessment has made a strong impact on learning. Pupils take pride in their work, want to do better and meet the expectations of their teacher. This was evident in their very ready response and participation in class discussions.
199. Pupils' learning is very good. Pupils respond to teachers' constant challenging by providing progressively fuller answers, orally and in their writing. The volume and presentation of written work are good. Pupils over the whole range of attainment achieve very well because work is well matched to their capabilities. Worksheets are modified for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils received carefully-targeted extra help in class, which enabled them to take part fully in all aspects of the work, including discussion. Higher-attaining pupils especially in Years 10 and 11 are constantly extended to make further intellectual efforts with the result that in the best lessons there is a sustained atmosphere of total absorption.
200. Religious education makes a good contribution to literacy through written work, discussion and the use of key words, which are also displayed in the classroom. Numeracy is effectively developed through pie charts and graphs dealing with percentages, for example representing proportions of people following different religions.
201. The department makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their multi-cultural awareness is clear from the understanding and sensitivity shown to Muslim pupils during the month of Ramadan, for whom the school provides a quiet room for daily prayers. The unsatisfactory provision for spiritual development noted in the last inspection has been addressed both in religious education lessons and in the assemblies.
202. Leadership and management of the department are very good and the department makes a considerable impact in the school. The head of department provides an excellent role model as a teacher. There are firm plans for developing the subject further, including establishing an A-level course.
203. Resources are generally good apart from provision for ICT. There are only two computers in the department which students can use for religious education. However, regular opportunities are provided in religious education for pupils to make use of the school's networked computers

to research and present projects and to produce attractive wall displays. A useful resource of CD ROMs is being built up. The library has a good stock of religious reference books which are used regularly by students. Community support comes through visits by the local vicar and priest and visits by pupils to different places of worship. The department runs an annual trip to Rome and Venice, which has been a significant experience for those involved. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

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

In the inspection, 15 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject

Number entered
% gaining grades A-E
% gaining grades A-B
Average point score

School
England
School
England
School
England

Mathematics

12
92
87
25
43
5.5
5.8

Chemistry

7
57
90
14
43
2.6
5.9

Biology

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

All the subjects in this area were focused on for detailed inspection.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Relationships between teachers and students are positive and supportive.
- Teachers are aware of students' strengths and weaknesses.

Areas for improvement

- Cater for the full ability range and suitably challenge the highest-attaining students.
- Expand schemes of work to provide a fuller framework for teaching and learning.
- Match courses to the needs of pupils to reduce drop out rates.
- Plan for more use of ICT and other opportunities for students' independent learning.

204. Standards in the mathematics A2-level examination in 2001 were in line with national averages, and similar in 2002. Eighty-nine per cent of students achieved a pass grade and twenty-two per cent achieved A or B grades. The A2-level results have remained in line with national averages over the past three years although the number of students entered has fallen. On the basis of the students' GCSE results in Year 11, achievement in A2-level mathematics is in line with expectations. At the end of Year 12, students enter for the AS-level mathematics examination. Forty-six per cent of the students achieved a pass grade but no students achieved the A or B grades. Drop out rates are high and, in 2002, no students continued with mathematics into Year 13. The department also offers a GCSE resit class but numbers are small.
205. On the evidence of the students' work and the lessons observed, standards in Year 12 remain in line with national averages. The work is developmental and builds well on previous learning, so that by the end of Year 12, students can confidently solve quadratic equations, identify arithmetic and geometric series, differentiate from first principles and use integration to find the area under a curve. In mechanics they have a good understanding of vectors, and in statistics they have a basic knowledge of measures of location and dispersion.
206. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make good use of their knowledge of examination requirements. They enjoy positive relationships with their classes and offer their time freely to assist students outside lessons. However, too little attention is given to the spread of ability and the highest-attaining students are not sufficiently challenged with enriching and more intellectually demanding work. Too often, teachers' talk dominates the lesson so that there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills.
207. Teachers have a good awareness of their students' individual strengths and weaknesses. Marking is regular with useful, supportive comments provided and exemplar solutions offered to students. Target setting lacks rigour and target grades are sometimes inconsistent with

those set in the partner school. To date, there is insufficient monitoring of external examination data to raise issues for further investigation. Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory; they demonstrate positive attitudes and good relationships with the teacher and with one another. They appreciate the importance of mathematics but are reluctant to involve themselves in lessons and do not take enough responsibility for their learning.

208. The curriculum in the sixth form includes AS and A2-level mathematics, covering modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. The department operates an open-access policy to study mathematics in the sixth form, although high numbers of unqualified results and increasing drop out rates confirm that these courses are not appropriate for all students.
209. The provision for literacy in mathematics in the sixth form is satisfactory, although a significant number of sixth form folders are marred by poor presentation skills and work which provides little support for later revision. Reading around the subject is not sufficiently encouraged and the stock of books in the library is inadequate. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory and students confirm little use of this to support their work, other than the use of calculators.
210. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Number work is developed well for sales analysis, profit and loss accounts and to calculate elasticity of demand in business studies. Students make use of standard form in calculating the rate of arrival of photons in energy calculations, and use algebra for substitution in laws of motion for physics. Students design questionnaires and analyse these for research in media studies. They read and interpret graphs in biology and make good use of charts, tables and graphs in sociology.
211. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The heads of department have a good awareness of the strengths of the department but there are no formal lines of responsibility and no shared strategic development of mathematics in the sixth form. The response to recent curricular changes has been good but schemes of work are not provided so that links between the various strands of mathematics and opportunities to use resources such as computers are not highlighted. Staffing is adequate, accommodation is satisfactory and resources appropriate. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Teaching is effective in Year 12, and in some lessons in Year 13, with a good emphasis on practical work.
- Schemes of work are well planned as a result of good cooperation amongst staff.
- Relationships between students and most staff are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Tackle the issues of poor teaching of some classes which results in little learning and contributes to the high drop-out rates at the end of Year 12.
- Increase teaching time in Year 13.
- Monitor both teaching and learning and the organisation and quality of students' notes.

212. A2-level results in 2001 were poor with three failures from seven candidates. In 2002 results were similarly weak with three failures from eight candidates. The grade range in both years varied between 'A' and 'U'. The drop-out rate, after completion of the AS course is high. Just four candidates chose to continue with A2 studies in Year 13 this year, after fourteen took the

AS course. Many more girls than boys are currently in the Years 12 and 13 groups. Data was not available to indicate the extent of students' success, considering their GCSE results.

213. Standards of work of the current Year 12 students are above average, reflecting their attainment in GCSE examinations in 2002. Students are making good progress in their studies, achieving well. Year 13 standards, however, are below average and results in their AS examinations in 2002 indicate substantial underachievement at the end of their first year in the sixth form. The two principal causes of this inconsistent and unsatisfactory picture are weaknesses in some teaching and insufficient teaching time, with just four hours a week available in Year 13.
214. Year 12 students showed good practical skills as they reacted the halogens with various reagents and applied their knowledge of oxidation and reduction. Health and safety considerations were given a high priority. The students' notes at this early stage in the course show good coverage of the AS modules. The small Year 13 group have some good notes as well, showing appropriate coverage of most areas taught. Little monitoring of students' notes is carried out, however. The small sample of notes seen indicates that some need to be arranged in a more structured way, to enable students to revise efficiently and effectively the large body of scientific knowledge required
215. The quality of teaching observed and evidence from the students' files show that teaching in Year 12 is good. Work is planned well to meet students' needs, with practical work emphasised throughout the course. Explanations are clear, provided by staff who have a good knowledge of chemistry, although at times more in-depth questioning of understanding would be helpful during both theory and practical sessions. The different styles of the teaching team are appreciated by students and relationships are very good. This good teaching results in good learning and achievement.
216. In Year 13, four hours of teaching time is timetabled rather than the five available in Year 12. Effective teaching takes place for most of this time, which is appreciated by students. Work is interesting and relevant and reflects syllabus requirements. Some poor teaching was observed, however, where students learnt very little in the hour period. Students are pleased with their progress in Year 12 and with much that takes place in Year 13. They are very unhappy with the poor quality of some teaching, however, and the impact of this on their likely A-level results. They said that they were unable to recommend chemistry in the sixth form until the issue of some poor teaching is resolved. In lessons, students are attentive, work well together and use textbooks purposefully. They make less use of computers than is desirable, but this is an area of current focus and the development of key skills is satisfactory. In the poor lesson observed, the students had researched four areas of chemistry and had been asked to present their findings using ICT. The four topics were of very different complexity. Very low-level computer skills were used, and when the presentations were completed, earlier than expected, nothing was taught for the second half of the lesson. Students' learning in this session was poor and the hour was largely wasted.
217. Facilities for teaching A-level chemistry are good. All lessons take place in a modern well-equipped laboratory and resources are good. Up-to-date textbooks have been bought and students have access to the Internet through modern ICT facilities in the sixth form library. Sufficient homework is set by most staff, but not all, and similarly, most staff mark students' work thoroughly. Mark books indicate that most staff keep appropriate records of students' progress. Students find it unhelpful, however, when teachers predict different grades for the same module. Teachers' liaison over assessment is, therefore, unsatisfactory. Leadership and

management of the two departments that together provide the teaching, resources and direction for chemistry, are good in some ways, but unsatisfactory overall. Staff meet together only about twice a term to discuss teaching and learning of the subject. The syllabus has been carefully subdivided amongst the teaching teams. New schemes of work are being written to help ensure good coverage of requirements. The known teaching problem has not been resolved, however, and responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and action is unclear, resulting in the unsatisfactory situation in Year 13. There are too few references in the last inspection report to teaching and learning chemistry to enable a judgement to be made about progress since then.

Biology

Overall, the standard of provision in biology is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching overall and some very good for active learning.
- Students' good attitudes help them to learn well.
- A good contribution is made to the teaching of key skills.

Areas for improvement

- Raise the standard of some aspects of teaching, such as clarity of explanations by some teachers.
- Increase the time available for investigative work and organise laboratory work more efficiently.
- Improve coordination to achieve consistent standards of teaching, learning and monitoring of standards.

218. Results at AS level in 2001 were below average, which reflected the cohort's attainment on entry to the course. Results at A2-level in 2001 and 2002 were broadly average. Past results have fluctuated. Girls have generally tended to score lower than in other subjects. Boys' results have improved to above average, but numbers have been very small. Students in the current Years 12 and 13 started their courses with average GCSE results. Standards seen in lessons and samples of work meet expectations for the course. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds do at least as well as their peers.
219. Teaching was good overall. In Year 12, there was consistency in teaching method. Teaching on mitosis was very good and students responded with very good attitudes. Students' pace of learning was good and students are used to the challenge of independent work. They extract meaning from a wide range of texts and use the Internet to acquire information. Students' presentation of information on cell division, using their own models, was very good. The teacher asked challenging questions, which enabled the students to learn well. Students participated actively in lessons; almost all students gave good responses. Year 12 students were also active in learning about diffusion, osmosis and the fluid mosaic theory of the cell membrane. Their presentational skills were less good in this session but they made good use of the Internet and of digital microscopes, and their learning was good. In both Year 12 classes, teachers' subject knowledge was very good.
220. In Year 13, there were examples of very good attitudes and good learning when the students were working on nerve impulses. They were able to carry through investigations on reaction time and reach a good level in their analysis of results. The teacher was able to compensate for the students' under-developed skills in the use of ICT, and reach a successful conclusion. This lesson showed a very good promotion of independent learning and gave evidence of

attainment in biological knowledge and understanding that met A-level expectations. However, there were some unsatisfactory aspects in a Year 13 lesson. Some explanations were unclear and board work was confusing. At the same time, the organisation of the laboratory work did not enable students to complete the planned work in the time available. At present, planned investigations do not fit conveniently into a single period, and double periods are not available for these activities.

221. Literacy skills are promoted well, for example in students' presentation of argument and the skills of presenting the results of their own research in Year 12. The interactive textbooks contribute well to students' learning. The use of ICT makes a good contribution to this work and numeracy skills are developed well within the coursework.
222. Student attitudes are positive. They acknowledge that the teaching methods and activities effectively develop their understanding. They are grateful for the opportunities for independent work and group work and appreciate that their learning experiences in Year 12 contribute significantly to their good achievement in Year 13.
223. The curriculum is satisfactory, as are procedures for assessment, which assist students to achieve well. Guidance informs students of their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve further. Resources are good and have been improved recently, but equipment is not available for some aspects of ICT such as data-logging. There is sound library provision and good provision of textbooks, although students are asked to contribute to the costs of these. Staffing is good. The opportunities for independent learning provide a good challenge for higher-attaining students, and particularly for those who are gifted and talented.
224. Management of the subject is sound. Relationships between teachers and technicians are good and appropriate liaison takes place over schemes of work and resource development. However, essentially the two schools work separately on the year groups they teach and, in Year 13, separately on the modules they teach. Thus there is no consistency of style of teaching and learning, and no systematic monitoring of standards of achievement or teaching. There was no mention of biology in previous reports but standards in the sixth form teaching were good and they remain good in biology. Improvement since the last inspections has been sound.

Physics

Overall, the quality of the provision for physics is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Some teaching is good.
- Provision of books in the library is good.
- Students show conscientious attitudes to their learning.

Areas for improvement

- Plan the course more consistently and effectively in order to raise students' performance and their enjoyment of the subject.
- Share good practice to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- Plan for more consistent use of ICT and the development of key skills.
- Use value-added data when planning the curriculum.
- Ensure that resources, including textbooks, are appropriate for the course.

225. The A2-level examination results in 2001 were well below the national average. Eight students took the examination. In 2002, only 4 students entered and results were again well below the

national average. In both years, girls achieved the very small number of A grades. It is not possible to compare the performance of the 2001 students with those in previous years.

226. Standards of work of current students are below average. In Year 13, students achieve below the level their GCSE results would suggest. They achieved less than expected in an unsatisfactory lesson on the Doppler Effect, for example, because the lesson structure was not focused on their learning needs. Their written work was well presented, but was largely notes and calculations with little explanation. Year 12 students are finding the change to A-level very challenging because of inconsistencies in the teaching. In a well-structured lesson on work and energy, for example, they recalled the law of conservation of energy, stating it clearly. They discussed and applied energy formulae to problem solving. However, in an unsatisfactory lesson on gravitational potential energy, they were unable to see the purpose of their work.
227. Students' learning is unsatisfactory overall because teaching is unsatisfactory. Some very good teaching was seen, but a significant proportion was unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was characterised by good relationships and careful planning to help the students connect physical evidence to mathematical explanations. In such lessons, students were involved in their learning through discussion and opportunities to explain their work to the rest of the class. Their confidence grew as the lesson proceeded and they enjoyed the work. Unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by the teacher reading through photocopied sheets. There was little opportunity for student involvement and they were unable to ask questions because they did not understand the work. However, they were attentive and assisted the teacher when wrong equations were provided to solve a problem.
228. In their own time, students go over the work using textbooks in an attempt to follow those parts that they have not understood in lessons. Although they appreciate the good teaching, they do not find the overuse of photocopied sheets helpful and are aware that they have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Students had chosen physics because they enjoyed it at GCSE level and found it interesting. They are now very disillusioned and all those spoken to would not recommend the sixth form course. Several Year 12 students will drop physics as soon as they are able.
229. The unsatisfactory teaching and learning stem from the inconsistent way in which the course is managed and taught. One half of the course has a satisfactory scheme of work whilst the other half is a list of textbook pages. Here, opportunities for cross-curricular elements such as key skills and the use of ICT are not identified. This split approach means that the course lacks coherence and the unsatisfactory teaching has a detrimental effect on the good teaching. Teachers do, however, monitor performance through regular testing so that students feel that they know how well they are doing. There is no analysis of the mismatch between predicted and actual performance in order to improve curriculum planning. The department makes a good input into the library to provide an interesting range of books and periodicals. However, resources at departmental level are insufficient to equip a modern physics department appropriately. Students have to buy their own textbooks although the department arranges this for them so that they benefit from group discounts. References in the last inspection reports to teaching and learning physics are insufficient to enable a judgement to be made about progress since then.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

The focus was on A-level design and technology.

Overall the provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers work well together; their knowledge and understanding extend students' learning.
- Good use is made of monitoring and assessment to raise students' understanding.
- Students have very positive attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Extend students' experiences into computer-aided design and making
- Develop students' skills in applying technical knowledge and understanding when designing.

230. The school offers courses at AS and A2-level. About 15 students study the subject at AS level in Year 12 and this falls to about half in the Year 13 A-level course. Results in the 2001 examinations were above average. Results were lower in 2002, and were similar to those of 2000.
231. Standards of students currently in Years 12 and 13 meet the expectations for the course and they achieve well, over time, given their standards on starting the course. Students have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of materials and processes and use product analysis and effective research techniques to support their designing and making. However, students are not rigorous enough in their application of technical knowledge and understanding when designing, and this often leads to superficial annotation and underdeveloped ideas. Students have a clear appreciation of the implications of social, moral and cultural considerations on product design and a sound understanding of the wider implications of design decisions. Their work is characterised by a thorough and detailed approach to all aspects of study; they work hard and take great care in their presentation. This is apparent in the Year 12 product study, where thorough analysis of an existing product leads to improved design for a target market. Students use a good variety of presentation styles in their work, and ideas are clearly annotated against specified criteria. The use of ICT is satisfactory and leads to good standards of presentation. However, computer-aided design and manufacturing are not being developed which is a weakness in the provision.
232. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen was satisfactory, as was students' learning. Lessons were well planned, with a brisk pace and focused teaching. The teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and respond well to students' queries, drawing on a wide range of examples to support learning. The quality of teacher-led discussions is good; they are focused and relevant. However, some lessons are too dominated by the teacher, which limits students' opportunities to achieve independently. Teachers use assessment and monitoring procedures well. Work is assiduously marked against examination board criteria and targets are set for individuals. However, teachers' expectations do not focus sufficiently on students applying their technical knowledge in enough depth while designing.
233. Students' attitudes to the subject are very positive. They are interested in their lessons; concentrate well and work hard. Students are polite and demonstrate a due regard for health and safety.
234. The leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. A strength is the way the teachers work together and this has meant, for example, that there is clear continuity and progression from the Year 12 course into Year 13. The new A-level in product design has

been successfully introduced, and, overall, the department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

235. Business studies and economics were focus subjects, but business AVCE and GNVQ intermediate business courses were sampled. There were no results in business AVCE in 2002. In the one lesson observed, students worked well independently and showed positive attitudes. The teacher had good subject knowledge and provided very good support for lower-attaining students. Students understood the principles of book-keeping and used spreadsheets to display and analyse financial data. In GNVQ intermediate business, results have been good over recent years. In the very good lesson seen, students applied motivation theories to the workplace. They achieved very well, and their attainment was above the course expectation at this stage.

Business studies

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

Strengths

- The students do well in examinations and their achievement is good.
- The subject is well led and effectively managed.
- The good teaching supports students' learning well and enables them to build up their knowledge and understanding effectively.
- Teachers know the students well and relationships are very good.

Area for improvement

- Increase opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their learning, particularly higher-attaining students.

236. A2-level results in 2001 were in line with the national average. Results for 2002 show improved average point scores, with a higher proportion of students gaining grades A and B. There has been a marked improvement in results since the last report. Students do better in business studies than most other subjects. Overall, male and female students do equally well.
237. The standards of work of current students are in line with course expectations. When their prior learning is considered, Year 13 students achieve well. In the lessons seen, their learning was good as a result of the high expectations of the teaching and the challenging activities they undertook. For example, students accurately applied their knowledge and understanding of time series analysis in a variety of business contexts to make predictions of sales. Students were given much support, and this encouraged the lower-attaining students and was particularly helpful for those who had missed work. However, the majority of students take too little responsibility for their learning.
238. Year 12 students achieve well. They recall and apply knowledge effectively. In a lesson on laws and their impact on business, they showed a good understanding of technical language in describing how legislation affected, for example, recruitment, wages and conditions. The well-organised teaching, with clear learning objectives, facilitates the transition from GCSE to advanced study. Students' numerical and literacy skills are equal to the demands of the course. Work in lessons and regular homework provide many opportunities for developing key skills although students' files include very few examples of work done using ICT. The proportion of students completing the AS course and continuing at A2-level is high.

239. Students learn well as a result of the good teaching. Comprehensive schemes of work support the thorough planning of lessons. Time is carefully organised and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. The teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject result in interesting expositions and clear explanations. Therefore, students achieve a sound understanding of important ideas and are able to respond confidently when questioning is used to consolidate their learning. Students appreciate the debates they take part in, for example on 'The Third Runway'.
240. Students build well upon existing knowledge to achieve a broader and deeper understanding as a result of teachers' careful planning. Students' previously completed work shows that an interesting range of teaching methods and activities is used. They have good opportunities to work with others. For example, Year 13 students worked very well in pairs to analyse and interpret data. Higher-attaining students show a willingness to work independently, though they are not always given sufficient opportunity to do so. Students' assignments are marked thoroughly, the annotations providing useful information and advice as to how standards might be improved.
241. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive. They find the course rewarding and, in discussion, indicated that they enjoyed their learning experiences. Relationships between teachers and students and within groups are strong. Accommodation and resources are good. The students' learning is enriched through a programme of well-chosen visits and other activities. For example, students are enthusiastic about their involvement in the 'Proshare' competition, which gives them a further opportunity to practise their ICT skills.
242. The leadership and management of the department are good. Strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained and standards have risen. However, the need to develop independent learning remains. The improvement since the last report has been satisfactory.

Economics

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well, with good results in 2002.
- Teachers maintain good relationships with students who respond with interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and experience.

Areas for improvement

- Make greater use of ICT to enrich learning.
- Develop opportunities for students' independent learning.

243. A-level results in 2001 were below average. Results in 2002 were above the national average for the previous year. Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
244. Students in Year 12 were seen working in line with course expectations at the time of the inspection. They were successfully building on their knowledge of supply and demand factors in a market economy. Presented with the new concept and definition of 'elasticity of demand', they developed their understanding well to work out new prices in response to changed demands.

245. Standards of work of current students in Year 13 are also in line with course expectations. Students build well on their achievements of last year's AS study. In one lesson, students showed a good understanding of price discrimination and consolidated this understanding well by applying it to case studies.
246. Teaching is good. Teachers have confident subject knowledge. They plan in detail, structuring learning activities well to achieve worthwhile learning outcomes. In a good Year 13 lesson observed, well-paced teaching built progressively on past learning, new knowledge and the application of that to new situations. Through working on the case studies, the students showed their increased understanding of how companies operate price discrimination through the planned segmenting of the market. Teaching that was less successful tended to be dominated by the teacher and failed to engage the students appropriately. The context and objectives of the subsequent tasks set were not clearly established, and so the students achieved less than they might have. The marking and assessment of students' work are good, and result in students receiving constructive advice on how they may raise the standard of their work further. Overall, all students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well.
247. Students use websites well for research and information, but in general they do not use computers enough to enrich and extend their learning. Good use is made of journal and broadsheet articles, and standard examination board revision texts, but, during the inspection, pupils made little use of the library to develop their independent learning. The department is well managed. The good quality of teaching and learning is a result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and experience, and students' interest and enthusiasm. There are too few references in the last inspection report to economics to enable a judgement to be made about the progress since that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- A-2 level results are improving to a good standard.
- Teachers are committed and offer good guidance to support students' coursework.
- Students show good attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement

- Make much greater use of assessment data to evaluate effectiveness and inform curriculum planning.
- Increase numbers continuing with the course to A-2 level.
- Analyse assessment data better to evaluate progress and identify areas for improvement.

248. A-2 level results in 2001 were in line with the national average, as they had been in the previous year. All pupils in the past three years have gained a pass but no student gained an A or B grade. Results in 2002, for which there are no comparators yet, showed a significant improvement from a much larger group of students. In 2002, nearly a quarter of students gained these higher grades. Most students remain on the course for the duration of the year but not all continue with the subject to A-2 level. In 2001, nearly seven out of every ten students continued from the first into the second year of the course. In 2002, more than half

the students did not continue onto the second year of the course, having failed to reach the school's recommendation of at least a grade D in AS-level.

249. The standard of work of students currently in Years 12 and 13 is average for this stage of the course. Students in Year 12 are learning how to develop their project work and how to use spreadsheets. Those in Year 13 are consolidating their understanding of databases and using this in their extended project. Their recorded work shows a developing understanding of the impact of this technology in the workplace and the potential benefits of its use. Students' achievement at this stage in their course is satisfactory.
250. Teaching and subsequent learning are satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge helps them to give students clear explanations of issues and examination requirements. Good guidance during lessons helps students to understand what is required for the completion of a good project and therefore how they will improve their standards. During the course of their practical work they receive any necessary support to enable them to achieve well. Students are expected to develop their understanding of software packages by working, at their own rate, through a workbook. While this is effective practice for many students, a few in each year are struggling and would benefit from some specific teaching of techniques. Students feel that they are now well supported, following changes in staffing. Those in Year 13 particularly enjoy being involved in discussion on topics about which they have had the opportunity to do some earlier research. They therefore learn more effectively.
251. Students' attitudes to learning are good. They complete the necessary background work in finding, interviewing and liaising with the end user of their practical project. They work well in lessons, getting on with their own individual work. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and from both feeder schools. They get on well together.
252. Leadership and management of the course are satisfactory. The two teachers work closely and well together and are beginning to make a range of resources, to complement the text and library resources, available to students via the school's Intranet. Their differing experiences complement each other, to the benefit of students. However, there is insufficient analysis of data to identify strengths and weaknesses and to guide curriculum planning. There has been very little analysis of available assessment data either to evaluate how good the 2002 A2-level results were in relation to students' attainment at the beginning of the course, or to find out why such a high proportion of Year 12 students in 2002 only gained an E grade or were ungraded. The accommodation for teaching the course is good, with high quality software available on the computers in the main room. This is not the case in other rooms, which have to be used on occasions. However, the main teaching room has no board or facility to provide a large view of a computer screen, which restricts teaching because teachers cannot support their theory work, or demonstrate computer examples to class groups. There were too few references in the last inspection report to ICT to enable a judgement to be made about progress since then.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

253. Drama was the focus subject, but media studies, art and physical education were sampled. Most students who take media studies achieve a pass grade and achieve well in relation to their starting points. One Year 12 lesson was observed. Students discussed with confidence the different treatment of celebrities in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. Students were attentive and responsive, and the teacher's very good subject knowledge and brisk questioning allowed good progress to be made. In art, all students passed in 2002, with a pattern of results

similar to the spread of grades reported nationally in the previous year. In the one lesson observed, good monitoring and feedback supported students' own strong motivation and capacity for working independently, so that individual work on their contextual studies developed well. In AS-level physical education, teachers use a variety of good teaching methods including PowerPoint presentations. Students are regularly involved in research, for example into the origins of various sports and sporting activities. They understand how class, gender, opportunity for leisure and facilities and resources available, affect the development of sport. Students achieve well in lessons because of the teacher's high expectations.

Drama

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

- **Strengths**

- Very good teaching is based on strategies that motivate students to perform well.
- Challenging opportunities are provided for gifted and talented students to succeed.
- Collaboration between students is very good.

-

- **Area for improvement**

- Increase opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and to work independently.

254. Numbers attracted to study drama each year vary. Despite a hundred per cent pass rate for girls in GCSE drama in 2000, there were no subsequent entries at A2-level in 2002. From a lower pass rate at GCSE in 1999, five students went through to A2-level in 2001 and nearly all passes were at higher grades, representing very good achievement. In lessons, standards are above course expectations overall. Significant strengths are in mime and movement, but there is room for improvement in vocal range and expression. The re-creation of a busy street scene by Year 13 and other episodes in the same performance, involving robotic movement and rhythmic speaking, were of a high standard. This original piece, "The Perfect Woman," had an excellent script written by a student. Others in the group added to its layers of meaning with suggestions, movement, choice of music and variety of visual and vocal expression. The whole performance was very coherently structured to convey clear messages, underscored with irony. Some activities in Year 12 were much less challenging and did not lead to such high standards. Standards in Year 12 are in line with expectation for this stage of the course.
255. Students' attitudes are satisfactory and their learning is usually very good in lessons. In Year 12, however, there is a significant amount of absence, which affects students' learning. The teacher has to monitor students more closely than is usual for this age group so that they keep up with written work; in this respect, Year 13 students are also remiss. Year 12 students are unduly dependent on teacher guidance when working and their achievement is limited by their lack of independence and confidence. What they do well is to concentrate on each other's performances and make genuinely appreciative comments. The teacher is establishing, through 'forum theatre', the way in which reciprocal learning for actor and audience arises from frank criticism. Teaching is very good. The teacher's expertise and range of strategies impress students and strongly motivate them. Appreciation of what students offer enhances their enjoyment and commitment. Clear guidelines are set by which students can achieve well. There are effective teacher-led discussions. Although students are challenged to keep up with coursework, sometimes pace and progress within the lesson is slower than it could be. Assessment takes place continuously and is used effectively to enhance students' progress.

256. The syllabus has been very well planned by the new teacher responsible for drama. The scheme of work provides challenging opportunities for all students, and particularly for those who are gifted and talented. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but changes of staff prevent firm long-term planning from taking place. The drama studio is an excellent facility and resources, such as lighting, are used well. Students make inadequate use of the very good stock of up-to-date texts in the library. The librarian is keen to meet the needs of students and to promote the use of reference materials. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography, history, sociology and psychology.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Relationships between students and teachers are good.
- Students have positive attitudes to work.

Areas for improvement

- Increase opportunities for active and independent learning by students.
- Develop greater co-operation and collaboration between teachers in managing the subject.
- Plan for greater use of ICT as an aid to learning.

257. In 2001 and 2002, students' results were well below the national average. Over recent years, students have done less well in geography than in other subjects. The numbers of students joining the course and the results achieved have fluctuated since the time of the last report and there is no discernible trend.
258. The standard of work of current Year 13 students is broadly in line with course expectations. When prior learning is taken into account, achievement is just satisfactory. In lessons seen, students made good progress where teacher expectations were high and the work was pitched at the appropriate level. This was the case, for example, when they studied the impact of tourism on the economies of less developed countries. In talking to students and looking through their files it is evident that the level of lesson content and assignments is not always sufficiently demanding. Last summer, the proportion of students who decided not to continue to study geography in Year 13 was high.
259. Year 12 students, who have recently completed work on rivers, have a limited grasp of the different processes of erosion and are unpractised in using advanced technical language. Students have too few opportunities to develop such subject skills as mapping and data analysis, or to apply and practise their ICT skills through their learning. For example, in a lesson where the objective was to identify variations within the 'Temperate West Coast Maritime' climate, opportunities for practical work were missed. The use of examination questions as homework assignments is increasing their ability to write succinct and structured paragraphs but they have less opportunity for more extended writing. Overall their achievement is unsatisfactory.
260. Teaching is satisfactory overall but the quality is variable. Teachers show good subject knowledge in their explanations. In the better lessons, students were aware of the objectives

and involved in their learning. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, this resulted in students achieving a secure understanding of the causes and impact of population change as they studied a model of demographic transition. On another occasion, when the teacher dominated the lesson, the students made notes and completed low order tasks that did little to advance their knowledge and understanding of the factors influencing climate. Students' previously completed work shows that a satisfactory range of methods and activities is used in the teaching and learning, but that practical work is limited. Students do not have enough opportunity to develop and practise the skills necessary for independent learning. Subject teachers have no agreed marking policy, and, therefore, there are inconsistencies in practice. While students' work on rivers has been marked thoroughly, with good advice as to improvement, this is not always the case.

261. Students have the numerical and literacy skills necessary to cope with the demands of the course. They are conscientious and diligent. Always attentive and courteous, they learn best when activities demand their involvement; otherwise they can lapse into passivity and mere compliance. A good learning centre has been provided though the range and number of books are limited. Students do not make enough use of this facility, which also provides access to the Internet, partly because it is not always open at breaks and lunchtime.
262. The shared responsibility for the management of the subject is ineffective. Subject teachers do not work closely enough together to bring about the necessary improvement in provision. There is too little evaluation of teaching. Geography is taught in both schools, as well as the sixth form block. This is divisive and impedes communication. For example, the syllabus has been divided between physical and human aspects, each being taught by teachers from the different schools and schemes of work are being prepared on different models. The increasingly available data, which allows targets to be set and progress monitored, is inconsistently used. There is a shared commitment to improvement, but no clear plan as to how this is to be achieved and improvement since the last report has been unsatisfactory. Important issues, including the more formal evaluation of teaching and the need for more opportunities for students to be able to show initiative, have not been resolved.

History

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Students show good attitudes in lessons and express positive views about the course.
- Marking is regular and helpful.

Areas for improvement

- Consider strategies to ensure that A-level results reflect the standards achieved during the course.
- Develop good liaison to ensure better strategic leadership.
- Plan a more balanced course to include enrichment opportunities, such as museum visits.

263. In 2001, A-level results were well below average. The 2002 results show an improvement, mainly because all students gained at least grade E. However, national averages are not yet available for comparison. The evidence from the inspection is that the standards of current students are average in both years. In Year 12, students interpret sources to identify their relevance to the events that they learn about, such as the 1923 Munich Putsch. Most can

evaluate the sources, for example making reference to their authorship when considering their reliability. In written work, most Year 13 students show expected levels of understanding of such questions as the extent to which Britain secured her objectives in the 1919 Peace Settlement, and present a coherent and valid argument about the outcomes of the American Civil War. In lessons, they show an appropriate historical objectivity in considering such questions as why Chamberlain followed a policy of appeasement towards Hitler. However, the ability of a significant minority to sustain extended spoken discussion is hampered by weaknesses in specialist vocabulary.

264. The GCSE results of students in both years indicate that they enter the sixth form course with average standards and achieve satisfactorily during the course by maintaining them. However, in previous years, they have not succeeded in translating the standards reached during the course into examination results that reflect this.
265. Students respond well during history lessons. They have a good commitment to learning, with all showing effort and concentration in their individual work. Most willingly volunteer to answer questions during lessons. In many lessons however, extended discussion is more limited. During a discussion with students, most expressed positive views, all saying that they enjoyed the course and were happy with the teaching. They find the marking of their work regular and helpful in informing them of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. They would however, like more opportunities for enrichment of the course by, for example, visiting museums and historical sites.
266. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The strong subject knowledge and understanding of teachers ensures that the subject is studied at sufficient depth and that good questioning allows students to practise making use of what they know. Teachers generally ensure that all students are involved during question and answer sessions. Written tasks usually consolidate preceding oral work well. Work often focuses on the interpretation and evaluation of historical sources, which is helpful to students in improving both their evidence skills and their understanding of the events and ideas to which the sources refer. This worked well, for example, in a Year 13 lesson in which students considered speeches by Abraham Lincoln that provided evidence about issues in the American Civil War. In some lessons, there is overestimation of what students can achieve on the basis of their prior learning and vocabulary. In these lessons, planned whole-class or small-group discussions tend to become dominated by the teacher.
267. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The only references specifically made to the sixth form in the last inspection report indicated that A-level results and standards during the course were below average. Although standards are now higher in course work, these are not yet reflected in examination results.
268. The leadership and management of the subject are shared between the teachers from each school, who each have responsibility for the sections of the course that they teach. Liaison is informal. This works adequately in respect of the day-to-day running of the courses. It is not, however, satisfactorily promoting longer-term strategic leadership. In particular, a more formalised approach is required to enable teachers from both schools to work together to identify why students perform better during the course than in examinations.

Sociology

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good, and students are able to relate their learning to topical issues.
- Students taking sociology for the first time on the A-2 level course achieve well.
- Students' attitudes are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Consolidate learning for all, and especially for lower-attaining, students.

269. A-level results were well above average in 2001. A high proportion of students gained A or B grades and both the numbers of students gaining A to B grades and those gaining A to G grades exceeded the national average. Many more girls than boys choose the subject at AS and A2-level. In 2002, results were lower and the retention rate from Year 12 into Year 13 was low. Examination results have remained close to the national average apart from 2001. Students achieve satisfactorily overall in relation to their prior attainment.
270. The attainment in the work observed in Year 12 was average and above average in Year 13. Year 12 students identify key concepts by reference to theories on class and family in contemporary society whilst discussing important moral and equality issues concerning employment. They understand the possibilities of manipulation and exploitation because of conditioning in society. Students have developed good critical skills, and they have sufficient knowledge and understanding to enable them to explore the influence of class on society. They apply this thinking to link previous learning to present day issues. Students' current achievement is satisfactory because of the challenging teaching and the stimulating materials used.
271. Year 13 students have a good understanding of theorists and different perspectives and apply these to a variety of topics, including recent events such as the aftermath of the World Trade Centre disaster. Students make well-informed hypotheses for discussion. They are competent at organising essays and understand the value of planning and research. High-attaining students answer questions well and use appropriate material linked with the requirements of the question. These students understand how to interpret statistics, analyse graphs, collect data and confirm hypotheses. Low-attaining students do not always feel secure in their knowledge and need further practice and consolidation to embed learning. Key skills are insufficiently developed, but students make good use of the Internet for research. Achievement is satisfactory for those students who have previously completed a GCSE in the subject; for those students doing sociology for the first time on the A2-level course, achievement is good.
272. The teaching of sociology is good and students learn well in lessons. Teachers skilfully question students to extend knowledge. They have a very good understanding of the subject and this enables them to tackle even sensitive topics and yet rigorously challenge students. For example, in a Year 13 lesson the teacher dealt with the social, moral and cultural implications of the role of women in religion. Students extended their understanding through undertaking their own research. Teachers give appropriate feedback on completed assignments but students do not always correct, improve or extend work by making notes to assist with revision. Marking is satisfactory, but not always closely aligned to AS and A2-level grading and teacher comments do not always indicate areas for improvement, which is especially important for low-attaining students. However, students are generally aware of both their level of achievement and their targets. Teachers take care to involve all members of the group and involve students of all levels of attainment in questioning. The meanings and definitions of technical vocabulary are emphasised. This assists all students but particularly the low-attaining students. This good teaching promotes good learning and students are keen to extend their

knowledge independently. Resources are good. Students use supplementary information from books and periodicals; they research topics from their files, books and the Internet. Useful research books are available in the main as well as the departmental library.

273. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good, leading to good exchanges of ideas and confident discussion. Students trust teachers and show initiative when exploring new issues. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, a Muslim student explained religious attitudes and dress conventions in Islam.
274. The subject is well led. Teachers are up-to-date with current developments in the subject, and are fully acquainted with examination requirements. Good systems for monitoring students' progress enable teachers to match the work to students' individual needs. There is insufficient evidence to gauge improvement since the last inspection.

Psychology

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

Strengths

- Attainment is above average and students achieve very well.
- The very good teaching uses a wide range of methods.
- Courses make a very good contribution to literacy skills and to students' spiritual and cultural education.
- A popular subject that is well regarded and enjoyed by students.

Area for improvement

- Consider ways to alleviate the workload that large classes impose on teachers.

275. A-level results in 2001 were well above average. Results at AS level in 2002 were above average, with over half of the students gaining A or B grades compared with thirty per cent nationally, and A2-level results in 2002 were higher overall than in 2001. There is no information about past trends and no evidence of differential performance between male and female students, other than that there are more females on the course.
276. The standards seen in lessons and samples of work reflect the results and students' very good achievement overall. The current Year 12 started the course with below average GCSE results, but students' work is now in line with course expectations. The current Year 13 were above average at the start of the A2 course and had made positive gains compared with their GCSE predictions. Currently standards are well above average. Students write extended critical essays of very good quality, comparing the views of different psychological schools, for example on criminal behaviour. Presentational skills are very good, as was seen in a Year 13 lesson on giftedness.
277. Teaching was very good in all lessons seen, charismatic and entertaining. The teacher plans the subject very well and knows how students learn. This was seen in two Year 12 lessons on memory, in which there was very good use of analogy, incisive pointers to key information, fast pace and high expectations. In response, student learning was very good. Sometimes a lack of technical vocabulary at the start of the course, combined with the large class size – twenty-three students – reduces participation in discussion, but it is still good, and the clarity of presentation on memory and encoding produced very good gains in knowledge and

understanding. The style of teaching promotes active learning, from which all benefit, and the students are conscious of this. Year 13 students learned very well in the lesson on giftedness. Good group discussions developed on educational policy, in which some groups showed very good insight into the disadvantages of educational labelling. The session in which students presented their research on Stevie Wonder, Albert Einstein and Beethoven to the rest of the class showed very good skills, with extensive and well-structured information, including humorous anecdotes and links with previously-learned concepts, such as social estrangement.

278. The course makes a very good contribution to wider education. Literacy skills are strongly promoted in the extended writing, active information research, extracting meaning from and summarising text, presentation of argument and the skills of presenting the results of their own research. ICT contributes effectively to this work and numeracy skills are developed well within the research methods module.
279. The course raises ethical and aesthetic issues such as the meta-problem of using psychology students as subjects, the ethics of experimentation and the cultural and social dimensions of giftedness. Thus it also makes a very good contribution to citizenship.
280. In response to the high quality of teaching, student attitudes are very positive. Even at the start of the course, they are very keen. They express pleasure at the active teaching activities, such as short-term memory chunking, which, they say, really help understanding. In the wider sense, they are grateful for the opportunities for independent work and group work, and they link their experiences in Year 12 to their current success in Year 13.
281. Assessment procedures are very good. Students of wide-ranging levels of attainment are well supported with detailed marking and clear guidance on how to improve. The independent learning constitutes very good provision for the gifted and talented and higher-attaining students in general.
282. The curriculum and assessment are very good. The schemes of work are newly-created and very good. The entire research module is available as a PowerPoint presentation. Very good case studies make specific reference to all the authorities that students need to evaluate, compare and cite. The curriculum is enriched by trips to the army, to study obedience and conformity, by revision conferences and lunchtime sessions. Clear guidance is given such that students are aware of their progress and what they need to do. In one set of work samples, such guidance led one student to progress from U grade to A grade essays over the course. The curriculum is under constant evaluation, and assessment is used to choose courses that match student needs from the many available within psychology. Resources are now good, having been much developed over the past year. Their greatest strength is teacher-produced materials, but they also include textbooks, satisfactory library provision, well-used videos and posters. Staffing has fluctuated in past years but is now very good. Accommodation is sound and well used.
283. Psychology was not mentioned in the previous reports, but improvement since 2001 has been very good.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

284. The focus of the inspection was on the A-level English language and literature course and on German. English literature was sampled. In 2001, in English literature, results were well above the national average and improved further in 2002, although national comparators are not yet

available. In the English literature lesson observed, students listened attentively to the skilful and well-constructed arguments presented to them and took careful notes. However, there were too few opportunities for sustained discussion and they became compliant so that their learning was passive rather than active.

English language and literature

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

• Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and an understanding of students' learning needs.
- The students' attitudes to study are very positive and they are interested in their work.
- Helpful and precise marking helps students identify learning targets.

Areas for improvement

- Manage courses more effectively for the longer term.
- Increase time for teachers' planning, preparation and collaborative meetings.
- Create a bank of shared resources.

285. The provision in English caters for approximately forty-seven students. Currently GCE AS and A2 courses are offered in English language and literature and English literature. GCSE is offered as a re-sit course
286. Standards achieved in AS and A-level examinations are high. In 2002 in the language and literature examinations, all students passed, and more than half gained A or B grades. No national comparisons are available yet because this is a new course examined for the first time in 2002. Students generally finish the courses they undertake.
287. The standards of work of students currently in Years 12 and 13 are above course expectations. Students achieve very well considering their qualifications on entry. Students listen attentively with a high level of concentration and make significant contributions orally in response to teachers' challenging and probing questions. High- and average-attaining students are skilful at reading and interpreting literary texts and in identifying implicit meanings. They expertly transfer these meanings from one style to another, such as from poetry into prose.
288. One group presented their transformed texts to the rest of the class explaining ways they had used specific techniques, such as figurative language, to maintain the dramatic impact of the original text. The class closely questioned them, using a high level of technical language that demonstrated their development as critical readers. Lower-attaining students have some difficulties interpreting deeper meanings in texts but are assisted by questioning from teachers that promotes their individual learning well, and by collaborative group work. One student was transferring a Victorian short story into a dramatic radio play, and members of the group were making constructive suggestions for improvement, for example to create tension and suspense. Students use the Internet for research but do not make sufficient use of computers for preparing essays and drafting work.
289. Teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent features. Teachers are experienced and have good in-depth subject knowledge. They recognise the different levels of students' attainment in their groups by good planning and thorough preparation and provide a variety of challenging tasks. However the level of their responsibilities in other curriculum areas restricts their preparation time.

290. Students' views of the subject are very positive. The relaxed atmosphere and good relationships with teachers create opportunities for collaborative learning and for them to express freely their opinions. They are enthusiastic, show pleasure in their progress and are proud of their increasing levels of skill. They enjoy the activities the teachers provide and appreciate the availability of teachers' support.
291. The management of each course is good, and teachers plan their own schemes of work carefully. However, there is no overall leadership to give an overview of the courses. The lack of strategic planning means that teachers are limited in the development of the course and have few timetabled opportunities for collaboration.
292. Staffing is satisfactory. Although cover from a supply teacher is used for one lesson every fortnight, the work is thoroughly planned and prepared by the course teacher. Teachers prepare their own resources and carry them from the main schools. There is no central bank of resources for teachers to share and the library contains inadequate resources for the new AS and A-level courses. The restricted opening hours of the sixth form library mean that students' opportunities for furthering their independent research are limited. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

German

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

Strengths

- Good results in the 2001 AS and the 2002 A2-level examinations.
- Some teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop students' language skills, especially speaking.
- Improve assessment and its use in setting targets for individual pupils.

293. Over the past four years, low numbers have been entered for AS and A-level German. There were no students at all in 1999 and 2000. Numbers were too low in 2001 and 2002 for direct comparison with national averages. Nonetheless achievement was good with the higher grades well represented amongst the results in both years.
294. At present there are no Year 13 students. The evidence from work seen shows that standards in the present Year 12 small group are below average. This largely reflects the lower prior attainment level of the students. The students' achievement is satisfactory in structured exercises, but they find it difficult to write at length or with accuracy in less controlled situations, and their performance varies across the topics. They also have difficulty in retaining the more sophisticated vocabulary and structures expected at this level for use in communicating opinions in oral work. There are some weaknesses in pronunciation and intonation. When effectively supported, they understand the gist of spoken German after a few repetitions, and can select key details. Students use the Internet for research, which enables them to widen their knowledge on the topics they are studying. Their achievement is satisfactory overall.
295. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall, and sometimes it is good. In the better-taught lessons, careful planning included effective support for the students, while they focused on tasks that developed more than one skill simultaneously. In one lesson, the teacher combined the correction of homework with the teaching and practice of phrases expressing agreement and disagreement. This enabled the students to amend and develop further the sentences they

had written for homework. Such techniques help the students to acquire and practise the language skills better. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers, on occasions, provide detailed marking with a helpful indication of how students can improve their work, but the grades given are over-optimistic in relation to the quality of the work. There is no sign that students are aware of the AS grade criteria, which would help them formulate targets for improvement.

296. Students are very co-operative and attentive in lessons. Although they lack self-confidence, they persevere and for the most part complete homework assignments very conscientiously
297. The present teaching room is located far from the faculty base. Teachers have neither access to nor storage for a good cassette-recorder near this room. This impacts adversely on students' learning, as the quality of the small portable cassette recorder is inadequate for developing higher order listening skills.
298. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Teachers are suitably qualified and have divided up the work sensibly to cover the syllabus fully. Numbers learning German in the sixth form fluctuate from year to year. This prevents firm plans from being devised to develop the subject further, and limits the number of enrichment activities, which can be organised. Improvement since the last inspection cannot be judged, as there is insufficient evidence.