

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL**

Crumpsall, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105583

Headteacher: Mr B N Levy

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 11 – 15 April 2005

Inspection number: 273685

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	801
School address:	Eaton Road Crumpsall Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M8 5DY
Telephone number:	0161 740 7248
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Rowe
Date of previous inspection:	2 November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

King David High is a voluntary aided comprehensive school catering for boys and girls of the Jewish community of Greater Manchester. There are 796 pupils in the school. This figure includes 193 students within the sixth form. The school is smaller in size than the average comprehensive school. There are more girls than boys in all years except in Year 9. Most pupils are white but 16 pupils are from ethnic minorities. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is low and there is only one pupil at the early stages of learning the English language. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average. There are nine pupils with statements of special educational needs. Most pupils at the age of 16 continue in full-time education. The school caters for the full ability range but on average the attainment on entry is well above the national average. Few pupils join the school other than at the usual time of admission. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national figure. Most pupils and students live in the wider Manchester area but the school serves Jewish children from a wide geographical area including pupils who travel daily from Liverpool and Leeds. The school has increased significantly in size since the time of the last inspection, when there were 552 pupils in the school.

The school is bidding to become a specialist school in mathematics and computing and gained a Schools' Achievement Award in 2001. The school is active in promoting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, is involved in Manchester's Excellence in Cities programme and works with other local schools in implementing the Leadership Incentive Grant.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Lead inspector	
31758	Ted Tipper	Lay inspector	
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Geography Geography (sixth form)
32330	Ann Behan	Team inspector	Mathematics Mathematics (sixth form)
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	English as an additional language Modern foreign languages European and community languages
25743	Peter Butler	Team inspector	Science Chemistry (sixth form)
35082	Andrew Carter	Team inspector	English English (sixth form)
22849	Ron Catlow	Team inspector	History History (sixth form)
18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	Citizenship Government and politics (sixth form) Hebrew
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Information and communication technology (sixth form) Psychology (sixth form)
1782	Andrew Lyons	Team inspector	Design and technology Business education (sixth form)
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design Art and design (sixth form)
31850	David Nevens	Team inspector	Music Work-related learning
15678	Jennifer Radford	Team inspector	Special educational needs Media studies (sixth form)
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**King David High is a good school with outstanding examination results.** Pupils make good progress across most subjects. Teaching and learning are good overall but are very good in the sixth form. The leadership of the school is good but aspects of management are unsatisfactory. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is very good. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very high standards are achieved by pupils and students in GCSE and A-level examinations.
- Pupils' attendance levels are high.
- Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are well motivated to work hard.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils' standards in physical education and design and technology are not high enough and across all subjects not all teachers are effectively using ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Outstanding leadership for the school is provided by the chair of governors but aspects of the management of the school are unsatisfactory.
- The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection. There have been significant improvements in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and in the number of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A\*-C. In tackling the key issues there have been some improvements in the quality of assessment and in the quality of accommodation. There have been some improvements in the management of subjects but weaknesses still remain. Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved. Not all pupils are receiving their entitlement to design and technology in Years 7 to 8 as was also the case at the time of the previous inspection. Improvements have been made in monitoring teachers' performance but there are still major weaknesses in the implementation of the school's performance management policy for teachers. There have been many improvements in the level of resources for ICT since the last inspection but weaknesses remain in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across all subjects. The prospectus still fails to meet legal requirements.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A*	A*	A*	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	A	A	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

*A\* means the school is performing of the top five per cent of schools nationally.*

Standards are well above average when pupils enter the school and by the end of Year 11 standards are well above average when compared with national figures. However, in relation to their prior attainment, **pupils, including those with special educational needs are achieving very well.** In the sixth form students' achievement is very high. GCSE results for the last three years have been in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved at a higher rate than the improvement nationally since the last inspection. Standards are low in physical education in all year groups and in design and technology in Years 7 to 9.

Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. Their attitudes to work and towards others are very good in the main school and good in the sixth form. Their overall **personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Attendance is very good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form, with punctuality satisfactory across the school.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.** It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth

form. Assessment is satisfactory. With the exception of design and technology and physical education the school provides a broad curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils. In the sixth form the school provides a wide choice of academic and vocational courses for students. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, as are the arrangements for pupils' care and welfare. The school's links with parents are satisfactory and the school's links with the community, especially the Jewish community, are good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall leadership and management are good.** The school benefits from the outstanding leadership provided by the chair of governors. Leadership is good at all levels within the school, with the exception of the leadership in physical education and design and technology which is weak. Governance is satisfactory overall but the failure to meet all statutory requirements means that this aspect of governance has to be judged unsatisfactory. Overall management is satisfactory. Strategic planning does not reflect the school's ambitions and goals and there is a lack of documentation to identify policies and practices to raise standards within the school.

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

Most parents believe their child likes school and is making good progress and that teaching is good and that staff expect children to work hard. Most, but not all, believe pupils behave well and the children are not bullied. They believe the school is well led and that transition arrangements are good. They believe that staff encourage children to become mature and independent, that there is a good range of activities which children find interesting and enjoyable. The inspectors' judgement is that the school sets high expectations for behaviour and these are met by the majority of pupils. A small number of parents do not think the school seeks the views of parents and takes account of their suggestions. Inspectors share some of these concerns and judge that this area of the school's work could be strengthened.

Most pupils hold positive views about the school. They believe they are well taught and that teachers expect them to work hard. They believe King David is a good school to be at. They hold similar views to their parents about behaviour and feel strongly that the whole class should not be punished for the poor behaviour of individual pupils. Over a third of pupils who completed the Ofsted questionnaire do not believe that all teachers treat them fairly and with respect. A smaller minority of pupils do not think the school is interested in their views and the inspectors judge that pupils' views are not sought regularly and, as a consequence, they are not involved enough in helping to influence their life in school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in physical education by:
  - a) increasing the amount of taught time for the subject;
  - b) improving the facilities for physical education, including outdoor provision;
  - c) improving the leadership and management of the subject.
- Raise standards in design and technology by:
  - a) increasing the amount of taught time in Years 7 to 9;
  - b) improving the accommodation and resources for the subject.
- Ensure that all teachers use ICT to support learning by:
  - a) making sure that all teachers have the skills and confidence to use ICT;
  - b) increasing pupils' access to computers to support their learning.
- Improve the management of the school by:
  - a) ensuring that all teachers and especially those with posts of responsibility have job descriptions which detail their responsibilities;
  - b) identifying development plans at both whole school and departmental levels to further raise standards;
  - c) improving the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Design and technology for all pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Fully implement the requirements of performance management for the headteacher and teachers.
- Ensure the prospectus meets legal requirements.



## OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE SIXTH FORM

**The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good.** Standards are well above average, but students enter Year 12 with much higher levels of prior attainment than is found in other sixth forms nationally. Teaching and learning are very good. The leadership of the sixth form is very good. Management systems are satisfactory. The number of students in the sixth form has expanded in recent years, which has enabled the school to introduce a variety of courses to meet the needs of individual students. The cost effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards at A-level are well above average as are the results for students following vocational courses.
- The head of sixth form is well supported by other experienced teachers in providing very good support for students.
- Most students have positive attitudes and are motivated to do well. They are more positive in Year 12 than in Year 13, where the attendance of a small minority of students is sometimes patchy.
- The good range of courses, both academic and vocational, meets the needs of students.
- The accommodation for sixth form students, although vastly improved since the last inspection, has not kept pace with the increasing numbers entering the sixth form in recent years.

The very high academic standards achieved by sixth form students, which were recognised in the last inspection report, have been maintained and improved upon. Individual subjects were not inspected at the time of the last inspection. There has been a significant growth in the number of students in the sixth form since 1998.

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

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English	Provision in English is <b>good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are good.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
Chemistry	Provision in chemistry is <b>good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are good.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
Geography	Provision in geography is <b>good</b> . Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
Government and politics	Provision in government and politics is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
History	Provision in history is <b>good</b> . Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good.
Psychology	Provision in psychology is <b>very good</b> . Standards are very high. Teaching and learning are very good.
Art	Provision in art and design is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
Media studies	Provision in media studies is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
Business	Provision in business is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.

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

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

The pastoral co-ordinators for the sixth form are developing a good system for providing students with sound advice and guidance on, for example, the process for applying to university. Each student has a mentor, normally the form tutor, to provide them with personal support and the co-ordinator also assists in this area. However, there are opportunities, for those who do not wish to share their concerns with teaching staff, to discuss them with external counsellors.

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

**The sixth form has very good leadership** and a record of high performance which has ensured that increasing numbers of students opt for sixth form courses. Effective leadership and management have established a very broad curriculum and a very close match between students' needs and appropriate courses. This results in very high completion rates and a drive for students to succeed.

**Management systems are satisfactory.** Good communication with students is difficult as the attendance of a small minority of Year 13 students is often patchy. It is recognised by the school that the current Year 13 students' attitudes to school are not as positive as those of Year 13 in previous years. The procedures for recording the attendance of sixth form students are unsatisfactory. Monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory.

The school does not analyse sixth form academic successes against students' prior attainment and so cannot calculate the 'value-added' in the sixth form. This is a missed opportunity to evaluate the work of the sixth form.

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

Very few students completed the questionnaire. Of those that did, most were very positive about their experiences in the sixth form. They felt that teaching was challenging and demanding and that their work was assessed helpfully and a very high proportion of students thought that their teachers were accessible and helpful if they had difficulties with their work. On the negative side, only a minority of students felt that the school seeks and responds to the views of its students. Only a small majority of students felt that there was a good range of enrichment courses and worthwhile activities outside their academic studies. This is somewhat surprising because many students, especially in Year 12, give freely of their time to providing voluntary work within the community.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are well above average when pupils enter the school and by the end of Year 11 standards are well above average when compared with national figures. In relation to their prior attainment pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well. In the sixth form students' achievement is very high.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results for each of the last three years have been outstanding and in the top five per cent of schools nationally.
- A-level results for 2004 were outstanding.
- Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved at a higher rate than the improvement nationally since the last inspection.
- Standards are low in physical education in all year groups and in design and technology in Years 7 to 9.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37.8 (37.2)	33.3 (33.4)
Mathematics	41.1 (40.3)	35.5 (35.4)
Science	38.2 (37.3)	33.1 (33.6)

*There were 99 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well above the national average. Their overall standards of attainment in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well above the national average for English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' prior attainment, results for English were above average and well above average for mathematics and science. Results for 2004 show an increase in standards for all three subjects over the 2003 results as the above table shows. However, performance in 2004 when compared to similar schools is not as strong as it was in 2003.
2. Overall, standards in the work seen were well above average in Years 7 to 9. In most subjects pupils are achieving well because they have very positive attitudes to learning and are well motivated to work hard.
3. For individual subjects by the end of Year 9, standards are well above average for mathematics, ICT and French. In most other subjects standards are above average, except for music and citizenship where standards are in line with national averages. Standards in physical education and Hebrew are below average and standards in design and technology are well below. In ICT pupils are making very good progress. In most other subjects pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils' achievement is poor in design and technology and unsatisfactory in physical education. It is poor in design and technology because the time allocated for the teaching of the subject is low and Yavneh boys do not receive any timetabled lessons. The amount of time for teaching physical education is well below the nationally recommended figure.

- In 2004, the school met its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2005.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	97 (98)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97 (98)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	376.5	282.8

*There were 122 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C was very high in 2003 and 2004. Based on average points score the performance for the last three years places the school's results amongst the very top schools nationally. When the performance of pupils is compared with their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 the school is in the top five per cent schools nationally for the value that is added. The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A\*-G and one A\*-G was well above average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The trend in improvement in GCSE results is above the national trend. Girls outperform boys, as they do nationally, but the gap is closer in King David.
- The analysis of individual subjects in the 2004 GCSE examinations shows that results in art and design and in drama, when compared with national results, were outstanding. For all subjects, with the exception of Spanish, all the results in GCSE were significantly above the national averages. Pupils' performance in religious studies, French, geography and history were relatively stronger than their performance in other subjects. Pupils' performance in double award science, English literature and mathematics was relatively weaker.
- In 2004 the school narrowly failed to meet its published targets for the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A\*-C and one GCSE grade A\*-G. The school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2005.
- In the work seen, standards are very high in English, mathematics, science, geography, art and design, ICT and Hebrew. Standards are high in all other subjects except for citizenship where standards are in line and physical education where standards are below the national average.
- Overall, most pupils are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment. In the work seen, pupils are achieving very well in English, art and design, design and technology, geography, Hebrew and ICT. In all other subjects pupils are achieving well, except for citizenship, where achievement is satisfactory and physical education where it is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs usually attain the standards that their teachers expect of them and often do better than expected in the GCSE examinations. Their progress overall matches the good progress of other groups of pupils. They achieve well in relation to their standards on entry to the school because they are keen to succeed and because they benefit from good teaching and very good support.
- The provision for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. Pupils enter the school with high levels of literacy and express themselves very well orally. Standards of English language and literacy skills demonstrated by pupils in the school are very good.

12. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics which is well above the national average. From work seen during the inspection pupils in Year 9 are attaining well above national average. This represents satisfactory achievement. By the end of Year 11, pupils have attainment which is well above average. This is reflected in the pupils' performance in GCSE examinations and in the work seen during the inspection, and represents good achievement.
13. Across Years 7 to 9 the standards of work in science are above average and the overall achievement good. Pupils settle quickly on entry to Year 7 and soon display good scientific thinking. The standard of work in Years 10 and 11 is well above average and the achievement is good. In all lessons pupils are keen to acquire new knowledge. They show interest in the subject and ask probing questions to increase their understanding. Practical work is carried out safely with accurate observations that are clearly recorded. Pupils show respect for each other and co-operate well in group work. Staff are well aware of the small number of pupils who need additional support. They participate fully in lessons and there are no differences in the achievements of any groups of pupils in classes.
14. Standards are well above national average in ICT. GCSE pass rates are excellent. This represents excellent achievement, and work seen during the inspection shows those standards are being maintained - save in a small minority of classes where poor teaching meant little was achieved.
15. Since the last inspection the high academic standards reported then have not only been maintained but improved upon. There have been significant improvements in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. In 1998, 83 per cent of pupils gained five GCSE grades A\*-C and this has increased significantly to 97 per cent in 2004.

**Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004**

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	97.4 (98.4)	92.4 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	71.2 (64.7)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per pupil	338.0 (297.1)	265.2 (258.2)

*There were 75 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

16. Students enter the sixth form with standards which are on average well above the average for sixth forms nationally. The school does not analyse students' performance at A-level in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE but, in comparison with all schools, results at A-level were outstanding. The number of students in each A-level group in 2004 was often small, which makes comparisons with national data statistically insignificant. However, in 2004, 100 per cent of candidates achieved the higher grades of A or B in classical studies, design and technology, drama, Hebrew, and physics. Results in the vocational courses of business, media, science, ICT and travel and tourism were outstanding when compared with national results.
17. Students are achieving very well in the sixth form because they are well taught and in the main they are well motivated. Year 12 students are particularly well motivated and attend regularly. There is a stark difference between Year 12 and Year 13. In Year 13, students' attendance is erratic and a significant number of Year 13 students do not share the school's values for effective learning. The school recognises that the current Year 13 are very untypical of previous Year 13 students.
18. Higher attaining students achieve very well overall. A very high proportion of students who complete A-levels go on to higher education. Completion rates are high, with most students successfully completing the courses they started, which indicates that there is good guidance provided to students on the choice of courses they should study in the sixth form.

19. Support for sixth form students is good, although opportunities are missed to identify targets for A-level based on analysis of GCSE results. Standards have risen since the last inspection and the popularity of the sixth form has also increased. This, in part, is attributed to the strong leadership provided by the head of sixth form and other senior staff in setting high expectations and standards for the sixth form and in creating an ethos of learning, achievement and progression to higher education.

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

Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. Their attitudes to work and towards others are very good in the main school and good in the sixth form. Their overall personal development, including, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is very good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form with punctuality satisfactory across the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very enthusiastic in their approach to lessons and the activities provided for them outside the school day.
- The high expectations for behaviour set by the school are met by the majority of pupils.
- The school instils in its pupils a strong moral code and helps them develop the social skills required.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their own values, principles and beliefs as well as an understanding of those of other cultures.
- Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools.

### **Commentary**

20. Most pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and have an insatiable desire to learn. This enthusiasm is effectively harnessed by the school to enable them to produce work of a very high standard. They are very confident individuals with a high level of self-esteem although, on occasions, this can border on arrogance leading to a certain disrespect shown to adults. For the most part, however, they work and play co-operatively with each other and treat adults within the school and visitors with politeness and courtesy. Opportunities to take responsibility are readily accepted and effectively performed. Pupils also support the range of extra-curricular activities enthusiastically. One evening, during the inspection, the library was full of pupils attending the Bet Midrash while others in the hall were enjoying the badminton and table tennis clubs.
21. There is a very clear system for controlling behaviour. Pupils disrupting lessons may be withdrawn to the exclusion room where they complete work set by the teacher under supervision. Those who persistently misbehave are given a daily report card completed by each lesson teacher during the day and signed by the headteacher at the end of each day. It is then taken home for parental review and signature. If the situation does not improve then the pupil concerned may be sent to the exclusion room for a number of days. The system, supported by parents, is proving effective in controlling the inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils. Overall behaviour is good throughout the school in the classrooms and the public areas. In some lessons, however, where the teaching is not sufficiently challenging, behaviour can deteriorate. This is particularly true where teachers have weak behaviour management skills. While bullying exists, it is the view of most pupils and parents that the school addresses any instances promptly and appropriately.
22. Pupils develop a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong, especially through their religious studies and by the constant reinforcement of teachers and other adults within the school. They show a willingness to express their views on ethical issues and personal values as expressed by Judaism as well as those of other cultures. The school, in co-operation with the parents and the local Jewish community, helps them develop a complete understanding of how to interact socially. This enhances their social skills and also enables them to contribute to the wider society outside school.

23. Pupils' personal development is very good. The ethos of the school, with its emphasis on the 'teaching and practice of Judaism and its values', ensures pupils develop a firm set of values, principles and beliefs. They also demonstrate compassion for those less fortunate by organising and generously supporting charitable organisations not directly related to their faith. Pupils gain a thorough insight into their own cultural heritage through lessons and assemblies, although their exposure to other cultures is rather more limited. The attendance of a group of pupils at a commemoration service for the Pope demonstrates the openness with which it acknowledges the existence of other religions. The school is effective in preparing pupils for living in a multicultural society and helps them become aware of the beliefs and traditions of other religions and of differing ethnic minorities.
24. Pupils with special educational needs usually have very good attitudes towards their work because they are well motivated. Pupils are fully integrated in classes and generally behave well.

### Attendance

The very high level of attendance in the main school, an improvement since the last inspection, reflects the eagerness with which the vast majority of pupils come to school supported by the constant encouragement of their parents. The school works closely with the families of the few who do not attend regularly to help them resolve their individual situations. Punctuality to school is not a major problem although transport difficulties, for the many pupils who travel long distances, can lead to their arriving late. The start of lessons through the day is, however, often delayed by pupils who show a lack of urgency in moving between classrooms or arriving promptly after a break.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.1
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

### Exclusions

The school excludes relatively few pupils for its size, although there has been an increase since the last inspection, when there were none. This reflects the school's zero tolerance policy to most aspects of unacceptable behaviour.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	657	27	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	28	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	8	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	16	1	0

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

## Sixth form

25. While most students display very positive attitudes to learning, there is a minority, mainly in Year 13, who openly smoke outside the school gates during the day and contest reasonable requests by members of staff. Many also adopt a very liberal interpretation of the school dress code. Those exhibiting persistent behaviour or attitude problems are referred to the pastoral co-ordinator who works closely with them to help resolve any issues.
26. Many students willingly take responsibility, as head boy, head girl and their deputies, and their involvement in a voluntary scheme to help those less fortunate than themselves demonstrates the compassionate side of their nature.
27. The school has concerns about the attendance and punctuality of a number of its students. A recent sixth form policy review reported to them that 'last term a number of you failed to meet reasonable levels'. However, the system of recording is not thorough enough to accurately record the situation. This also has health and safety implications, as there is no clear record as to who is in school at any particular time.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good and in the sixth form it is very good. Teaching is better for older students but is good overall. The curriculum has many strengths and the school has worked hard at ensuring that the courses provided meet the needs of individual pupils and students. Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory and its links with the local Jewish community are good and these links enhance the quality of education provided for pupils and students.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are good. They are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are very good in the sixth form. Assessment of pupils' and students' performance is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are stronger for older pupils and students than they are for younger pupils.
- Teaching of physical education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- There is a high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Work is assessed during lessons and pupils are provided with instant feedback.
- Assessment is carried out on a regular basis and realistic targets are set for pupils.
- The whole-school policy on assessment lacks rigour.
- Not all targets are related to the National Curriculum levels and to the requirements of the GCSE examinations.
- Assessment is carried out inconsistently across departments and within departments.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 157 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (1.9%)	53 (33.8%)	59 (37.8%)	37 (23.6%)	2 (1.3%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (0.6%)

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



28. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are very good in the sixth form. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is very good in art and design. It is good in English, science, geography, history, modern foreign languages, Hebrew, and for pupils with special educational needs. In all other subjects, teaching is satisfactory except for ICT where it is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good in geography, art and design and Hebrew. Teaching is good in all other subjects except for citizenship where it is satisfactory and physical education where it is unsatisfactory.
29. As a result of good teaching pupils are learning well; in part, because of the high quality of relationships between most pupils and their teachers, and also because pupils are very well motivated to be successful. Most teachers provide encouragement and give students confidence to tackle their work effectively. This they do from a firm command of the knowledge and skills of the subjects they teach. The high quality of relationships results in most pupils having very positive attitudes towards their learning and contributes to effective learning in lessons. There is also a very good pace to learning when teachers have high expectations for pupils.
30. One of the major strengths is the very good management of pupils' behaviour and it is rare to see teaching or learning time lost because of time spent in managing challenging behaviour. However, on some very rare occasions, a minority of pupils do not treat teachers with the respect they deserve.
31. The variety of teaching tasks set for pupils is satisfactory. In most lessons teachers set tasks which meet the needs of pupils but in some lessons the work set did not fully match the wide-ranging needs of pupils. It is a weakness in some English and design and technology lessons. There is a weakness in the use made by several departments of assessment data to ensure that the tasks set fully challenge all pupils. When pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs, or small groups, they stay on task and can give clear feedback to the class. As a result of being well taught many pupils have well-developed skills in working independently.
32. Not all teachers are making good use of ICT to support their teaching, nor is it always being used effectively to support pupils' learning. Some teachers lack the confidence and expertise to effectively use ICT and several found that the training in the use of ICT did not meet their needs. As a result, opportunities are missed in the use of ICT to support learning in modern foreign languages, mathematics, science, geography, history, art and design and music.
33. A few parents and some pupils raised concerns about the quantity and quality of tasks set for homework. The inspectors' judgements are that homework is satisfactory, with most teachers setting appropriate tasks to extend and reinforce what has been learnt in lessons.
34. There is a whole-school literacy policy, which focuses mainly on the promotion of specialist vocabulary and a consistent approach to the development of general skills of expression. Subject departments emphasise the importance of knowing and using the technical terms and key words appropriate to their subject. Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to practise the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in all their lessons. A variety of written forms and styles is encouraged by most subject teachers. Many departments actively promote good literacy in pupils by correcting misspellings and awkward expression. However, not all teachers in every subject demonstrate good practice to pupils by careful marking and insistence on high standards of written work.
35. A numeracy policy is in place, and opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical skills are identified in some faculty schemes of work. However, the application of the policy is not monitored formally. Pupils measure accurately, and estimate and weigh quantities in design and technology. Pupils apply formulae in spreadsheets and produce graphs in ICT. In science, pupils perform calculations for various measurements, and use formulae and graphs to solve practical problems. In art, pupils work with perspective, enlarge shapes and work with proportion and symmetry.

36. Pupils with special educational needs usually learn well because they want to succeed, and also because teaching styles and learning materials are generally carefully matched to their needs. Pupils gain confidence through the good relationships in the classroom and from the help they receive from teachers and support staff. However, there are occasions when tasks are not sufficiently challenging and work is not sufficiently well adapted to pupils' requirements. Assessment is carried out systematically and effectively through the twice-yearly reviews of pupils' individual education plans.

### **Assessment**

37. The school has devised a whole-school policy on reporting, recording and assessment, which provides departments and individual teachers with guidance on how to carry out assessment. It outlines the procedures that are to be followed in assessing and marking pupils' work and storing records in the teachers' mark books. Assessment takes place after twice-yearly examinations, which are set and marked by teachers. After these internal examinations pupils can be moved between sets depending upon how well they have performed. However, this policy document lacks detail.
38. Most teachers make good use of marking pupils' work to indicate how they can make further progress, although there are some inconsistencies in English, mathematics and science. In some departments, pupils play an active role in assessing their own work and in setting realistic targets. Much of the assessment of pupils' work is directly related to the National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9 and to the GCSE examination specifications in Year 11. Effective assessment systems to track pupils' progress over time are not fully developed in citizenship, modern foreign languages, physical education, geography and history. Assessment is used effectively to track pupils' progress through a mentoring programme, whereby teaching mentors take account of study skills and standards of work produced by individual pupils. This involves the collection of grades from all subject teachers and subsequently providing support for those pupils whose performance has been identified as causing concern. All departments have access to data, which is used to inform the movement of pupils from one level to another.
39. However, although assessment takes place during lessons and pupils are provided with feedback, which helps them set targets with their teachers, it is not carried out consistently across departments. In English, for example, some teachers, but not all, provide pupils with written comments which include advice on how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Marking is intended to be positive and helpful. In science there is an extensive assessment policy but not all members of the department apply it consistently. Good progress is being made now with computerised tracking of pupils' progress and available data are used to track an individual from the point of entry in Year 7 through to Year 10. Marking is carried out on a regular basis and mistakes corrected, but not all teachers provide constructive and helpful feedback. In vocational courses assessment is carried out rigorously as it is an integral component of the course structure itself. The school makes good use of assessment of pupils' work in determining how best to support those pupils who have special educational needs.

### **Sixth form**

40. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. In over 90 per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be good or better and nearly half the lessons were judged to be very good. In most lessons there is an extremely high level of subject expertise and authoritative explanation and questioning by teachers. Their ability to encourage and involve students is very good. In particular, teachers are very knowledgeable about the specific requirements of individual examinations and are able to effectively prepare students with very good techniques for meeting the demands of examinations. Learning is very good, with many students showing a single-minded determination to concentrate on their academic studies to the exclusion, in some cases, of playing a full part in the wider aspects of school life. This determination, allied to very high levels of self-confidence exhibited by many students, produces highly-motivated students with very positive approaches to learning. On occasions, as can be seen by the attitudes of some

Year 13 students, this can result in over-confidence bordering on contempt for teachers and the school. This is reflected by the decision by these students not to turn up for all of their lessons. This is in stark contrast to Year 12 students, whose approach to learning is excellent.

41. Some teaching groups contain students with a wide range of prior attainment. However, the teaching of gifted and talented students is good and tasks are set which fully challenge these students. Similarly, weaker students are well supported and encouraged and often these students gain results that exceed their predictions on entry to the sixth form.
42. In the sixth form, students are encouraged to play a much more active role in the assessment process. Work is assessed during lessons, instant verbal feedback given and specific targets set. Consequently they know what they must do to improve the standard of their work. Teachers ensure that students are familiar with those criteria against which their work is to be assessed and in subjects such as mathematics, business studies, art and design, chemistry and government and politics assessment is very good.
43. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching. In particular there has been a major increase in the proportion of lessons judged to be very good or better. There has been a reduction in the number of unsatisfactory lessons seen. Weaknesses in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning still remain. The inadequate use of assessment information in planning for the range of attainment of pupils in their classes also remains an issue which has not been effectively tackled.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. It provides some vocational courses as well as those for GCSE and its work-related provision is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of most pupils.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which enhances learning.
- Pupils have an increased opportunity to study additional foreign languages.
- The time for lessons meets the national recommendations but Yavneh pupils experience a much longer working day.
- The provision for design and technology in Years 7 to 9 does not meet legal requirements and the time given to physical education is insufficient for pupils to achieve high standards.

### **Commentary**

44. The school provides a balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all its pupils and fulfils statutory requirements in all its subjects with the exception of design and technology for a small number of pupils in Years 7 to 8. The time allocated to subjects is mainly good but it is unsatisfactory for both design and technology and physical education to enable pupils to reach high standards. The time allocated for teaching for the main school meets the national recommendations but Yavneh pupils have a significantly longer day than other pupils. The school offers the opportunity to study more than one foreign language. In Years 10 and 11 the school provides a number of optional groups which result in external examinations and, as a result, pupils benefit from the range of courses, which is organised to meet their needs. There is a good balance of academic and vocational courses with the introduction of a number of vocational courses, including leisure and tourism and business studies in Year 11 and applied business and business studies in Year 10. Drama is a further popular course for pupils to choose. Citizenship and work-related programmes are recent additions to the curriculum and both are improving. The provision for careers education is good and this prepares pupils and students for their next stages in education.

45. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. Pupils receive appropriate sex education and education in the misuse of alcohol and drugs.
46. The school provides a good range of activities to support pupils' learning outside the school day. Provision both in the arts and sport is good. There is a range of activities both at lunchtime and after school. There is a strong commitment by the school to provide well-supported visits to Israel several times a year.
47. The curriculum is well planned to meet the particular requirements of pupils with special educational needs. There are good grouping arrangements that allow pupils to work to their strengths and courses leading to the Certificate of Achievement are available for pupils needing an alternative to the GCSE syllabuses. Resources, in terms of books and materials, are good overall but there are not enough learning resources in ICT, such as spelling and reading programs, for pupils to be able to work independently.
48. Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory overall but with variations across departments. There is a good match of well-qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. In order to ensure that subjects are taught by specialist teachers it has been necessary to appoint a higher number of part-time teachers than would be found in most schools nationally. There is adequate provision of support staff to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Under the guidance of the special needs co-ordinator they are involved in the planning of lessons and well used to reinforce the work of teachers. Although there has been a high turnover of staff over the past two years this was for valid reasons such as relocation to other parts of the country or for promotion. Technical staff are employed in subjects where needed such as science, art and design, ICT and food technology. There is a qualified swimming instructor in the physical education department.
49. Accommodation is good except in physical education and design and technology. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Twenty-five new classrooms and a sixth form library have been added to accommodate the increased intake of pupils and a further three rooms for special educational needs provision. Extensive refurbishment has recently been undertaken. Accommodation is good in English, art and design, modern foreign languages and music. However, there is insufficient space for food technology and a lack of social accommodation for sixth form students. Outdoor facilities, including playground and hard surface areas, are poor and this makes the teaching of games very difficult. Gyms are adequate with good changing rooms and the swimming pool is an asset. The spacious library performs several functions and is heavily used as a resource centre for private study, tutorials and teaching. A good range of books and magazines is available for reference purposes and career guidance as well as for borrowing. Resources to meet the needs of the curriculum are good in both quality and supply. ICT resources are adequate but not sufficiently accessible for all teachers to be able to use ICT to support teaching and learning.

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

The school makes satisfactory provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. It provides them with support, advice and guidance that are satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. It does not effectively involve its pupils through seeking, valuing and acting upon their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils develop trusting relationships within the school.
- Pupils are well cared for in a secure environment but arrangements for ensuring their health and safety are in need of improvement.
- There are very good arrangements for pupils joining the school.
- Pupils' views are not sought regularly and, as a consequence, they are not involved enough in helping to influence their life in school

## Commentary

50. This is a very caring school community with pastoral support provided by form tutors supported by the heads of year and heads of lower and upper school. Heads of year have high teaching commitments and therefore their opportunities to support pupils during the timetabled day are limited. Similarly, the limitations in the assessment process mean that pupils are not always fully aware of what they need to do to improve their performance in individual subjects. Pupils experiencing academic or personal problems have access to mentors within the school who are existing teachers given extra non-contact time to mentor pupils. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is effective as is the whole-school monitoring of their academic development, which enables the school to move pupils between streams on the basis of twice-yearly tests.
51. The combination of high fencing surrounding the school, closed circuit television and security guards contributes to the security of the school. However, the provision for ensuring the health and safety of those within the school is not as thorough. There is no annual audit of arrangements within the school and the health and safety officer has had insufficient training to fulfil the post effectively. Each department is responsible for carrying out risk assessments but there is no central control to ensure these are carried out. Risk assessments are carried out for educational visits but these vary in their thoroughness. Several hazards were witnessed during the inspection, such as the chairs stacked too high in the hall, a fire exit blocked in the dining hall by the salad bar and cleaning materials stored in a disabled toilet. The deputy headteacher has been fully trained in child protection issues and operates an appropriate system for child protection in conjunction with the Manchester Jewish Federation which ensures the school receives a prompt response to any concerns from the social services department of the relevant local authority. She is very experienced in this area but does not have a fully trained deputy and, while most teachers are aware of the procedures to follow, there is no provision for regularly updating them nor a child protection section in the staff handbook. Pupils are made aware of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle through subjects such as science and the personal and social health education programme. The school has also introduced a salad bar in the dining hall but still has a range of vending machines containing products not generally considered as contributing to a healthy diet. However, the school has lately eliminated from those machines any products which contain 'E-numbers' which are perceived to have a detrimental effect on children's health and behaviour. The school identified its limitations this year and has signed up to achieving the Healthy Schools Award.
52. Year 6 pupils from the feeder primary schools attend taster days at the school with their parents to see the school in action. On the basis of performance in an entrance examination, offers are made of places within the three 'streams' of the school. Parents' evenings are then held for each 'stream' attended by the chair of governors, senior managers and the head of Year 7. The latter also visits the main feeder primaries with the special education needs co-ordinator to meet the pupils and discuss their personal and academic profiles with their teachers. The Year 7 pupils start in September one day before the rest of the school to allow them to become acclimatised and to meet their Year 10 'buddies' who continue to support them through their first year. Six weeks later parents are invited to discuss with staff how well their children are settling in. The overwhelmingly positive response by parents to the question in the pre-inspection questionnaire on this topic demonstrates how effective the school's Year 7 transition procedures are.
53. Pupils from each form are represented on the school council although they are not given the responsibility of being involved in the running of it. It only meets once a term, which is insufficient to enable it to make a real impact, especially when feedback is reserved until the next meeting. Apart from the council, there are no formal means of discovering pupils' views although many do make suggestions informally, such as a new club or a charity event, which are sometimes adopted. Around one-third of pupils, who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire, disagreed with the statement: 'The school is interested in the views of its pupils'.

54. The school gives very good guidance and support to pupils with special educational needs. The systems for identifying and monitoring pupils in need of extra help are very efficient. Pupils' individual education plans give clear targets for improvement, together with information on support arrangements and useful advice on suitable learning activities. Daily progress is carefully monitored by the support staff, who are committed to the well-being of the pupils in their charge and have a good understanding of their particular needs. Pupils know what their targets are and they make their own contributions to progress reviews. The school's close partnership with the local support services enables pupils to benefit from specialised help when necessary.

### **Sixth form**

55. The pastoral co-ordinator for the sixth form is developing a good system for providing students with sound advice and guidance on, for example, the process for applying to university. However, half the students answering the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel they were given well-informed advice on what they could do on leaving school. Each student has a mentor, normally the form tutor, to provide them with personal support and the co-ordinator also assists in this area. However, there are limited opportunities for those who do not wish to share their concerns with teaching staff to discuss them with external counsellors.
56. Students receive regular updates on their progress every six weeks where they are advised on what they need to do achieve the required grades in their coursework and modular examinations. They are also helped to address issues such as poor time-management. The majority of students appreciate this good system of ongoing assessment and advice.
57. There is much informal discussion with students and meetings between the head boy and head girl and sixth form staff. However, there is no student council or other formal method for identifying their opinions, which helps to explain why almost two-thirds of those returning the pre-inspection questionnaire felt the school didn't seek or respond to their views.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has developed a satisfactory relationship with its parents and carers. Links with the community are good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- Information provided for parents has not improved since the time of the last inspection.
- The school has developed very strong links with members of the local Jewish community.
- The school needs to involve its parents more in helping to shape the future direction of the school.
- Opportunities to develop beneficial relationships with other schools and colleges are underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

58. Most parents have very positive feelings towards the school and, in the pre-inspection parents' questionnaire and meeting, the overwhelming majority felt their children were making good progress, thanks to the high expectations of their teachers who taught them well. Many make financial contributions to the school and provide their children with a home environment conducive to helping them learn. Parents' attendance is very high at the annual evening to discuss their children's progress and at school productions and Parents' Guild events.
59. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not have a prospectus that contains all the required statutory information. The governors' annual report to parents includes all the required information. The school does not produce newsletters to keep its parents informed but does have a website, currently under construction, the contents page of which indicates a worthwhile

source of information if it is to be regularly updated. Parents only have one formal opportunity to discuss their children's progress per year, supported by two reports in January and July. While these include grades for effort and achievement and the latest examination mark in each subject, there is little information on what a pupil needs to do address any shortcomings hindering their progress. One-fifth of parents responding to the Ofsted parents' questionnaire felt they were 'not kept well informed about how my child is getting on'.

60. The school has developed very good links with the Jewish communities from which its pupils are drawn. Local Rabbis visit the school and address the pupils who, in return, visit their synagogues. There are also strong links with the Jewish Federation. Links with the secular community are more limited but the choir visits local senior citizen homes, and the involvement of drama students in the Remembrance Day observance, are good examples of this happening in practice. Outside organisations like theatre groups and agencies, such as those involved with health and the police, visit to provide pupils with educational experiences and awareness of issues such as drugs and crime. There are also some good relationships being developed with business partners, especially in the departments of media and business studies and leisure and tourism. All these links help to prepare pupils for life outside school and also provide them with learning experiences relevant to everyday working life. The very high confidence the community has in the school is reflected by the increasing numbers of pupils attending the school over recent years.
61. The school does not have a formalised procedure for seeking parents' views and taking account of their suggestions and concerns. Consequently, only just over half of those answering the pre-inspection questionnaire felt the school valued their views.
62. The school has a very good relationship with the primary school with which it shares its campus. It has also developed good links with a network of universities and colleges of further education; around 50 supported the last careers convention held by the school. Meanwhile, two part-time teaching staff in the media studies department use their other employment in a college of further education to enhance their pupils' learning. The March of the Living, where pupils visit Auschwitz on a joint trip with colleagues from non-Jewish secondary schools, is a good example of how such collaboration increases their social awareness. However, apart from these examples of good practice, the school does not fully exploit the opportunities offered by other academic institutions to provide learning experiences for its pupils.
63. The school has a good partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are encouraged to contact the school in case of concern. They contribute to the reviews of their children's progress and are usually pleased with the progress made. There are good links with the main primary schools and nearby colleges, with the result that transitional arrangements are smooth and most pupils settle quickly into new routines when they move from one phase of education to another. Members of the local community also provide good support.

### **Sixth form**

64. The school enables its students to establish worthwhile links with the local community through its volunteer programme. There are also some good contacts being established with business organisations to allow students practical experience in their chosen career. Links with other schools and colleges, other than for transfer to post-18 education, are limited in their impact on students' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership is good. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school benefits from the outstanding leadership provided by the chair of governors.
- Strategic planning does not reflect the school's ambitions and goals.

- Despite a strong commitment by the governors to the school, overall governance has to be judged satisfactory as several legal requirements are not being fully met.
- The sixth form is very well led and managed.
- There is a lack of documentation to identify policy and practices to raise standards within the school.

### **Commentary**

65. The governing body makes a major contribution to the leadership of the school, including its sixth form and its successes. In particular, the chair of the governors keeps a close involvement in the school's work and the school's wider community owes a great deal to the personal commitment and dedication provided by the chair in raising standards over recent years. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and deal with them openly. However, the chair of governors and other individual governors undertake many of the responsibilities normally associated with those of senior management. This is a deliberate strategy by governors to reduce the time spent by the headteacher and senior staff on management tasks. For example, the current school development plan is produced by members of the governing body as is the school's annual timetable. Many aspects of the work of the governing body show outstanding governance. However, overall governance has to be judged satisfactory as the school is failing to meet all of its statutory requirements. Not all pupils are receiving their entitlement to design and technology in Years 7 and 8 (Yavneh boys). The legal requirements for performance management are not being fully met. The prospectus, as at the time of the last inspection, does not meet legal requirements.
66. Leadership is good. Leadership is principled and well established. There is a drive for raising academic standards and a strong sense of direction provided, in the main, by the chair of governors. There is a very strong commitment by the governing body and senior staff to provide an inclusive school, which effectively meets the needs of all pupils, and the strong ethos within the school reflects the genuine concern for the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and has a clear vision of how improvements can be made. There is a clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations by other key staff within the school. Overall subject and pastoral leadership are good. There are weaknesses in the leadership of design and technology and physical education.
67. Overall management is satisfactory. Although the school has clear vision statements the school's development plan is of poor quality in moving the school forward. There is a lack of department development plans to indicate how self-evaluation is being used to raise standards. Opportunities are missed to identify targets for improvements for individual pupils based on the assessment of their prior attainment. Individual teachers with posts of responsibility did not, at the time of the inspection, have specific job descriptions or time to carry out their responsibilities. The legal requirements for the performance management of the headteacher and other teaching staff by the governing body are not being fully met. Guidance provided to schools clearly indicates that the meeting to assess the headteacher's performance cannot take place if only one governor is present. There are opportunities missed to use the performance management of teaching staff to bring about improvements, especially in identifying the professional development needs of individual teachers. Adequate job descriptions for all teachers are not in place.
68. The leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is very good. The statutory requirements in relation to pupils with statements of special educational need are met and relevant documentation shows detailed assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. An efficient team of support staff has been formed. Management of daily routines is good and staff are able to benefit from good in-service training. However, the SENCO does not have enough opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs through regular classroom observations. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection in responding to the challenge of successfully meeting the requirements of pupils coming into the school with widely diverse special educational needs.



69. The professional development of staff is limited. Good use is made of the support provided by the examination boards that relate to the requirements of specific GCSE and sixth form courses. Less good is the provision of professional development to meet the needs of individual teachers, departments and whole-school priorities. The support given to newly qualified teachers from within the school is appropriate. Little use is made of the courses provided by the local education authority or other organisations to support newly qualified teachers.
70. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training and manages the recruitment, retention and deployment of staff effectively.

### Sixth form

71. The sixth form is very well led and managed satisfactorily. The sixth form has benefited from the good vision and commitment of the governing body and the senior staff which has resulted in the increase in the number of students within the sixth form and in the wide range of courses offered. The head of sixth form's analysis of examination results does not reflect well-marshalled evidence to show the measure of value-added provided by attendance in the sixth form. She sets very high standards for students and has high expectations and is supported in this by the efforts of some very experienced teachers. Sadly, her insistence on high standards of attendance, especially for Year 13 students, is not responded to positively by a significant number of students. The sixth form provision is both educationally viable and cost effective.

### Financial information

The latest auditor's report in October 2004 stated that sound financial controls were in place. The governing body agreed the auditor's report findings. The school's approach to financial management in helping achieve educational priorities is unsatisfactory. The priorities for improvement within the school have not been identified or costed within the school's development plan and, as a result, the school's development plan cannot be used to influence the setting of the budget.

There is no evidence to indicate the active involvement of the headteacher, the senior management team or the governing body in the budget setting process. Individual budgets are not allocated to departments and the needs identified by heads of department are submitted to the chair of governors, who determines what resources are purchased. The auditor's report also stated that there was no evidence to indicate that the budgets are reviewed on a regular basis by senior management. In spite of these weaknesses there is no evidence to suggest that principles of best value are not accurately applied in the spending of resources at the school.

The school is well resourced when compared with schools nationally. Individual governors voluntarily undertake management and administrative tasks, which are normally undertaken by members of senior management teams. This results in senior members of staff having significant teaching commitments and enables the school to have a very low pupil teacher ratio. Thus, most pupils are taught in relatively small teaching groups.

The school achieves very high academic standards and, although it is well resourced, the school provides good value for money.

#### **Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,474,575	Balance from previous year	9,796
Total expenditure	3,418,755	Balance carried forward to the next	65,616
Expenditure per pupil	4,306*		

\* Calculated on 794 pupils on roll

## WORK-RELATED LEARNING (WRL)

Provision in work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good work experience programme, preparation of *curricula vitae* and guidance interviews which are valued by pupils.
- Not all pupils have comparable opportunities to develop work-related skills and experience because only a minority of curriculum subjects offer them.
- The school has good career links with higher education and business organisations but pupils would like a broader range of careers guidance and more up-to-date reference material.
- The co-ordinator has begun to implement formal provision for work-related learning despite lack of training and the active support of whole-school management systems.

### Commentary

72. Pupils' opportunities for learning about WRL through actual work are good. They centre on a one-week period of work experience for all pupils towards the end of Year 10, with appropriate preparation, monitoring by teaching staff, the keeping of a work experience diary and debriefing. In some work areas, for example, in medicine and dentistry, work-shadowing is available. Pupils also have good opportunities to visit business and professions. Some pupils have participated in the stock market challenge, set up under the Excellence in Cities initiative and the school were the winners in 2004. Enterprise initiatives also encourage pupils to be innovative in organising charity events
73. Pupils' opportunities to learn about work are satisfactory overall. The common elements include the preparation of *curricula vitae* and job applications, guidance and simulated job interviews. However, not all pupils are able to have comparable development of skills and experience of WRL because only a limited number of subjects offer them. Vocational studies and business studies make the most effective contribution but, for many pupils, their Year 10 and 11 subject choices preclude contact with WRL aspects. There are also some elements of WRL which are currently not covered at all. As a result, it is not possible for the school to assess attainment and progress of all Year 10 and 11 pupils in WRL skills, knowledge and understanding.
74. Careers provision is satisfactory overall, but it is particularly focused on entry to higher education. There is a regular and successful careers fair. Pupils indicate that they would prefer a broader approach to the guidance for future study and work and would like a wider range of more up-to-date careers resources.
75. The co-ordination of WRL is satisfactory. Existing provision and limited new developments have been combined successfully to implement WRL satisfactorily in the school. However, strategic development is limited by insufficient staff time, the lack of designated responsibility for WRL, no specialist training or networking with other providers and little support provided by whole-school management systems necessary for successful cross-curricular provision.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Teachers use a good range of teaching methods; they set a good variety of English tasks, both written and oral, which contributes to pupils' good or very good achievement.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils in all years approach their work in a positive and responsive way; as a result, pupils attain high standards and achieve well or very well.
- Information about pupil performance is not used systematically to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils.
- Methods of assessment of pupils' work are not consistent across the English department.
- The English department makes very good use of resources and training provided by the English strand of the national strategies; teaching materials and lesson plans are produced and used collaboratively across the department.
- Members of the English department do not benefit from a regular review of their performance.

##### **Commentary**

76. Results at the end of Year 9 have been well above the national average in comparison with all schools since 2001. In 2004, Year 9 test results show an increase and are well above the national average in comparison with all schools and are above the national average when compared with similar schools. GCSE results in English and English literature have been well above the national average for the last three years. In 2004 they are well above the national average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools.
77. Standards in English are above average in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are able to write accurately in a variety of styles and forms, including narrative, critical and explanatory pieces, and explain their ideas confidently in discussion. In Years 10 and 11, standards are well above average. Pupils in those years demonstrate a good understanding of language features, discuss texts sensitively and express their ideas very well in longer pieces of examination coursework.
78. In Years 7 to 9, achievement in English is good. On entry, pupils' attainment is high and they make progress which is above the national average. In Years 10 to 11, achievement is very good and progress is well above the national average. Pupils achieve well because their attitudes to learning are positive and they are keen to succeed. Progress is also aided by good teaching but, occasionally, pupils are not challenged enough. A Year 7 class enthusiastically tackled the devising of a fantastic new invention. They could have achieved more, if their task had a structure which encouraged them to think and express themselves in more depth. More generally, information about pupil performance is not used systematically to inform teaching and encourage high achievement. Lower attaining pupils are favoured by being placed in smaller groups, but their individual needs are not always met, with little attempt to intervene to deal with their weaknesses. There is not a detailed departmental assessment policy and assessment practice is not consistent across the department. Assessment in English is satisfactory, but marking of work is not always focused on helping the pupil to improve.
79. Teaching and learning in English are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, speaking with authority on the content of their lessons and the skills they aim to develop. In the main, lessons are well prepared and teachers are skilled at managing whole-class discussion, listening and responding to individual pupils, while maintaining a firm grip on the direction of the lesson.

Teachers use a wide range of other teaching methods. They set a good variety of English tasks, both written and oral, to practise the full range of English skills. Year 10 pupils studying *The Hound of the Baskervilles* are encouraged to interrogate the text in order to draw a plan of the murder scene and make a list of clues that might help to solve the mystery. There is good collaboration in the production of teaching materials. A GCSE poetry lesson, which had been planned by one teacher, included differentiated work for use by colleagues teaching each of the streams in Year 10. Very good use is made of resources and training provided by the national strategies: lessons are divided into episodes, with clearly stated learning outcomes and plenary sessions to review knowledge and skills acquired. In a good Year 7 lesson on the features of persuasive language, pupils encountered images of apartheid, a recording of Martin Luther King's '*I have a dream*' speech, a paired speaking and listening activity, and a chart to help identify features in a written text, thus varying their experiences in the lesson and addressing a wide range of learning styles.

80. Leadership in English is good. There is a consistency of approach across the department. The team meets regularly and there is much evidence that planning and resources are shared. Management of English is satisfactory. Although the head of department has a clear view of the department's priorities for development, there is no detailed departmental development plan and the department handbook gives department members only minimum support. The head of department is aware of the professional development needs of colleagues, but there is no regular performance management or the consequent review of roles. The head of department does not have a job description or the clear accountabilities that would be included in it. The head of department is allocated limited time to monitor and evaluate the work of the department.
81. Accommodation for the teaching of English is very good, with access to ICT equipment to aid teaching. There is no central departmental base, however, to support the collegiate atmosphere within the department.
82. Improvement in English since the last inspection is good. Pupils' standards and achievement by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 continue to be well above the national average. Pupils' progress continues to be good or very good.

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

83. The provision for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. Pupils enter the school with high levels of literacy and express themselves very well orally. Standards of English language and literacy skills, as demonstrated by pupils in the school, are very good.
84. There is a whole-school literacy policy, which focuses mainly on the promotion of specialist vocabulary and a consistent approach to the development of general skills of expression. Subject departments emphasise the importance of knowing and using the technical terms and key words appropriate to their subject. Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to practise the skills of reading and writing, listening and speaking in all their lessons. In mathematics, discussion is used to analyse and solve problems and, in geography, Year 11 pupils discuss issues of globalisation and report back to the whole class, using only notes for reference and confidently answering questions put to them by the rest of the class.
85. A variety of written forms and styles is encouraged by most subject teachers. In science, pupils are occasionally set creative writing tasks to help develop their understanding of a topic. Many departments actively promote good literacy in pupils by correcting misspellings and awkward expression. However, not all teachers in every subject demonstrate good practice to pupils by careful marking and insistence on high standards of written work.
86. In addition to opportunities given in lessons, there are a number of lunchtime clubs which offer pupils throughout the school a chance to develop their literacy and oracy skills. These include drama clubs, debating and public speaking groups and a reading club.

## Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results in French at GCSE level are consistently excellent.
- The very high level of skill in the teachers' command of the foreign language results in pupils answering confidently.
- There is a limited use of ICT to support learning.
- Pupils have little involvement in target setting.
- Strategies in place to raise standards in Spanish are appropriate.

### Commentary

87. By the end of Year 9 standards in teacher-assessed tests and in the work seen are well above the national average. In French at GCSE level the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades is consistently well above the national average, as is the standard of work seen in the inspection, including a high percentage of A\* and A grades. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. French is one of the top performing subjects in school. Low numbers are entered for GCSE Spanish and results are well below the national average. A contributory factor is that pupils only study Spanish in Years 10 and 11, which gives little time to cover the syllabus. Despite this some pupils do gain the highest grades.
88. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. Learning is made fun. Pupils enjoy language learning and participate fully in lessons. Authentic resources provide challenge. This was evidenced in a Year 8 French lesson using a supermarket till receipt for a reading comprehension. The work was equivalent to foundation level at GCSE, but with the encouragement of the teacher all coped very well. Understanding of taped texts is good and most pupils communicate well orally. Pupils take pride in accurate written work and there were examples of imaginative writing displayed on walls. Spanish is introduced as a very short taster course in Years 8 and 9. Some pupils do not take this taster course seriously, thus inhibiting learning.
89. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11 in both languages. Important examination techniques are being taught. Pupil files and examples of coursework are evidence of the high standards of work, which is topic based. Each topic is studied in depth using all four skills. Excellent revision booklets, language clubs and classes provide added support. There are regular assessments with extended tasks to stretch the higher attaining pupils. Several Year 10 pupils are taking French GCSE a year early. Strategies are in place to raise standards even further. Pupils with special educational needs have support where necessary to enable them to progress according to ability. Behaviour and attitudes are very good overall.
90. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 7 to 9 they are stronger in French than Spanish. Some very good and excellent teaching was seen. The best lessons are the result of good planning, sequencing of task, brisk pace and the use of challenging materials. Where teachers use the foreign language throughout, pupils are totally immersed in the language. This results in very good communication. Relevant homework is set and marked. However, there is little guidance by way of teacher comments on how to improve work and pupils would benefit from involvement in target setting. There is limited use of ICT but there were many examples on display and plans are in place to incorporate this into lessons.
91. Leadership is good. Subject leaders provide very good role models with clear priorities for improvement. There have been efforts to develop a committed team and teachers are working together. However the fact that there are so many part-time teachers presents difficulties in organising meetings to discuss and share ideas. There is a focus on raising standards further, which includes the consideration of introducing the teaching of Spanish at an earlier age. Management overall is satisfactory, but good on a day-to-day basis. There is no systematic

monitoring of teaching and learning. Whilst assessment procedures are in place, there are no systems to use the data to track pupils' progress. The new handbook has few policies to ensure that all teachers follow the same guidelines. There is a lack of effective self-evaluation systems in place. Improvements since the last inspection are good. Many of the issues have been addressed and the high examination standards in French have been sustained.

## Hebrew

Provision in Hebrew (Ivrit) is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are below expectations; standards at the end of Year 11 are well above.
- Progress is very good overall, but good in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching is good overall. It is very good in Years 10 and 11.
- The head of department gives very good leadership and satisfactory management.
- The head of department does not monitor or evaluate the work of the department and therefore opportunities are missed to share good practice.
- Assessment and the use of assessment data are a weakness.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject

### Commentary

92. Standards at entry are well below expectations. By the end of Year 9, they are below average expectations. Lower attaining pupils cannot guarantee to pronounce all the letters and sounds correctly. They read hesitantly and some struggle to read independently. They write comparatively well in terms of neatness of script and many can produce short sentences, drawing from memorised language.
93. Higher attaining pupils use intelligible pronunciation and intonation, make use of an increasing range of phrases and sentences and have a growing ability to understand and communicate in the present, past and future tenses, but they have not fully developed good communication skills in order, for example, to initiate and develop conversations. They do not always have the strategies to paraphrase or improvise. Higher attaining pupils generally read confidently, but often without, or with incorrect, inflection. Writing is their most advanced skill and, mechanistically, is done well. However, there is very little 'free' writing of merit on real or imaginary subjects.
94. By the end of Year 11, where nearly half of the year group enter for the examinations, standards of attainment are well above national levels and expectations. Pupils show an understanding of the most common features of spoken language. In oral work, they converse and discuss with increasing confidence. They talk freely and with some accuracy in various situations and, in their reading, they show understanding of texts concerned with topics within their experience. Given their low attainment on entry, pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9, and very good progress in Years 10 and 11.
95. Teaching is good overall. It is very good in Years 10 and 11. Some lessons, however, were only satisfactory. Learning reflects teaching and in the best lessons pupils learn well. In these lessons, a similarly strong profile of teaching applies. Teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious love for it and this commitment is strongly communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of methods that support learning well. There is appropriate emphasis on inclusion and on literacy and high expectations are set for reading and for the use of correct technical language, supporting progress, learning and achievement. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not always use time effectively, nor do they have a range of strategies to deal with the small minority of pupils, mostly those of lower attainment, who lose concentration.

96. Leadership of the subject is very good. Management is only satisfactory. The vision for the subject is good. It is supported by the current head of department who is a very good role model of a teacher dedicated to the highest standards. However, there are key areas of management which are not yet sufficiently addressed. These include a much more detailed development plan and a much more rigorous assessment regime, in order to drive up standards, particularly, but not exclusively in Years 7 to 9. There is insufficient time for the head of department to monitor in-class performance by teachers and pupils, and less experienced staff do not enjoy the professional development which can accrue from seeing more experienced teachers at work. These are crucial matters for improvements in the subject.
97. The previous report mentioned that an appointment of a head of department would provide the necessary rigour and cohesiveness to drive the subject forward. That head of department is now in place. She has, without doubt, the capacity to fulfil the role but the time she is allocated to provide leadership and management of the department is limited.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching has led to improved results in GCSE examinations.
- The head of department provides good leadership and has identified a clear plan for future improvement.
- Pupils' positive attitude towards their work assists good learning.
- Limited access to computers restricts the use of ICT to support learning.
- Marking of pupils' class work is inconsistent across the department.

### **Commentary**

98. In the 2004 National Tests for 14 year olds, results were well above the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. The results in mathematics were similar to those in science but better than those in English. Results have improved in mathematics since 2001, in line with the national trend. The results in 2004 are better than those of 2003 but are below the school's target.
99. The 2004 GCSE examination results in mathematics were well above national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. Pupils' results in mathematics were not as good as their average results across all their other subjects. Girls did better than boys, particularly at the higher levels. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C has improved since 2001.
100. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics which is well above the national average. From work seen during the inspection pupils in Year 9 are attaining well above national average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Year 9 higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of algebra, solving linear and simultaneous equations and rearranging formulae. Lower attaining Year 9 pupils, working in probability, can identify the outcomes of combining two experiments and produce diagrams and tables as representation.
101. By the end of Year 11 pupils have attainment which is well above average. This is reflected in the pupils' performance in GCSE examinations and in the work seen during the inspection, and represents good achievement. Higher attaining pupils use a variety of mathematical concepts to solve complex problems. They are able to apply their knowledge of angles and the properties of circles effectively, and use trigonometry to investigate and solve two and three-dimensional problems. They are able to analyse data, producing cumulative frequency tables and graphs to solve problems. Lower attaining pupils apply their ability to find percentages of quantities to solve everyday problems, and their knowledge of angles to find bearings.

102. Standards of teaching and learning are good overall; they are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. When teaching is good or better, lessons are well planned, pace of learning is brisk, and pupils are engaged by a variety of activities. Teachers display very good subject knowledge, successfully use open-ended questions to challenge pupils' learning, and capture pupils' interest by making effective use of electronic whiteboards. In lessons that are satisfactory, there are weaknesses. The work fails to motivate some pupils, particularly when there is over-direction by the teacher and pupils are not given enough opportunity to work individually. In these lessons some pupils become restless and lose concentration. In most lessons, pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Good use is made of teaching assistants who work sensitively with lower attaining pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very good, they are keen to do well, co-operate well with one another, and have very good relationships with their teachers.
103. There is very good feedback to pupils in lessons on how to improve their work. This is particularly effective because the majority of teaching groups are small. However, although there is a departmental policy for marking written work, this is inconsistently applied. In some cases inaccurate work is left unmarked or uncorrected. Pupils in Year 9 are made aware of the national curriculum levels they are expected to achieve, but not all pupils in Year 7 and 8 know the national curriculum levels at which they are working.
104. Leadership of the department is good, management is satisfactory. The head of department has identified a clear plan for improving standards in mathematics and he is well supported by members of the department. Together with the mathematics staff, he has revised all schemes of work and has produced a variety of policies that aim to improve standards. He is giving good support and guidance to a newly qualified teacher. Monitoring the implementation of policies and schemes of work is less thorough. The head of department has introduced an assessment system, based on bi-annual tests, the results of which are used to identify underachieving individual and groups of pupils. However, there is no formal ongoing monitoring system, which could be used to inform department planning. The head of department's teaching commitment does not allow him to observe all teachers in the department teach. Teachers with responsibilities in the mathematics department do not have job descriptions that relate to their specific role.
105. The department provides popular extra-curricular classes for pupils. There are good links with local primary schools that aid transition into Year 7. Accommodation is satisfactory, other resources are good. The department has limited access to ICT facilities, and whilst the use of ICT has increased since the last inspection, insufficient use is made of ICT to support the learning of mathematics.
106. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. GCSE results have improved, as have national test results. New schemes of work and department policies are in place. The quality of teaching has improved. Most pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. A marking policy has been introduced, although this is not consistently applied. The leadership and management of the subject have improved. Staff have received training in the use of electronic whiteboards and do have the opportunity to attend courses in connection with external examinations, but there is a lack of a rigorous performance management system that would aid the identification of individual training needs.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

107. A numeracy policy is in place, and opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical skills are identified in some faculty schemes of work. However, the application of the policy is not monitored formally. There are good opportunities for pupils in geography to use statistics to gather and present information in various forms. Pupils measure accurately, and estimate and weigh quantities in design and technology. Pupils apply formulae in spreadsheets and produce



graphs in ICT. In science, pupils perform calculations for various measurements, and use formulae and graphs to solve practical problems. In art, pupils work with perspective, enlarge shapes and work with proportion and symmetry.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in all years, pupils responding with very good behaviour and a positive approach to the subject.
- The use of a variety of teaching approaches ensures a high level of interest in lessons and leads to good learning.
- Standards of attainment are high and pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is good.
- Planning is good but there is a need for increased checking and evaluation of progress in lessons.
- The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is not fully developed.

### **Commentary**

108. GCSE double science results in 2003 and 2004 were well above the national average. Girls' results are slightly better than boys. The smaller numbers of pupils taking separate sciences were all successful, mostly attaining very high grades. A small group of lower attaining pupils have successfully followed the Certificate of Achievement in science course, but this has been replaced in the current Year 10 by GCSE applied science, thus better meeting the needs of individual pupils. Year 9 test results in 2003 and 2004 were well above average when compared to all schools and to similar schools based on prior attainment. There has been no significant difference in results of boys and girls prior to 2004, but in the most recent results girls slightly outperform boys. In comparison to other core subjects science is in line with mathematics and slightly above English.
109. Across Years 7 to 9 the standard of work seen is above average and the overall achievement good. Pupils settle quickly on entry to Year 7 and soon display good scientific thinking. A Year 7 class displayed enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment as they carefully planned and then competently carried out an experiment to purify rock salt. Their use of correct scientific terms was impressive and they were able to put forward sensible and perceptive ideas as they evaluated their work. The standard of work in Years 10 and 11 is well above average and the achievement is good. In all lessons pupils are keen to acquire new knowledge. They show interest in the subject and ask probing questions to increase their understanding. Practical work is carried out safely with accurate observations that are clearly recorded. Pupils show respect for each other and co-operate well in group work. Staff are well aware of the small number of pupils who need additional support. They participate fully in lessons and there are no differences in the achievements of any groups of pupils in classes.
110. Teaching and learning are good, with teachers' subject expertise and skills in presenting information a feature of lessons. Well-planned and managed lessons with a variety of teaching and learning approaches lead to a positive response from pupils. Pupils in a lower attaining Year 7 class were fully engaged in collecting data from each other in a lesson on variation. They entered their findings on an electronic whiteboard and were quickly able to spot any trends and patterns emerging, which they presented in a series of bar charts. A Year 11 class of higher attaining pupils showed a lot of interest and applied good scientific reasoning as they developed their answers on the theories of evolution before moving on to the topic of genetic engineering. In a mainly teacher-directed lesson the pupils were comfortable with this approach and fully involved throughout. The standard of marking is variable in terms of identifying ways in which pupils might improve. In some lessons the progress of pupils towards meeting lesson objectives is not fully evaluated and there is sometimes a failure to stretch and challenge higher attaining

pupils. When they are stretched, as in a Year 11 lesson on respiration, imaginative ideas of a very high standard are produced. In all classes relationships between staff and pupils are constructive, leading to a good atmosphere for learning.

111. Overall leadership is good and management is satisfactory. There is a shared commitment by staff towards subject improvement. They are well led by a department head with a clear vision for the future of the subject. Schemes of work are in place and revisited as necessary. Systems for monitoring teaching followed by evaluation and identification of action plans need further development as do systems for monitoring pupils' performance. Development plans for identifying improvements are lacking. There is a need to develop the use of ICT in the delivery of the curriculum and the department would benefit from increased access to the use of electronic whiteboards. Accommodation is just satisfactory, with two well-designed and equipped laboratories, which support pupils' learning well, in the new block, and five in need of some refurbishment in the main school. A hard-working team of technicians provides good support to the learning process. Literacy skills are good, particularly in discussion work and questioning activities, and pupils were clear and fluent when asked to read aloud from textbooks. Numeracy skills adequately support work in all years.
112. Since the previous inspection improvement is satisfactory. The sharing of good practice has helped to improve teaching standards and this has led to a marked improvement in the standard of attainment. Aspects of assessment to inform planning and target setting still need further development. Some accommodation issues have been addressed with the addition of two new laboratories, but a substantial proportion of teaching remains outside laboratories.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above national average.
- In general, teaching and learning are good but a minority of lessons are ineffective because of poor teaching.
- The department is well led and managed.
- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
- The use of ICT across the school to support learning is not yet fully developed.

### **Commentary**

113. Standards are well above national average in Years 7 to 11. Building on the national strategies, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show 100 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 or above which is well above the national average. Pupils are achieving very well in Years 7 to 9. GCSE pass rates are excellent, as is the proportion of grades A\*-B (75 per cent against 32 per cent nationally). Pass rates have risen year on year since 2002. Fewer pupils do the GCSE short course, but pass rates and average points scores are equally strong. This represents excellent achievement for these pupils, and work seen during the inspection (both in lessons and in the work scrutinised) shows those standards are being maintained - save in a small minority of classes where poor teaching meant little was achieved. There is a very good range of provision across all years in the school.
114. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are stronger in Years 10 and 11 than they are in Years 7 to 9. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have a good command of the subject and most underpin this professional knowledge through excellent relationships with pupils. In the best lessons, skilled questioning and a good sense of fun helps keep everyone involved. There is generous additional help, and assessment is conscientious, helping pupils improve and develop. They in turn are skilled learners, quick to respond and share ideas both with each other and the teacher. Even in Year 7, many pupils bring high level

ICT skills including good keyboarding and the ability to navigate quickly both through network areas and the Internet. They work well both in pairs and in larger groups and deal skilfully with complex ideas. In one lesson, for example, pupils could identify and use Boolean operators. They understood and applied validation rules and procedures, as well as explaining where and why one would require to use them in 'real world' applications. This was shown in their work on a complex spreadsheet, adding validation formulae, calculating discounts and tracking changes.

115. Leadership in ICT is good and management is satisfactory. Leadership is quiet, purposeful and determined with efficient organisation. There is, however, some failure to deal with ineffective teaching, while the management of ICT in the wider context of the whole curriculum is only just satisfactory - a school rather than a departmental weakness. There has been much improvement since the previous the inspection (in which ICT was a weakness) both in the provision of hardware and of good staff appointments. Accommodation in the ICT department is beautifully furnished and equipped, but the awkward layout of rooms can make group and plenary work rather difficult.

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

116. Pupils use ICT extensively in independent learning (often at home) for research on the Internet, analysis of data and presentation of material. There is work of exceptional quality in a few subjects (notably media studies, art and design and English). The school is well provided with electronic whiteboards, which are increasingly used in presentation but their interactive potential in learning is not yet fully exploited. Most departments make mention of ICT in schemes of work but the use of ICT in support for learning has some way to go. Pupils complain of difficulties in accessing terminals as they need them, and staff also have problems in scheduling lessons to exploit ICT. Music technology is well used in Year 10 and 11, but not in Years 7 to 9. In English and the humanities some pupil work is word processed, but spontaneous use of ICT (for example in drafting and redrafting text) is hindered by this difficulty of securing access. Those are issues to which the school is very responsive, and its bid for specialist school status in science and computing is focused not simply on resources, but on the cultural shift it will bring in more fully embedding the use and practice of ICT into support for all subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- The standards achieved by pupils are well above average by the end of Year 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.
- The leadership of the department is very good.
- Geography makes very good contributions to the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- ICT is not effectively used to support teaching and learning.
- The accommodation for geography is poor.
- Assessment data is not effectively used for planning or for target setting.

#### **Commentary**

117. Results of the 2004 GCSE examinations show that the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-C was well above the national average. All pupils entered for the examination achieved a pass, which is not the case nationally. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The standard of work seen during the inspection is well above the national average. The standard of work seen for pupils at the end of Year 9 is above national expectations.

Teacher assessment for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2004 is high showing all pupils achieving Level 5 and above. The progress made by pupils represents good achievement in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, including those identified as gifted and talented, is good. They receive very good support both in lessons and in their spare time. There were no pupils with English as an additional language. No significant difference was noted between the achievement of boys and girls.

118. The quality of both teaching and learning is very good overall. It is very good in Years 10 and 11. The team of specialist teachers use their very good knowledge of the subject to develop the pupils' thinking skills analytically and to encourage perceptive questioning by the pupils. The enthusiasm of the staff and pupils, combined with a very strong work ethos, ensures maximum input for learning, which produces very good results. The very good relationship between staff and pupils creates an atmosphere of enjoyment in learning, a feature frequently mentioned in discussion with pupils. Lessons are well planned with resources including newspaper reports on current topics which make the pupils aware of the relevance of their learning in the subject. In lessons observed on the decline of industry in the Midlands, pupils had opportunities to empathise with workers who lost their jobs from the Rover factory. Similarly, globalisation raises the question of moral issues, social and cultural differences, regarding costs and benefits for less economically developed countries. Although electronic whiteboards are being effectively used in lessons, computers are not generally available in classrooms or networked for the students to use, in order to enhance their learning. Homework is regularly set, thoroughly marked with advice on how to improve.
119. The quality of leadership is very good. The head of department has a very clear vision for achieving high standards of attainment and ensuring that the students appreciate the relevance of the subject to real life situations. Very good improvements have been made since taking up the post. The profile of the subject has risen and recruitment has increased significantly. Many pupils praise the quality of teaching and enjoyment of lessons which appeal to them. Fieldwork opportunities add to the attraction of the subject. A very good role model and the creation of a dedicated team, ensure good management of the department. Very good liaison and sharing of ideas and resources enable efficient operation of the department. However, the teaching of lessons in dispersed classrooms creates difficulties such as the storage and availability of resources including the use of computers. Although assessment is good and pupils are given good advice verbally and in marking on how to improve, there is as yet no system for data analysis to be used for tracking pupils' achievement and setting targets. Documentation of the department is thorough, good resources are well matched to topics and used effectively by staff.
120. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have risen significantly and the quality of teaching has improved. The subject has increased in popularity, has a high profile in the school and recruitment for GCSE courses has increased significantly.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning are good and this is reflected in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils respond well to high expectations and this leads to very good GCSE results.
- The historical visits that are made enhance what is learnt in the classroom.
- Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Pupils' access to and use of ICT is a weakness.
- There are weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

## Commentary

121. Overall standards are above the national average and in some cases excellent. In 2004 the number of A\*-C passes was well above the national average with 44 per cent gaining grades A and A\*. The girls' results are marginally at a higher level than the boys' but the latter are well above the national average.
122. Pupils enter the school with varied historical skills but very soon make good progress. By the end of Year 9 standards are above those gained nationally. Pupils' achievement relative to their prior attainment is good. They achieve well because of their positive attitudes and high aspirations, parental support and the teaching they receive. Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of events over time. Pupils in all years handle source material very well and were very clear about interpretation and bias. Pupils can analyse very well and discuss historical issues with their teacher and in pairs. Higher attaining pupils can write well and the quality, which is sometimes very good, can be seen in more extended writing. Other groups make good progress in their writing. Literacy skills and the use of historical language also improve significantly. The department's contribution to the development of numeracy skills was little in evidence during the inspection.
123. Pupils were working at above the national average by the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement relative to standards at the end of Year 9 is good. Most pupils are confident in the use of source material and this greatly helps them in their understanding of developments over time. They write well, whether it is in answer to an examination question or tasks that they are given.
124. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some that is very good. Teachers have a good command of their subject. Teachers plan their lessons well, although objectives are not often shared with pupils. The lessons draw on a range of activities and resources. Skilful questioning and oral assessment help pupils to understand and reinforce their learning. Opportunities to use ICT to support learning are limited. Pupils were given some good opportunities for independent learning and for working in pairs. Homework is set regularly and is used to reinforce what has been learnt in the lesson. Marking is regular with some useful comments on how to improve work; however, the data available to teachers is not sufficient to track pupils' progress fully.
125. Subject leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The overall leader knows the vision and direction the department needs to go and is supported with good schemes of work and uses historical visits to bring the subject alive in the classroom. It is not, however, fully underpinned by monitoring of teaching and sharing good practice, which would be particularly beneficial to new entrants to the department. There are also weaknesses in the use of evaluation of teaching and learning. Accommodation is satisfactory, however, and pupils' work is celebrated by displays in some classrooms. The area is well resourced. The department has dealt effectively with most of the issues from the last report.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient time in Years 7 to 9 for pupils to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Satisfactory teaching enables satisfactory learning but achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation is poor with barely adequate resources, restricting the range of the technology experiences that can be provided for pupils.

- GCSE results are well above the national average as time is adequate and teaching is good,
- Good relationships and pupils' capacity to work hard enable achievement to be satisfactory overall despite the restrictions.

### **Commentary**

126. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\*-C in 2004 was significantly better than the national picture. There are a very high number of A grades, nearly three times the national average, but there were no A\* grades. The number of pupils entered for the examinations is very low, only a third of the national average. Examination entry varies year on year.
127. Attainment on entry is slightly below national expectation because many pupils have limited experience of mechanisms and working with rigid materials. At the end of Year 9, standards are well below the national expectation because the programmes of study are not covered as required. Making skills are better than designing skills, which are weak, and there is insufficient attention to developing graphic skills to underpin the design process.
128. The progress of all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is limited by the time available, which at best is very low. Pupils follow separate lessons for resistant materials, food technology and graphics that are not co-ordinated effectively. In addition, the amount of time varies between different groups and genders and this is unsatisfactory. Some pupils do not study the subject at all, which is a breach of statutory requirements. However, achievement in lessons is satisfactory, but year after year pupils fall behind national expectations, so that by the end of Year 9 they have not achieved what they should, or could.
129. In Years 10 and 11, the achievement of the relatively few pupils who follow the subject is often very good because they catch up much of what they missed earlier and achieve high standards. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Effective learning is supported by the good relationships between pupils and their committed teachers. Pupils work hard in class as well as at home.
130. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, and often good, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers prepare lessons in which they try to use the limited time available effectively. Pupils learn well. There are good standards of behaviour and discipline that enable a lot to be achieved in the time available. Pupils listen well and follow instructions carefully. In the GCSE years extensive planning enables good progress to rapidly catch up the missing skills of the earlier years. This, together with the good learning enabled by very good attitudes, enables pupils to make coursework of quality, which gives them access to the highest grades. They are less secure in the design and theory areas of the examination because their earlier foundations are weak.
131. In each of the first three years the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Pneumatics, microprocessors, using ICT to design sub-systems and modern Smart materials are some of the areas insufficiently covered. The use of computer-aided design and manufacture is underdeveloped and pupils gain too little experience to understand how it fits into modern industry. The range of the GCSE curriculum is narrower than is found in most other schools.
132. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. This is because the teachers involved have not been given an effective structure that enables them to work together to produce a coherent and effective scheme of work and the time available to make it work properly. Since the last inspection there have been some developments, such as improvements to the food accommodation, and some new units of electronics have been developed but overall the impact is very limited. What is poor is the leadership of the subject at whole-school level, as the key issues raised at the last inspection, and the inspection before, have not been effectively addressed.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress from Year 7 through to Year 9.
- Results in the GCSE examination in 2004 were well above the national averages.
- Teachers are very well informed and possess very good subject knowledge.
- Pupils work with great concentration to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Informal assessment takes place during lessons but formal assessment procedures lack rigour.
- Provision of ICT in the art department is unsatisfactory at present.

#### Commentary

133. Although pupils enter the school with a wide range of different skills, the standard of their work is broadly in line with national expectations. Initial drawings in the visual diaries are quite weak in terms of the use of line and tone, but due to pupils' enthusiasm for the subject they make good progress in Year 7. This improvement is continued into Year 8, when pupils show that they have acquired the capacity for sustaining work over longer periods of time. By Year 9, the majority of pupils are producing work of a standard that is above expectations, with a significant minority working well above. Pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are good.
134. Results in the GCSE examination in 2004 were well above the national average, with 45 per cent achieving the highest grades A\*-A, by comparison with the national figure of 18 per cent. The standard of artwork that Year 10 pupils are currently producing is above national expectations. Pupils in Year 11 are producing artwork of a standard that is well above expectations. They work with great concentration to broaden their knowledge, deepen their understanding, and improve their technical skills. They explore ideas and concepts through experimentation with a wide range of different media and materials. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers during lessons. Pupils are achieving very well in Years 10 and 11.
135. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers are very well informed and possess very good subject knowledge. Planning is carried out thoroughly before lessons and teachers are very familiar with the National Curriculum levels and with the requirements of the GCSE examination. During lessons they provide very good advice and support for all pupils. Teachers have very high expectations and pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils in Year 11 are encouraged to develop the capacity for working with much greater independence, both at home and in the art studios. Although informal assessment takes place during lessons and pupils are provided with verbal feedback, more formal, written tracking and recording procedures are lacking in rigour at present.
136. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a very clear vision of how she would like to see the department develop over time. She is a very good role model for staff and pupils alike and relationships within the department are very good and teachers have very good relationships with pupils in all year groups. Planning is carried out thoroughly and each individual member of the department is familiar with his or her role and responsibilities. However, insufficient use is made of objective data when setting targets for pupils.
137. Accommodation is good. There are three multi-purpose studios, which are large and well lit. However, there are some issues surrounding the storage of pupils' finished artwork. Resources are good, within the context of a traditional model of the curriculum, but pupils have very restricted access to computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers in the art studios. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Standards are above the national average at the end of Year 9 and the quality of teaching is now very good overall.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in drama are very good.
- Drama courses are becoming increasingly popular with pupils.
- Drama makes a significant contribution to extra-curricular provision.
- The subject is well led.

### Commentary

138. Drama was not taught as a separate subject at the time of the last inspection, but is now a growing strength of the school. Drama is a popular examination option for pupils. Drama is not taught as a separate subject in Years 7 to 9, but the department offers many opportunities for pupils in those years, including drama clubs and community theatre projects. In a very good whole-school assembly, drama pupils, directed by a member of the drama department, told the story of Passover in an accomplished and very entertaining performance.
139. Standards in drama are very good. GCSE results for 2004 are well above the national average and the department's GCSE coursework has recently been used by the examination board to establish national standards.
140. Pupils and students approach their work in drama in a positive and professional way. Drama pupils are confident learners, who find the drama lesson a safe place to explore ideas, emotions and a sense of their physical selves. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and work with sensitivity, enthusiasm and intelligence. Pupils and students are involved in the assessment of their work and are aware of their own strengths and where they need to make specific improvements.
141. Resources for drama are good, but accommodation is only just adequate. Extensive use is made of ICT, including the practical use of computerised lighting equipment, as well as digital cameras and video to record performance and contribute to self-evaluation. The main drama room is a stimulating environment, but is getting very old and cannot belie its origins as a pair of portable classrooms. The new drama studio is lavishly equipped, but poorly designed with inadequate soundproofing.
142. The head of drama supports his department through a carefully planned scheme of work, weekly department meetings, a thorough department handbook and regular lesson observations. The department works on joint projects with the art, music and English departments. Drama is well led and the head of department has a clear vision for what is required to establish and maintain the subject as a successful and important element in the curriculum offered in the school.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recently designated subject leadership and new staffing are beginning to provide better opportunities for pupils, which are raising the profile of music in the school.
- Pupils' attainment and achievement by Year 9 are much too variable in relation to their capability because of inconsistent teaching and learning.
- Good teaching and learning are promoting good achievement in Years 10 and 11 and improving GCSE results.



- Subject management and strategic planning are limited by the lack of whole-school management support systems.
- There are no opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to use ICT to support their learning.

### Commentary

143. Although numbers are relatively small, GCSE results in 2004 were above the national average and showed an improvement on the 2003 results because of the higher number of A and B grades. Current standards of attainment in Years 10 and 11 are above average and pupils' achievement by Year 11 is good. Year 10 pupils, in particular, have the potential to improve further the number of higher grades. Teachers' assessments of pupils in Year 9 in 2004 show the proportion gaining National Curriculum Level 5 as well below average. Current standards by Year 9 have improved and are just about average overall, but the range of attainment in relation to pupils' capability is still much too variable and reflects the similar pattern in the 2004 assessment results. As pupils' standards in music on entry are average overall, achievement through Years 7 to 9 is only satisfactory.
144. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils benefit from good lesson planning, a good balance of practical and more theoretical activities, opportunities for analytical listening and a broad range of musical styles and sources. Although a good range of tasks is provided for pupils of different capabilities in Years 7 to 9, they are too often not made aware of, or directed to, the best level of work to develop their potential. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own or others' work, which limits their confidence in understanding and using technical terms and musical processes. Pupils have no access to subject-specific ICT. Inconsistent management of pupils, both by individual teachers and across all teaching, is only partially successful in minimising the lack of attention, variable concentration and limited productivity of a significant minority of pupils. In some lessons these negative attitudes too often reduce the maximum progress most pupils could make. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but its recent revision has yet to make an impact on learning. Teaching is consistently good in Years 10 and 11 and its rigour and challenge, as well as good facilities for ICT, promote pupils' independence through the effective development of learning and problem solving skills.
145. Leadership, management and improvement since the previous inspection are all satisfactory. The appointment of a designated subject leader and, even more recently, of an additional full-time specialist, who have very good music skills and experience, despite being not yet fully qualified teachers, represents the most significant improvements in provision since the previous inspection. As a result, good schemes of work, including assessment, plus growing opportunities for instrumental tuition, performances within school and externally and collaboration with the rich variety of professional organisations in the area, are beginning to raise the profile and status of music in the school. Day-to-day organisation is efficient but, as was the case at the previous inspection, subject planning and strategic development continue to be limited by a lack of supportive whole-school systems, particularly for monitoring, evaluation and review, performance management and continued professional development. Despite some improvement in learning, raising the achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 remains the subject priority.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **poor**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the department are poor.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, overall.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is unsatisfactory.
- Standards are below average throughout the school.

- Pupils get good opportunities to participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities that are offered within the school.
- Outdoor facilities are inadequate, preventing pupils from developing their skills in a range of activities.

### Commentary

146. GSCE physical education is not offered in the school. By the end of Year 9, standards, overall, are below the national average. By the end of Year 11, standards are below, sometimes well below, those expected. Standards in swimming are above average. The majority of pupils, even in Years 7 to 9, do not achieve their potential for a range of reasons. Although pupils do make progress in some practical skills, the curriculum does not enable them to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth. Also, the time allocated to physical education is below the recommendation throughout the school. Pupils often lose further time, especially in Years 10 and 11, because they complete work in their examination subjects when they should be in physical education lessons. The lack of playing fields and the regular loss of indoor facilities for examinations and lunchtime dining further prevent pupils from learning and achieving satisfactorily.
147. Although teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, it is unsatisfactory, sometimes poor, in Years 10 and 11. However, it is good in swimming, as skills are well broken down into parts so that pupils gain good technical knowledge and improve their performance. When pupils are given the opportunity to analyse their performance in order to identify the skills of relay take-overs they can use this new knowledge to improve their own performance. These opportunities, though, are very rare, as teaching is mainly instructional. Although teachers ask questions, pupils, who are very articulate, are given little opportunity to explain their opinions in depth in order to extend their learning. Teachers are subject specialists with good knowledge of the activities. However, they have had little opportunity to receive any training on how to implement National Curriculum subject requirements. Consequently, although teachers usually encourage pupils to work hard physically, in some Year 10 and 11 lessons there is insufficient challenge to pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace, but, when teaching is poor, explanations are far too long and, thus, pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to participate actively. Tasks are often at a very basic, introductory level, even in Years 10 and 11, as a result of the department's introducing activities based on the recent acquisition of new resources such as hurdles or a trampoline. Relationships are good and teachers use suitable strategies in most lessons to encourage pupils to display good attitudes and behaviour.
148. Leadership and management are poor. Roles and responsibilities within the department are not clear as teachers do not have any job descriptions. As a result, no one has overall responsibility for the department and there is no vision for improvement. The curriculum offered to pupils is satisfactory on a day-to-day basis but there is no consistency as the department offers activities in reaction to availability of facilities and resources and, thus, there is little continuity in learning. There are no procedures to check on pupils' progress or the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, the department does not know its strengths and weaknesses. There are limited opportunities for pupils to participate in teams and fixtures against other schools but a high proportion do take part in inter-house sporting competitions.
149. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory as the same issues identified remain, although changing facilities are now much improved.

### BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

150. Business studies courses and other vocational courses were not inspected in depth. There are a number of vocational courses, including **leisure and tourism** and **business studies** in Year 11 and **applied business** and **business studies** in Year 10. These courses were sampled. Teaching and learning were good and the courses met the need of individual pupils.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship was inspected in detail. Other aspects of personal, social and health education were sampled.

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is in line with that found nationally.
- Pupils use a range of strategies that encourage participation in activities within lessons, where they develop skills that can be employed outside lessons.
- A teaching strength is the sensitivity displayed, universally by staff, when discussing sensitive or controversial issues.
- Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.
- Assessment, monitoring and evaluation are not fully developed.
- The contribution of subjects to citizenship is not yet fully developed.

### Commentary

151. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' attainment is in line with national standards. Higher attaining pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study, and show awareness of the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens, and some can contribute to discussions and debate. Lower attaining pupils explore, discuss and debate topical issues of significance and interest that are relevant to their lives. For example, pupils consider the issues of world peace and conflict. The generally high levels of literacy and oracy skills enable pupils to attain levels, both in debate and in writing, which are above average. However, although pupils make good progress in developing ideas, the lack of wider reading around the subject prevents the debate from reaching full maturity,
152. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' attainment is in line with that seen in similar schools. Pupils have a good knowledge of the topical events they study, and they are particularly aware of the importance of combating anti-social behaviour and engaging as a good citizen both in school and in the community at large. In discussion, they demonstrate a maturity of understanding, based on their own experiences. Standards are, however, only average, because there is a general lack of application to a subject which lacks parity of esteem, an inconsistency of application and a disparaging attitude from a significant minority of pupils.
153. Teaching is satisfactory overall, though some lessons are good. The best lessons, particularly those in which citizenship was offered within other subject areas, such as religious education or PSHE, are characterised by good planning and clear aims which are explained and understood by the pupils. In such lessons, the citizenship elements often have specific references made to them. A teaching strength is the sensitivity displayed, universally by staff, when discussing sensitive or controversial issues.
154. A major ingredient of successful lessons is the use of a range of strategies that encourage student participation in activities within lessons, where they develop skills that can be employed outside lessons, whilst engaging in active citizenship. For example, in some lessons, there is a high preponderance for debate and informal discussion about aspects of identity, which leads to pupils acquiring skills which they use later in practical situations, both within and outside the school, such as an increased sense of community. Moreover, the school is very effective at providing a setting for active citizenship and measures the success of the provision by how much the programme enables pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding actively in the local community. For example, pupils are involved in a range of community-oriented activities such as millennium volunteers programmes and the 'hand-in-hand' project.

155. The citizenship curriculum is developing. An effective policy has been drawn up which includes a mapping exercise for citizenship and an audit has been carried out to identify opportunities for these subjects to contribute to the provision for citizenship. However, the school recognises that opportunities to have specific aspects of citizenship taught by other curricular areas have not yet been fully exploited, and several subjects do not include it as a discrete part of their planning or provision. If citizenship provision does occur in these areas, it is often by accident rather than deliberate planning.
156. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Citizenship is the responsibility of the deputy headteacher, whose other major areas of responsibility limit the time she can devote to the leadership and management of the subject. There are clear and imminent plans to appoint a co-ordinator for citizenship, whose first tasks will be to identify specific contributions to citizenship by other subjects of the curriculum, and the establishment of an appropriate regime of assessment, monitoring and evaluation, involving the provision of suitable assessable examinations, including public examinations. The acceptance by the school of the importance of these matters can be seen only as important signals which bode well for the future.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 11 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	8	100	98.3	87.5	50.2	112.5	87.1
Biology	9	100	96.6	66.7	40.0	95.6	79.3
Business studies	9	100	98.9	77.8	39.4	102.2	81.8
Chemistry	7	100	97.7	57.1	50.0	94.3	85.7
Classical studies	1	100	99.6	100	58.1	120	92.8
Drama	4	100	99.6	100	42.8	115	85.1
English / English language	7	100	99.2	42.9	36.4	85.7	81.1
English literature	13	100	99.4	92.3	44.9	109.2	85.5
French	3	100	99.0	66.7	53.1	100	88.9
Design and technology	1	100	97.8	100	35.0	120	77.9
Geography	4	100	98.8	50	46.4	90	85.2
History	17	100	99.0	82.4	45.6	98.8	85.1
Information technology	7	100	96.3	28.6	25.7	82.9	71.1
Mathematics	10	90	96.8	80	56.6	102	89.5
Music	3	100	98.2	33.3	37.1	80	79.5
Other languages	7	100	97.3	100	66.7	111.4	95.6
Other sciences	18	100	97.4	66.7	44.2	96.7	82.5
Other social studies	2	100	97.4	50	42.5	100	81.6
Physics	3	100	96.7	100	45.3	106.7	82.6
Religious studies	40	40	99.1	90	49.5	105.5	87.4

### *Level 2 vocational qualifications*

Qualification	No in final year	% A - B		% A-E		Average points score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	10	50	24.1	100	91.6	94.0	67.9
Media: communication and prod.	21	95.2	43.0	100	92.5	113.3	79.1
Science	3	100	10.2	100	89.9	100	58.9
Information technology VQ	1	100	26.9	100	88.3	120	67.8
Travel and tourism	1	100	19.6	100	90.1	100	64.9

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which helps students to attain standards in English that are well above the national average.
- Teachers usually employ teaching methods which engage students actively in their learning.
- Assessment of students' work is not always very detailed or prescriptive in a way that will help them understand what they need to do to improve.
- Students approach their work in a positive and responsive way and there is a good working relationship between teachers and students; as a result, students achieve very well.

#### Commentary

157. In 2004, the attainment at A-level in English language was above the national average and well above the national average in English literature, both improvements on the previous year. At AS level, in 2004, attainment was above the national average in English Language and well above the national average in English literature.
158. Standards in English are well above average. Students show good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Written work is thorough and students readily engage in discussion when invited, using the opportunity to clarify and explore ideas. Students compile weighty portfolios which include annotated texts, notes and longer pieces of written work.
159. Achievement in English language and English literature is very good. Standards on entry to the sixth form are good and students' very positive attitude to their work helps them to make progress that is well above average. This is aided by good teaching, giving students opportunities to engage actively with ideas presented to them. In a Year 12 English language class, students worked energetically to identify the features of a number of contemporary novels by analysing the information displayed on their covers. However, marking of students' written work is not always very detailed or prescriptive. Students receive oral feedback on their work, but there is not enough written analysis of strengths and weaknesses to help them understand how to improve.
160. Teaching and learning in English are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They provide students with detailed and helpful notes to support their learning. Students approach their work in a positive and responsive way and they are helped to achieve by a good working relationship with their teachers. Students' responses and questions reflect an intelligent understanding and an enquiring approach. Teachers use questioning well or very well to stimulate students' thinking, but sometimes discussion is dominated by the teacher, leaving few opportunities for students to engage actively with ideas and make them truly their own. An English language revision seminar on the features of spoken English did not offer enough focused tasks for students to be involved in any other than a passive way. Nevertheless, even when discussion is led and directed by the teacher, it can give students room to explore important issues. The teacher had a firm hand on the direction of a very good Year 12 lesson, but kept the students involved; even when they began an individual task, a sense of corporate purpose was maintained. In another revision lesson on language frameworks, students were given the chance regularly to reinforce their ideas by working in pairs and reporting back.
161. Leadership in English is good. Teachers work together well and there is much evidence that planning and resources are shared. Management of English is satisfactory. Although the head of department has a clear view of the department's priorities for the development of English in

the sixth form, there is no detailed departmental development plan and a department handbook gives department members only minimum support. There is no evidence of regular performance management of members of the department or the consequent review of roles. The head of department does not have a job description or the clear accountabilities that would be included in it. For example, the head of English has identified the need to broaden provision in the sixth form to reach potential students for whom the courses presently offered by the department are not entirely suitable. However, the role the head of English should take in the development of these new courses is not clear. The head of department is allocated limited time to monitor and evaluate the work of the sixth form English staff.

162. Improvement in English since the last inspection is good. Standards and achievement in English language and English literature continue to be above or well above the national average.

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

163. The provision for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. Standards of English language and literacy skills, as demonstrated by students in the school, are very good.
164. There is a whole-school literacy policy, which focuses mainly on the promotion of specialist vocabulary and a consistent approach to the development of general skills of expression. Subject departments emphasise the importance of knowing and using the technical terms and key words appropriate to their subject. Students are given plenty of opportunity to practise the skills of reading and writing, listening and speaking in all their lessons.
165. A variety of written forms and styles is encouraged by most subject teachers. Many departments actively promote good literacy in pupils by correcting misspellings and awkward expression.
166. In the sixth form, students have many opportunities to engage in extended discussion writing about complex ideas. The use of technical language is good in written and oral work. The English department runs a lunchtime club for sixth form students who wish to polish their essay writing technique.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A-level examination results are very good.
- Teachers are confident and have very good subject knowledge.
- Very good teaching leads to very good learning.
- Students have very good attitudes to mathematics and this is reflected in their high achievement.

### **Commentary**

167. The 2004 A-level results in mathematics were well above the national average. In 2003 the results were very high and in the top five per cent nationally. The 2004 AS level results in mathematics were well above the national average. Very good results at A-level have been maintained since the last inspection and, there has been an improvement at AS level.
168. Students' standards on entry to Year 12 are generally above national average. The results at the end of Year 13 are well above average, and higher attaining students reach the highest grades; most students are on line to achieve A or B in the forthcoming examinations. This represents very good achievement. There is no significant difference in achievement by gender. Students show a high level of analytical thinking and can choose from a wide knowledge of

different methods to solve problems. For example, in a Year 13 lesson students were working independently on different topics. All were able to apply advanced calculus to solve a variety of problems and showed a good understanding of functions, graphs and second derivatives.

169. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are confident in their teaching methods. They use detailed and thorough assessment to set challenging targets for students. Assessment is structured so that students know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their results. Students have very positive attitudes to the subject and have excellent relationships with their teachers. They are keen to succeed and work with enthusiasm.
170. Leadership and management are good. The head of department and the sixth form mathematics co-ordinator have revised and improved schemes of work. There is a strong team commitment to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards of attainment. Retention rates are good. Accommodation is satisfactory, other resources good.
171. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Numbers studying A-levels have improved since the last inspection and are being maintained. Very good examination results at A-level have been maintained and AS level results have improved. The standard of teaching has improved. Leadership and management have improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

172. Students are competent in mathematics when they use it in other subjects. Data handling skills and application of formulae are well above average. Students use these effectively in science, geography, business studies and ICT. Good use is made of shape, size and patterns in art. In food studies, students measure and weigh accurately. Whilst there is a numeracy policy in school, there is currently no formal monitoring in the use of mathematics across the curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Chemistry**

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

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

- Teachers' high subject expertise ensures good learning opportunities for students.
- Students have a very positive attitude to learning and reach well above national standards of attainment.
- The planning and structure of lessons are good but there is a need to further challenge and stretch higher attaining students.
- The application of ICT to support teaching and learning needs to be developed.

#### **Commentary**

173. In 2003 A level results were very high compared to schools nationally and in 2004 results remained well above the national average. AS level results for the small numbers of students completing their studies at the end of Year 12 were well above national average in 2003 and above in 2004. The standard of work seen both written and in class indicates that present students in both Year 12 and Year 13 are working at well above average standard. The achievement of students based on prior attainment is good. Evidence of a very good foundation of knowledge was seen in a Year 12 group confidently drawing skeletal structures and correctly applying rules of nomenclature to a range of organic compounds. A Year 13 group demonstrated good practical technique in the preparation of a series of buffer solutions followed by pH measurements and showed good understanding and application as they confidently handled the associated equilibrium relationships.



174. The quality of teaching is good, giving students confidence and enabling them to learn effectively. Lessons are well planned, with a high level of student involvement, which maintains their interest and motivates them to work hard. This was seen as a Year 12 group developed a good understanding of the mechanisms of addition polymerisation by whole group involvement in which folded arms representing monomer double bonds opened up to create the polymer single bonds. Homework is used well to reinforce learning and students are provided with very good supporting notes which they use well for revision purposes. Students enter into discussions well and are always prepared to ask questions to clarify their understanding. At times, however, opportunities are missed to consistently challenge students and expect them to think more for themselves. Students form constructive relationships with one another and with teachers. They are co-operative in group work and support each whenever possible in the learning process.
175. Leadership is good, the head of department and teacher in charge of the subject have a shared commitment to achieve best for the students. Teachers delivering the subject form an effective team. Management is generally satisfactory but there are some aspects which need attention. Use made of performance data in terms of informing planning and target-setting needs to be more formalised. Plans for subject development need to be in place. Accommodation is satisfactory but some updating of the laboratories would provide a more supportive environment for learning. Resources generally are satisfactory but there is a need to develop ICT and its use in the delivery of the curriculum. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Some issues still remain with respect to assessment and resourcing of ICT but teaching and learning remain good and students' attainment has been maintained at well above average standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High pass rates over time (save for 2003) in AS and A-level.
- A good proportion of students achieve the highest grades A and B.
- Introduction of a successful VCE programme with very high pass rates.
- High quality coursework from both GCE and VCE students.
- Achievement sustained by consistently good or very good teaching in the sixth form.
- A good mix of vocational and academic programmes.
- Good use of links with local, national and international businesses.

### **Commentary**

176. Sixth form provision in ICT comprises both vocational and academic programmes (VCE and GCE), each available at both AS and A-level. Save for a dip in one year, standards over time are well above national averages. There are consistently high pass rates with a good percentage of those at the two highest grades, A and B. In 2004 there was a 100 per cent pass rate in both the subsidiary and full awards of the VCE programme. There has been a 100 per cent pass rate at GCE A-level in each of the last three years and work seen during the inspection was of a comparably high standard in both the GCE and the VCE courses.
177. Achievement is therefore very good, and work produced by the current AS and A-level students shows that those standards are being maintained and improved. Built on the students' hard work and enthusiasm, this achievement draws importantly on strong teaching and good academic planning.
178. Teaching and learning are very good, matching sound preparation and classroom practice with excellent computing expertise. Experienced teachers share their insights on 'real world' applications. Students respond well to this good teaching both in commitment to individual tasks and whole-class activities. Students' folders contain notes, handouts, printouts of work and

downloads from the Internet. Students are briefed to avoid plagiarism, and make good use of ascription protocols in acknowledging work they have downloaded. Those folders are generally very well organised, and represent not only a good record of work but a valuable resource for study and revision.

179. Leadership and management of sixth form ICT are good. There is helpful tracking and recording of achievement, and management of exam board deadlines and attainment criteria. The department has supported newer colleagues in their development from newly qualified teachers to very strong professional competence.

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

180. The previous report noted a deficit in the use of ICT to support the curriculum. In the sixth form at least, there is now extensive use of ICT in many subjects, and students bring high levels of ICT skill which they use extensively in independent learning, presentation and research.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- The standards achieved are above average at the end of Year 13.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The students are highly motivated and work hard to achieve high standards.
- Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.
- The leadership of the department is very good.
- The accommodation and lack of access to computers create difficulties for teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

181. Results of the 2004 GCE A-level examinations show that the percentage of students achieving grades A and B was above the national average but the achievement of boys was well above average. All students who entered for the examination achieved a pass, which is above the national average. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The standard of work seen during the inspection is above average in Year 13 and well above in Year 12. The progress made by students represents good achievement. No significant difference was noted between the achievement of boys and girls.
182. The quality of both teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers use their expertise well to challenge the students and generate intensive discussions. The enthusiasm of the staff and students combined with a very strong work ethos ensures maximum input for learning which produces very good results. The students approach lessons with enthusiasm and are able to discuss ideas and challenge their teachers because of the very good relationship between them and the staff. A sense of humour makes learning enjoyable. Homework is methodically discussed, with advice on how to improve grades. Lessons are well planned with resources, including newspaper reports on current topics, which make the students aware of the relevance to the world of work. Lack of networked computers has a limiting effect on teaching and learning.
183. The quality of leadership is very good. The head of department has a very clear vision for achieving high standards of attainment and ensuring that the students appreciate the relevance of the subject to real life situations. Very good improvements have been made since taking up the post. The profile of the subject has risen and an increasing number of students choose to study the subject for GCE A-level. The students praise the quality of teaching and say that

lessons are enjoyable. Fieldwork opportunities add to the attraction of the subject. The head of department is a very good role model. Members of the department are very experienced teachers and their links with examination boards enable them to keep up to date with the latest developments. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

## **Government and politics**

Provision in government and politics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results are above national averages and standards seen in class are well above national standards.
- Achievement is very good.
- Very good teaching leads to very good learning.
- The subject leader is a very good role model, committed to high standards.
- Accommodation for the subject is a weakness.

### **Commentary**

184. In GCE A-level, the results in 2004, with a small cohort, were above national averages for students obtaining A or B grades.
185. Standards attained by current students in Year 12 are above average. Higher attaining students have developed an early enthusiasm for the subject and they develop a good understanding of the central concepts of the subject. They understand and interpret effectively political information in a variety of forms. However, lower attaining students are relatively weaker at selecting and organising relevant materials to construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions. For example, in their study of the role of parliament, students effectively describe such parliamentary roles as security, representation and law-making but they struggle with the more evaluative tasks of ascribing a hierarchy of importance to them.
186. In Year 13, at A-level, students' attainment, as seen in class and in their files, is well above national averages. Students analyse effectively, and evaluate skilfully, the differences between the UK and USA political systems which govern relationships between institutions, processes, ideologies and concepts. For example, in their comparative studies of the political systems of the UK and USA, higher attaining students evaluate evidence and produce compelling arguments to support their theories concerning the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different political systems.
187. Achievement in Year 12 is good. Students across the ability range make good progress and there is considerable evidence in both their oral and written work of the acquisition of increasing knowledge of facts. In Year 13, achievement is very good, particularly in the heightened maturity of political awareness which students display. In both years, however, the achievement of students is limited by their lack of wider reading around the subject and their over-reliance on teacher produced notes. In class, students' response and behaviour are very good, and on occasion, they are excellent. Students engage diligently in their work. They sustain concentration and have a responsible attitude to the subject.
188. The very good response from students reflects the very good teaching which they receive. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they present in lively, and sometimes inspirational, classes which motivate and stimulate the students and which lead, therefore, to very good learning. A significant characteristic of the teaching is the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, which is infectious and which has a favourable impact on students' learning. A newly emerging characteristic of politics teaching is the successful encouragement of students to become independent learners.

189. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is an excellent role model as a teacher committed to high standards. This support would be even more effective, with a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of students' progress, by compiling and using diagnostic information that will monitor and support students' academic performance.
190. Accommodation for the subject is just satisfactory in that the subject has no base room and the room which it shares is not conducive to tutorial learning, which is a major facet of provision in the subject.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well.
- Students have high expectations and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Students analyse interpret and evaluate the source material well.
- Resources are used effectively to improve the quality of learning.
- There is a lack of rigour in monitoring students' progress.

### Commentary

191. Most students gained a grade at AS and many of them continued their studies to A-level. The girls at AS level achieved higher results than did the boys. In the 2004 A-level examinations the number gaining A or B was well above the national average. There are significant differences in results when considering gender.
192. The evidence of the inspection is that standards achieved both in lessons and in the scrutiny of work is that most students are working above that expected nationally, with some students producing some very good work. Students demonstrate both from their work done in school and that done on their own initiative, that they have developed a good knowledge and understanding of the European history topics they are studying. They appreciate from their reading the complexity of the themes they are studying and are able to use a range of source material constructively. Most students have the contextual knowledge that engenders confidence to put across their ideas in discussions and in their writing and show evidence of working independently and being able to organize their work well. However, some by their non-attendance in some lessons, lessen their opportunities to progress.
193. Achievement is satisfactory. Students have built on their knowledge and skills that they have acquired while they have been at King David. They have developed good analytical skills and benefited from evaluating a range of historical evidence and made good progress in developing an understanding of the themes they have studied. Expectations are high because most students are positive about the subject and are clear about the future direction of their studies.
194. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A reasonable range of teaching strategies is used well. The relationships between the teachers and their students are very good. They manage discussions well and, on the whole, the balance between teacher and student involvement is just about right. Students respond positively to good questioning and they use the resources they are given to some effect to increase their understanding. They encourage the students to write well and monitor their progress.
195. Leadership and management are good. The leadership has a clear perception of the direction the subject needs to go. The curriculum is well suited to students' needs now and in the future. Student attitudes are positive towards the subject. Assessment needs further rigour to inform

progress and planning. The provision of the accommodation is satisfactory; the quality of resources is good. ICT is increasingly being used for research and learning. The improvement has been good with all the issues in the last inspection addressed.

## Psychology

Provision in psychology is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very high standards at both AS and A-level.
- Expert and inspiring teaching provides strong personal support for students.
- There is a culture of high achievement grounded in students' commitment and intellectual sparkle.
- Excellent coursework, which is very well organised, produces very detailed student folders.
- The subject makes a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Commentary

196. Standards are very high, with consistently strong results over time and a commendable proportion of those at the very highest grades. The 100 per cent pass rate at A and AS levels has, in the last two years, included 75 per cent passes at grades A and B, which is well above the national averages. At both levels nearly half the candidates gained a pass at grade A. This represents very good achievement, while the high quality of the coursework and folders shows that this standard is being maintained - as does the sparkling enthusiasm of students for the subject, whose responses in discussion and written work reveal a real depth of understanding matched by a considerable ability to synthesise and collate information.
197. Referring to the idea of stimulus and learned response, students can articulate the role of classical conditioning in the development of specific phobias, and apply the principle of Occam's Razor (that a simpler explanation is always to be preferred) to a comparison with the Freudian account of their origin. They were able to relate their knowledge of operant conditioning to the reinforcement of ritualised behaviour in, for example, obsessive-compulsive disorder.
198. Teaching and learning are very good. Students are consistently engaged by their work and the quality of discourse would not have been out of place in a good university tutorial. Teaching is challenging and well structured, grounded in considerable intellect and a proper mastery of the subject. Students respond to the obvious affection and respect with which they are treated. Indeed, their excellent response is itself a stimulus to the quality of teaching they enjoy, in which there is also a strong contribution to social and moral development. Students receive outstandingly good individual support.
199. The leadership and management of psychology are satisfactory, and provide a sound base for the teaching and administration of the subject. But procedures for evaluation and monitoring of performance within the larger school context are undeveloped, leading to some professional isolation.
200. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There was no separate commentary on the subject in that report, although it noted that psychology students 'take responsibility for their own work and contribute perceptively to class discussions.' This remains the case. But, in the interim, numbers have grown, the quality of provision has been consolidated and examination results are excellent.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

201. None of these courses was fully inspected. A lesson on **AS design and technology** in food studies was sampled. The lesson in Year 12 was based on the effective reviewing of coursework. The quality of teaching and learning was very good and students achieved very well.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

202. One **music** lesson in each of Year 12 and Year 13, together with examples of the work of three students were sampled. At the time of the previous inspection music was not offered in the sixth form and its reintroduction is a significant feature of the improvement of the subject's profile. Previous AS results are average in relation to A or B grades nationally. Current entry standards in Year 12 are average and both Year 12 and Year 13 students are working at above average standards. Their achievement is promoted by good teaching and learning and their own strong motivation and hard work.
203. **Drama** was not subject to a full inspection but was sampled. Drama is now a growing strength of the school and is a popular option for students. Standards in drama at AS and A-level were well above the national average.
204. Students approach their work in drama in a positive and professional way. In a Year 12 lesson, students exploring characters from the *Commedia dell'Arte* felt secure enough to lose themselves in the activity completely. The result was some outstanding physical work. Students are confident learners, who find the drama lesson a safe place to explore ideas, emotions and a sense of their physical selves. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and work with sensitivity, enthusiasm and intelligence. Students are involved in the assessment of their work and are aware of their own strengths and where they need to make specific improvements. Drama is well led and the head of department has a clear vision for what is required to establish and maintain the subject as a successful and important element in the curriculum offered in the school.

### Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the GCE A-level examination in 2004 were well above the national average.
- Students make very good progress from the start of Year 12 to Year 13.
- Teaching is very good in Years 12 and 13.
- Informal assessment is carried out effectively during lessons but more formal tracking and recording procedures lack rigour.
- Provision of ICT in the art department is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

205. In the GCE AS level examination in 2004, attainment was well above the national average, with all candidates achieving grades A or B. This was significant improvement over the results for 2003. In the GCE A-level examination in 2003, attainment was broadly in line with the national average, but there was significant improvement in 2004 when 87 per cent of students achieved grades A-B by comparison with the national figure of 50 per cent.
206. Year 12 students make very good progress. There is substantial evidence in their visual diaries to show that they have developed very good understanding of how to take complex ideas and develop them over time. They make highly effective use of the work of other artists and designers as starting points for their own work using a wide range of different media and

materials. There is a strong multicultural dimension to much of this work and students draw heavily on images from Africa, Japan and Asia. Students in Year 13 make very good progress. They work with great assurance and demonstrate the confidence required to enable them to work from their own ideas, concepts, attitudes, values and beliefs. Many make very effective use of photography as a means of collecting information in a visual form that is used to inform their own work. Some are also making very good use of ICT as a means of generating exciting visual imagery. Most students demonstrate the capacity for working with a high degree of independence and are producing artwork of a standard that is well above national expectations.

207. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 12 and 13. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and provide very good support for students at this level. Through effective questioning they probe students' understanding of the subject and challenge them to think more deeply about their work. Assessment during lessons is very good and students are provided with immediate verbal feedback. However, more formal written recording and tracking systems lack rigour at present. Teachers encourage students to work independently and to produce final pieces of artwork that are based upon their own ideas and concepts. Students are also encouraged to experiment widely through the use of a variety of different media and materials, and to learn through a process of trial and error.
208. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a very good relationship with students, which enables them to explore and experiment in an environment that is safe and secure. She has a very clear vision of how the department should develop and is keen that much greater use should be made of ICT in the production of interesting and exciting visual imagery.
209. Accommodation is good. There are three multi-purpose studios in which students can produce large, ambitious pieces of work in three dimensions. However, storage of this work is problematic. Resources are good, but access to computers, scanners, digital cameras and printers in the art area is very limited. On occasions students have brought their own computers into the studios. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good and students in Years 12 and 13 are now producing work of a standard that is well above national expectations.

### **Media studies**

Provision in media studies is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students attain standards that are well above average in external examinations.
- The subject is a popular choice and students have very good attitudes towards their work.
- Very good teaching and access to resources of high quality promote very effective learning.

### **Commentary**

210. Results in the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) examinations in 2004 were well above average. Students achieved very well. The majority of students gained the highest grade and there was no significant difference between the results of male and female students. Results were better than those of the previous year.
211. Overall standards in Year 13 are well above average. There is a high standard of technical expertise. Most students show an impressive competence in a wide range of practical media skills and they can apply these skills very effectively in activities such as making programmes for radio, designing film posters and websites and creating animated productions. Levels of teamwork are also high. Students work together very efficiently in preparing group assignments and they are also ready to help each other with suggestions for improving individual work. Students generally have very responsible and mature attitudes to their work because they are very well motivated. They enjoy their lessons and are very keen to learn. They value the advice

of their teachers and treat equipment with care. Most students have very good communication skills. They speak confidently and fluently in discussion and usually listen attentively to others. Written work seen during the inspection shows that students write very successfully in a wide variety of styles. These range from lively radio and film scripts to clear analyses of media products and objective evaluations of set tasks. There is also evidence of careful background research for assignments.

212. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and both male and female students achieve very well. Strengths of the teaching include a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject that is conveyed to students in a confident, purposeful and lively way. The interactive whiteboard is used to very good effect for introducing new work and consolidating learning. Students are given excellent support and encouragement so that they apply themselves very well and produce work of high quality. They benefit from a tutorial approach to learning. Classroom relationships are very good. Students themselves are appreciative of the progress they have made in developing technical skills and although the work is demanding they find it creative and enjoyable. Assessment of students' work is very thorough. Marking is accurate and detailed and students receive very good advice on ways of raising their coursework grades.
213. Leadership of the subject is very good. There is a strong sense of purpose and a very clear vision for further improvement. A very effective teaching team has been created and the subject has become very popular in the sixth form. Management is good. Complex daily routines run smoothly and good quality resources have been built up. However, although teachers have received training for the forthcoming new examination course, there is no established programme for professional development, the need for which is identified through the regular monitoring of performance. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Media studies is now flourishing as an independent subject instead of being part of the English curriculum. Standards, teaching and learning and resources have improved substantially and the students benefit from visits to media resource centres where they have access to a wide range of professional equipment for examination assignments.

## **BUSINESS**

AS and A-level courses were inspected in business education, and are reported below. The **AVCE business education course** was sampled. One lesson was seen in Year 12 and one in Year 13, in which the quality of teaching and learning was very good and students achieved very well.

### **Business education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very well-organised and very knowledgeable teachers use their specially prepared materials to help students to gain the highest grades they can in the examinations.
- Very good teaching encourages students to work hard and achieve very well.
- Students work very hard both at school and at home to do very well.
- Teachers support students very effectively and develop very good relationships, enabling very good attitudes to learning.

### **Commentary**

214. In 2004 in the A-level examination, nine students were entered and all passed. The average point was very high compared with the national figure. In 2003, 12 students were entered with again very high results. In both years, students gained nearly twice the national A/B rate. In the AS examination there were insufficient results in 2004 to be statistically valid, but they were much lower than previously. In 2003, ten students were entered and all passed with double the national average number of A and B grades.



215. For some students business education is a new area of study, although a number have already followed the GCSE course. Students learn very well and make very good progress. This is because teaching is very good from committed and hardworking teachers who use the examination criteria to plan effective and challenging lessons. Achievement is very good because students make such good progress in lessons and achieve very well in coursework and homework. Students are very mature and have very good relationships between themselves and their teachers. Because they are treated as adults, and teachers set high standards of work and behaviour, students respond excellently. They recognise the opportunities offered to them by the school. ICT is only included partially within the learning environment and this needs improvement.
216. Teaching takes place in the context of commerce and industry, with regular reference to the local and national businesses and to current affairs. More could be done to bring the subject further to life by improving the number of visits and using external experts on a more regular basis. When considering the variable prior experience when they start the course, and the level all students are now at, students' achievement is very good. Very good assessment, using the exam board criteria effectively, identifies each student's strengths and weaknesses, and informs them how to improve.
217. Leadership is good, as is management on a day-to-day basis, with all with teachers contributing their expertise. New teachers are very well inducted by the head of department and are given the expertise to join the very effective team. Working together the team produce teaching materials of quality. There are weaknesses, however, as teachers are not regularly being updated as they should be and the analysis of prior achievement is not used to inform the potential of each student as it does in most other schools. There have been good developments since the last inspection.

#### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

218. None of these courses was inspected in detail. Provision is **satisfactory**. Year 12 students have very positive attitudes towards the provision the school makes. Many Year 13 students hold quite negative attitudes and a minority are arrogant and only attend lessons which will lead to examination results and do not see the value of personal development programmes. Attendance is unsatisfactory by many Year 13 students who do not attend their timetabled examination classes. The lack of accommodation of a social area for sixth form students also contributes to the lack of involvement for many year 13 students in the wider life of the school. Contributions to charity fund-raising are good and many sixth form students actively support wider community involvement. Many individual students provide good mentoring support for younger students. The efforts by sixth form tutors to make tutorial times meaningful and purposeful are often ruined by the poor attendance of students and sixth form assemblies are poorly attended.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	4	2
Attitudes	3	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	2	3
How well pupils learn	2	3
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	4
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	4

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