

INSPECTION REPORT

**The Queen Elizabeth Royal Free Grammar
School**

Spalding

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120665

Headteacher: Mr Michael Stewart

Reporting inspector: David Jones
8197

Dates of inspection: February 4th-8th 2002

Inspection number: 190262

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Selective
Age range of students:	11-19
Gender of students:	Boys –Mixed post 16
School address:	Priory Road Spalding Lincs.
Postcode:	PE11 2XH
Telephone number:	01775-724646
Fax number:	01775-765801
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Michael Townsend
Date of previous inspection:	7/10/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8197	David Jones	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is school lead and manage?
9511	Elizabeth Longfield	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
22780	David Custance	Team inspector	Science	
24894	C Petts	Team inspecor	Design and technology	
18032	Isobell Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication Technology	Post 16 co-ordinator How well students taught?
10739	Peter Hick	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered?
4926	Thelma Aspin	Team inspector	Post-16 Mathematics	
31693	Tim Hannfin	Team inspector	Art	
23016	Terry Morrison	Team inspector	English	
20825	Brian Ogden	Team inspector	Geography Post-16	
1523	Trevor James	Team inspector	History, Religious Education Post-10 History	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
1210	William Walton	Team inspector	Physical Education Special Educational Needs	
20825	William Ogden	Team inspector	Geography	
18846	Philip Priest	Team inspector	Music	
19404	Leslie Schubler	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages Post-16	
12825	Nial Carr	Team inspector	Psychology Business Education Law	

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
BR1 3JH

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Queen Elizabeth Royal Free Grammar school is a long established Lincolnshire selective boys school admitting girls only to years 12 and 13. The school draws from a very wide area of rural Lincolnshire and some border areas of Cambridgeshire. There are few students from an ethnic minority background. The school uses the Lincolnshire standard entrance procedures and admits the top 30 percent of the catchment on ability. The school is similar in size to other secondary schools with 885 students on roll. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals (1.2 percent) is well below the national average and the percentage of students speaking English as an additional language (1.1 percent) is low. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs, including statements, (2.3 percent) is well below the national average as is the percentage of students with statements of special educational needs (0.1 percent).

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Spalding Grammar School is a good school with very good sixth form provision. The quality of teaching is good and in over a third of all lessons teaching was judged to be very good or better. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. Standards of attainment are in line with those in similar schools. Leadership and management are good and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good with almost no unsatisfactory lessons seen.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject and their management of students are very good.
- Students' interest, behaviour and relationships are excellent. Their concentration and independence are very good, as is their attendance.
- Attainment in mathematics is very good.
- Careers education and the provision for personal, social and health education are very good. The cultural opportunities offered are very good.

What could be improved

- The unsatisfactory co-ordination of English in years 7-9 including the development of a scheme of work.
- The documentation relating to child protection procedures is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of reports to parents does not meet statutory requirements.
- The accommodation available is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. However, in the monitoring and improvement of teaching good progress has been made and the quality of teaching is noticeably stronger than that seen previously. Good progress has been made in the development of the curriculum in the main school. This now meets statutory requirements and the breadth and balance of provision are now good.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards of attainment on entry to the school are above the national average. In the national tests at aged 14 taken in 2001 standards of attainment in English remain well above the national average. Standards in mathematics and science were very high in comparison to all schools nationally. Performance in the 2001 GCSE examinations was very high when compared to the national average, placing the school in the top 5 percent of schools nationally. When measured against the pupil prior attainment the 2001 GCSE results are seen to be in line with similar schools. The percentage of students who achieve 5A* - G grades at GCSE and 1 A*-G Grades is well above the national average. Standards of achievement are at least in line with expectations in all subjects in years 9 and 11. The schools' results have been stable for the last three years with the school placed sixth out of the fourteen LEA grammar schools. Standards of attainment at advanced level are well above the national average overall, when compared with all schools with those in mathematics, psychology, law and sociology being exceptional.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students attitudes to the school are very good
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This was found to be excellent.
Personal development and relationships	These are very good in both teaching and social groups.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, well above the national average

Students' interest, behaviour and relationships are excellent. Their concentration and independence are very good. This is also true of their behaviour and personal development, their enthusiasm for the school as well as their involvement in activities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is good throughout the main school. Of ninety seven lessons seen in the main school, ninety four percent were judged to be at least satisfactory, while seventy five percent were good or better. As a result, students' learning is good, and their achievement is good in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Students' learning improves directly in line with the quality of teaching they receive. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in years 7-9 in English where there is insufficient pace and focus in some lessons. It is also satisfactory in science but good in mathematics. In years 10 and 11 teaching in English and science is good but that in mathematics is very good. Teaching is also very good in modern foreign languages, sociology, art and music. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is mainly in Years 7 to 9 where there are some gaps in teachers' specialist expertise or the pace is too slow in some lessons to maintain students' interest. Students have good basic levels of literacy and numeracy on entry to the school and good teaching in a number of subjects enhances these with a careful development of technical vocabulary. However, this process is not co-ordinated and no structured use is made of the National Literacy Strategy. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported, achieving at least in line with other students.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A very good range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances good breadth and balance of subject provision.
Provision for students with special educational needs	This is satisfactory in all subjects and in all year groups.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	This is satisfactory in all subjects and in all year groups.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good with very good provision for students' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its students	This is satisfactory with many strong features but the school has failed to adopt formal child protection procedures.

The school's working partnership with parents is good. Parents who replied to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting were positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children make good progress. They particularly appreciate the range of academic opportunities and extra-curricular activities that the school provides. A small number of parents were critical of the standards of behaviour in the school but the inspection team found no evidence of this and found behaviour to be excellent. Some parents believe the school should keep them better informed. The information the school provides for parents is unsatisfactory because the written reports on students' progress do not meet statutory requirements to explain progress through the subject provision in plain English.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good, with particular strengths in the way the schools aims and values are reflected in its work and in the development of an inclusive and academically strong sixth

	form.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' role in shaping the school and their understanding of its strengths and weakness are good. However the policy and procedures for child protection are unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The action taken to meet the schools targets and the monitoring of teaching are good.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the resources at its disposal well.

There is a good match of staff expertise to the needs of the curriculum and the use of the resources available is good. Many aspects of the school's accommodation are unsatisfactory and this is affecting the further enhancement of standards in many subjects. All the major attributes of leadership and management of the main school are good, including its consistent search for best value. The induction of new staff is sound with some weaknesses currently in English. The custom and practice relating to child protection matters is very strong but the formal documentation in this area is unsatisfactory. When the progress since the last inspection, quality of provision and standards achieved are considered the school is found to give good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching. • Range and quality of the courses provided. • Extra curricular opportunities • Standards achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with parents • More consistent use of homework • Some aspects of behaviour.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents with regard to teaching, standards and curriculum opportunities. Inspectors found the use of homework was good and the behaviour of students excellent but that the quality of reports to parents did not comply with statutory requirements.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is slightly larger than the average nationally with 213 on roll. Although the main school is selective boys' grammar school, sixth form provision is mixed with entry determined by performance at GCSE. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is very good with 26 advanced level course offered. The justified reputation of the sixth form provision draws students from a very wide area.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provision at Spalding Grammar school is very good. In comparison to all schools nationally standards of attainment are high. Students' standards of achievement are very good because of the strong inclusive and supportive ethos of the school. Teaching and learning are very good and the school has maintained the strength of provision noted in the last report. The leadership and management of the schools sixth form provision is excellent.

Strengths

- The breadth and balance of the sixth form provision and the equality of opportunity offered are very good.
- Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good.
- Standards of work seen sixth form are very good.
- Attainment in mathematics, psychology, sociology and law are outstanding and a strength of the school.
- The progress made by gifted and talented students' post 16 is very good.

What could be improved

- The provision of Statutory religious education post 16.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Very good. The high quality of staff subject knowledge / expertise produces strong teaching. Very high standards of attainment were seen and all students make very good progress.
Biology	Satisfactory. Good use was made of the teaching resources available, including good use of information and communication technology. Very good attitudes and behaviour of students
Chemistry	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good, good use of resources with clear explanations; very good attitudes and behaviour of students
Business Studies	Very good: Clarity of exposition, test / examination results are high. Staff moderation of coursework and the use of internet research are raising the standards of learning and students study skills.
Art	Very good: High quality of teaching and learning seen in the range and

	quality of students' work, very positive attitude of students to their work.
Geography	Very good. Improved results and take-up in the last two years, good teacher monitoring and fieldwork provision, challenging students to make the most of their opportunities
History	Good. A level results over the last three years show improvement that was continued by the successful introduction of AS courses. Good teaching of modern European history. Positive student response.
Psychology	Excellent. Very strong A level results; standards above average. Excellent teaching is based on strong staff subject knowledge and has developed very good student support and assessment. Subject leadership and management are excellent
Law	Very good. Strong A level results; standards above average. Very good teaching linked to very good student support and assessment
English	Good. Staff subject knowledge, the quality of questioning and development of intellectual enquiry has produced a commitment to high standards.
French	Very good. All of the teaching is very good or excellent and the monitoring of student performance is a strength.
	The provision in the following subjects was sampled.
Music	Good. Teaching is good and results at A and AS are above national average. Good extra curricular participation and standards
Religious Education	Good. A positive experience linked to Key Skills assessment.
Sociology	Very good provision with excellent teaching, development of students new to subject and very high exam results. A strength of the school.
Key Skills	Satisfactory. Communication well developed both in Escape Skills and across the curriculum; high examination results last year. IT being taught through escape skills and in discrete Key Skills lessons: some lack of continuity but good provision for application to students' work between lessons

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The inclusive pastoral and academic support is excellent
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are a significant strength of the school. The delegation from the Headteacher and the working relationship with the Head of Sixth form is very good. The contribution of staff with management responsibilities in the sixth form is excellent. Leadership ensures good educational direction with very strong pastoral and academic support. The very strong inclusive ethos of the mixed sixth form provides an excellent equality of opportunity that produces high standards. The reflection of the school's aims and values in its work is excellent in the sixth form.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of relationships with staff.• The support they received• The range of extracurricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodation.• Information and communication technology.

The inspection team agrees with all the noted students' comments and feels that the students' attitudes and behaviour were a significant strength of the sixth form provision.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".

The improvement in the sixth form provision since the last inspection has been good. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good and the cost effectiveness of the sixth form provision is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are above the national average. The school uses the Lincolnshire standard entrance procedures and admits the top 30 percent of the catchment on ability; this differs from grammar schools nationally who admit on average the most able 20 percent of students. The detailed information available for the current year 11 and for the cohort examined in July 2001 shows their attainment on entry was much closer to that of a comprehensive school than that expected in a grammar school.
2. In the national tests at age 14 taken in 2001 standards of attainment in English remain well above the national average. Standards in mathematics and science were very high in comparison to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools (grammar schools) performance in English was well below the average and that in science and mathematics below the average. As noted above, the comparison with grammar schools nationally is insecure due to the differences in intake criteria. Performance in the 2001 GCSE examinations was very high when compared to the national average. When measured against the pupil prior attainment data published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) the 2001 GCSE results are seen to be in line with similar schools. The percentage of students who achieve 5A* - G grades at GCSE and 1 A*-G Grades is well above the national average.
3. Standards of attainment in English in years 7-9 remain above the national average but have been on a declining trend for the last four years. However those in mathematics and science in years 7 – 9 have been on a rising trend for three years. Science attainment is well above the national average and on a rising trend. Those in mathematics have been very high for the last three years. At the end of year 9, standards of attainment in all three core subjects when compared with schools nationally are very high. The school has met all of the targets set by the LEA for the last two years.
4. Standards of attainment in the foundation subjects at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations in design technology and information technology. They are above national expectations in art, geography, history, French, German, music, physical education and religious education.
5. When students' ability on entry is considered their standards of achievement are satisfactory in mathematics, French, art geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Achievement is only just satisfactory in English, science, design technology and German.
6. The 2001 GCSE results show a second stable year, just below the schools highest ever attainment. In 1999 when they were entered for the national tests in English, mathematics and science their performance was well above national expectations and in line with expectations. When their GCSE results are measured against their prior attainment in the national tests at age 14 their achievement was in line with expectations for the school. The strengths of these results lies in the significant percentage of students achieving GCSE high grade passes in art and design, French, geography, history, Latin, mathematics and particularly sociology. GCSE results remain above national expectations in all subjects.

7. The progress made by students with special needs is in line with that of other students. Almost all students at stages 3 to 5 on the register of special needs have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Careful attention to their problems allows students to make progress, to achieve in line with intellectual expectations and to make good progress. The most recent reviews of students indicate that they are making progress to the extent that they may be removed from the register or brought to a lower stage. The progress made by gifted and talented students is satisfactory overall and good in mathematics, sociology, art and design, history and French. Those students with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. They achieve at least as well as the rest of the school population and in line with their abilities.
8. The school has no whole-school approach to developing students' competencies in literacy. Some areas such as English, science, geography, music, and modern foreign languages, have considered the contribution they can make, but this is neither widespread nor consistent across the curriculum. Standards of literacy are high in relation to those found nationally, with speaking and listening skills a little better than reading and writing skills. Students speak clearly and confidently. They have many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. For example in art, a student gave a short talk to the class about his ethnic masks from Sri Lanka and then answered questions. In geography students are encouraged to give short presentations. In mathematics, students analyse and explain their work and in history speaking and listening are key features in many lessons. Students read competently, both with clarity and expression. They can find information from the text and identify relevant points. Many are enthusiastic readers, encouraged in their first few years in the school by the Reading Challenge scheme developed in English. Written work, in the context of continuous and coherent prose, is of a good standard, and is generally satisfactorily presented. Many students write with fluency, handling sentence structures confidently and paragraphing appropriately. Students spell accurately and often use appropriate terminology. In some subject areas, for example, music and modern foreign languages, specialist terminology is displayed in the classrooms, but this is not consistent, and in some subject areas the use of technical vocabulary is underdeveloped.
9. Development of numerical skills within mathematics lessons is good. Students are encouraged to undertake mental calculations without resorting to calculators unnecessarily. They have confidence in their ability to do this and reach a good standard. When appropriate, they can use calculators skilfully. Students usually cope satisfactorily with the numerical requirements of subjects across the curriculum. There are some very good examples of the application of number in geography throughout the school. There is particularly good statistical work. In art lessons there are good contributions to the development of numeracy. For example, students in year 8 could enlarge postcard size images to A4 size with accuracy. In design technology and in ICT students can cope satisfactorily with basic numerical requirements. In science lessons there are numerous examples of numerical competence including the use of charts and graphs, solution of simple equations and the use of statistical methods. The science department is planning to adopt a numeracy policy in line with that of the mathematics department who, in turn, are in the process of developing a whole school numeracy policy. This should ensure that the requirements of all subject areas are incorporated.

Results and achievements

Sixth form

10. Standards of attainment are very high on many post 16 courses. The average points score of students entered for two or more advanced level courses was well above the national average. There is no significant difference between standards attained by the male and female students, or by those very limited numbers from ethnic minority groups and this is a tribute to the inclusive and supportive teaching and management of this mixed sixth form. In English the commitment to high standards, particularly of literature is good. Mathematics standards are very high and students are consistently made aware of the quality of their learning. Advanced level results in law and business studies show a high percentage of student's gain the top grade passes. Attainment in psychology is well above the national average and this was consistently demonstrated in lessons. Improved results and take-up in geography were noted and the advanced level results in history have been strong over the last three years with the successful establishment recently of AS courses. The range and quality of students' work in art is very strong.
11. In the sixth form, communication skills are taught successfully as part of the key skills provision. Sixth form students' literacy levels are high and contribute to their attainment in examinations.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Students' very good attitudes to learning, their excellent behaviour and very good relationships are strengths of the school. Their attitudes to learning are very good in all subjects. Students take an active part in formal discussions and speak with confidence. They are interested in their work and concentrate well, persevering with their tasks. They respond particularly well to lessons where they find the work interesting and which involve them in a variety of activities and ways of learning. In discussions, students expressed a very positive appreciation of what the school provides and expects of them. They are eager to come to school, participate with enthusiasm and enjoy their lessons. They respond well to adults and to each other.
13. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent and has a positive impact on their work and concentration. Movement between lessons is orderly although space is at a premium in some circulation areas. In lessons, they respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. This is uniform throughout the school from the excellent work and behaviour ethos in a Year 7 mathematics lesson to the support Year 10 students gave each other during a German lesson and the manner in which the Year 11 students talked about their artwork. The result is a positive climate for learning with no evidence of aggressive or racist behaviour. There is no graffiti or evidence of vandalism or damage to property. Misbehaviour is infrequent and when it occurs it is dealt with promptly and effectively. There have been no permanent and very few fixed term exclusions in the last year.
14. From the time the students join the school, they establish very good relationships with the staff, with other adults and with each other. In lessons, students' work well together in pairs or groups taking turns and sharing fairly and giving proper weight to suggestions made by other members of the group. Teachers value the students' work, praising effort and good work. In class discussions and in assemblies they listen thoughtfully and respectfully to opinions and beliefs that may differ from their own. They are careful and considerate of the needs of others. They talk readily to visitors and are courteous, helpful and polite.
15. Students' personal development is very good. They respond easily and confidently in the various work and social situations, which form the school day: e.g. in a series of

year 9 seminars on World War One boys were keen to volunteer for demonstrations of trench warfare techniques. They are willing to accept responsibility. Younger students have responsibilities within their own forms as sports captain and form captain.

16. Levels of attendance throughout the school are very good and above that in other similar schools. An accurate record of absence is maintained and the marking of registers meets statutory requirements. Registration periods are satisfactory and provide a structured start to the day. Lessons start and finish on time.

Sixth form

17. Students in the sixth form continue to have the very good attitudes in their work. They take seriously the responsibilities they undertake in the organisation of school affairs: e.g in the organisation of much of the schools music and drama productions. Two sixth formers work with each form to monitor and supervise form activities. The younger students appreciate the individual support they receive from the sixth form students to help them with their work in the homework club. Relationships between the students themselves and with the rest of the school are very good. The development of their personal and learning skills are very good through the 'Escape Skills' programme. The views of the sixth form about the school are very good, there was some criticism of the range of after school activities from a minority but most felt this was better than could be expected when the dispersed catchment was considered. Attendance in the sixth form is good. The majority of students are punctual.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good throughout the main school. Of ninety-seven lessons seen in the main school, ninety-four percent were judged to be at least satisfactory, while seventy five percent were good or better. As a result, students' learning is good and their achievement is good in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Teaching is very good in mathematics, French, art and music, but has insufficient pace and focus in some lessons in English, design technology and ICT. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is mainly in Years 7 to 9 where there are some gaps in teachers' specialist expertise or the pace is too slow in some lessons to maintain students' interest.
19. Good teaching is in part the result of the teachers' very good subject knowledge and grasp of the requirements of their subject curriculum. This is especially true in almost all subjects, with teachers of French, sociology, art, electronics, graphics and music having very good subject knowledge. The standard of teaching in ICT suffers because there is no subject specialist, so that students are taught basic procedures but are not challenged sufficiently by being asked to use their capability to find their own solutions. Teachers of examination groups in Years 10 and 11 have very good knowledge of GCSE requirements with the result that students' coursework, for example in English, modern foreign languages and art, is well prepared, well presented and contributes to students' high standards in the subjects.
20. Teachers' planning is good in almost all individual lessons, where they meet clear objectives, with a brisk pace that encourages students to concentrate throughout the lessons except in some design technology lessons. Students therefore can see where lessons are leading, which gives them confidence to participate in full. Teachers also plan well for the development of students' learning over time, especially in mathematics, science, physical education, art and modern foreign languages.

However, in ICT teachers' expectations are too low and therefore the pace of learning is slow.

21. In English between years 7 and 9 individual lessons are well planned but there is no scheme of work to ensure that the staff are working towards similar outcomes. The students' experiences in English are therefore inconsistent across different classes, and there is no assurance of clear building in learning throughout the national curriculum, although the development of learning is much improved at GCSE where all teachers follow the prescribed syllabus. Planning in all subjects is especially good where teachers plan for a good range of interesting experiences to help students to learn, for example through the use of role-play, or of ICT, seen in students' files in almost all subjects.
22. Students in a Year 11 sociology group were particularly interested in being given the opportunity to watch Parliamentary proceedings through the Internet in order to learn about the British system of government. The history department organised a visit by a specialist re-enactor who brought sharply into focus the experiences of a World War One soldier for lower school history classes. In one art lesson the students were so impressed by the teacher's demonstration of air-brushing that they applauded. In design technology, however, the range of teaching styles is too narrow to provide sufficient challenge in all lessons and older boys find the time wasted frustrating.
23. Almost all teachers have very good relationships with the students based on mutual respect and trust. They involve the students in their own learning by encouraging them to question, to think for themselves and to evaluate their own work in order to improve. This is true in all subjects, but particularly so in mathematics, sociology, art and modern foreign languages. As a result, students are keen and confident. They express their views willingly, ask for help when they have problems and raise issues when they feel that a matter has not been sufficiently pursued. Parents expressed some concern about relationships in Year 8 lessons, but the inspection found that there is a good working atmosphere in almost all lessons seen.
24. Students with special needs are well known to staff though better use could be made of individual education plans and the register of special needs in some cases. Students are fully integrated in classes and cannot be distinguished from other students in almost all cases. Teaching strategies meet the needs of students, they are well supported and make good progress. Teaching and support enables some students to be removed from the register. The limited support available in the school is well focused on those with the greatest needs; it is effective and allows good learning to take place.
25. Although assessment of students' work is very rigorous in some subjects, for example in mathematics, history, religious education and modern foreign languages, where it is used to support teachers' high expectations, marking in other subjects such as English, science, and geography in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent within the departments. They do not use recognised national curriculum criteria to measure students' attainment, and so do not make it easy for students to understand how they can improve their standards. This aspect is better at GCSE where teachers use the requirements for examination courses as guidelines for their students to help them to improve. Teachers know their students well, giving individual support, encouragement and challenge where it is required, particularly in mathematics, physical education, art, history and religious education. Homework, set regularly by all teachers, plays a good

part in helping students to learn, as teachers always ensure that it is relevant, building bridges by asking students to follow up on work in order to prepare for the next lesson.

26. The co-ordination of basic skills is developing at present and is satisfactory overall, but with variations in the experiences offered to students. Teachers support the development of students' literacy well in most subjects, and are beginning to develop strategies to reinforce the use of numeracy. In almost all subjects there are some effective examples of the use of ICT to support students' learning. However, the examples of ICT are not planned securely into schemes of work to the extent that all teachers ask their students to use it.

Sixth form

27. Teaching is very good in the sixth form, resulting in very high standards in most subjects. This is an improvement on the situation at the last inspection. Of the seventy lessons seen, sixty-nine were at least satisfactory and fifty-five ranged from good to excellent. Subject inspectors judged that almost every aspect of teaching is very good, with excellent teaching in mathematics, psychology and sociology. Teaching in geography, business studies, law, modern history, French and English literature is very good. Some teaching in early modern European history, chemistry and biology is less strong, but is still satisfactory. Sixth form students therefore make very good gains in learning over their attainment on entry to the sixth form. This is especially true of the students taking psychology, sociology, law and business studies who have entered the sixth form from other local schools, but who quickly catch up with the others.
28. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and are skilful in asking questions or setting problems that challenge students to work to very high standards. This is particularly true in English, mathematics, law, psychology, business studies, sociology, geography and art, where students are given a breadth of vision that motivates them to work independently within the clearly defined course structures. The standard of teaching is so high in these subjects because of the very good planning of courses and of lessons, providing a wide range of interesting and challenging activities that maintain students' levels of interest during and beyond lessons. In some other subjects, for example chemistry, biology and early modern European history, the teachers still have very good subject knowledge but do not involve students as effectively in activities that make them think for themselves. As a result, in these subjects the most able students are not sufficiently challenged, while the least able in some history lessons do not feel confident about thinking for themselves.
29. Relationships between teachers and students are very good in almost all subjects, where teachers demonstrate high expectations of students' commitment to which students respond positively. This is particularly strong in English, mathematics, psychology, law, sociology, art and music, where students are given the confidence and challenge to work out their own ideas but realise that they are being given very good guidance to help them to successes. Teachers are realistic but very supportive in their assessments, which are very good in most subjects, but especially in mathematics, French, psychology, law, sociology and geography. Teachers give very good feedback on students' performance both formally on written work and informally in class. Students therefore know how well they are attaining, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do in order to improve. Students in chemistry and biology where assessment is less informative are less clear about their performance and so their learning is not as good as in other subjects.
30. Teaching of the key skills of literacy and ICT in separate lessons and in the Escape Skills course is very good, with students making very good progress achieving

examination results that last year were very high in relation to national average in literacy and above average in ICT. Teachers across the curriculum have still not fully implemented the teaching of key skills, but are now beginning to look for opportunities to meet the criteria. The work to integrate numeracy and ICT is some way behind that on literacy, but the Year 12 students seen learning to use ICT during the inspection had improved their capability considerably over that on entry to the sixth form.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the main school are good with the breadth and balance of learning opportunities considered to be very good. Sociology, Spanish, German and Latin are provided in addition to the normal range of examination subjects and a critical thinking course is offered as an open access mixed age group to all boys in years 7–11. A good range of sport and extra curricular experiences is an additional strength. Extra curricular activities involve a large proportion of staff and students. Music, drama and sport figure prominently amongst these. Educational visits, in the local area and further afield, are organised regularly. There are exchange visits with French and German schools. There is open and well-monitored access to art and information technology facilities at lunchtime and immediately after school. Most academic departments offer support and enrichment classes at lunchtime or after school.
32. The school's lack of engagement in the national literacy strategy and its failure to provide appropriate schemes of work in English in years 7 – 9 is having a negative effect on standards. Despite these twin limitations in the management of English and some limitations in the provision for ICT the provision of the statutory curriculum is satisfactory in years 7 –9 and good in years in years 10-11. These older students have the opportunity to take a total of 10 full GCSE courses and a short course in religious studies. Students are taught in form units in years 7, 8 and 9 except for streaming in mathematics from year 8. Streaming continues in mathematics in years 10 and 11 and is introduced in modern foreign languages. The school responds positively to student demand for particular subjects in years 10 and 11 and makes limited but appropriate use of the dis-application procedures to allow students to focus on a particular courses.
33. A whole school numeracy strategy is under development based on the very good procedures in place in mathematics. All students are appropriately numerically competent for their year group with good numerically challenging work being done in geography, art, modern foreign languages and science. However, some opportunities are lost in design technology notably the case in years 10-11. In law, business studies and sociology in particular, subject staff are very good at making students aware of how they need to express themselves in subjects that are new curriculum experiences and this is having a positive impact on the standards seen. In lessons seen and in scrutinies of students' work, science, geography, design technology, history, religious education and physical education all made consistent efforts to develop students mastery of technical vocabulary.
34. The provision for students with special educational needs is good. Information to staff on issues related to their subject is very good and the methodological guidance satisfactory. A wide variety of open-ended tasks enable all students to access the curriculum and make good progress. In some subjects setting is used to make sure that all students are working at the right level. Reading and homework support from sixth form volunteers effectively extend learning opportunities for some students. Almost all support is provided in class, some of it from learning support assistants or

sixth form volunteers, but flexibility exists for learning support assistants to provide one to one help when this is felt to be beneficial to the individual student and others in the class.

35. Students who have English as an additional language are identified upon entry to the school. At the time of the inspection there were twelve students. When an individual has difficulty in accessing the curriculum they are either withdrawn from some lessons to be supported by a learning assistant or provided with personal support from the subject staff. The progress of all students is monitored. All students with English as an additional language progress very well, and achieve at a standard commensurate to their ability. Teaching is inclusive, the level and consistency of the individual support offered is very good, as is the equality of opportunity offered. The new demands and vocabulary of these subjects are consistently explained and developed and this inclusive curriculum provision is having a positive impact on standards.
36. The provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. In art there has been extensive reflective work by GCSE students inspired by the terrorist attack in New York on 11 September where the students have explored their feelings about the massacre. In religious education in the revised and developing curriculum all students explore what it is like to be spiritual and how this affects life styles both of Christians and people of other faiths. The requirements for an act of collective worship are met; an assembly takes place each day but not all students are involved on all occasions.
37. Good moral discussions are commonplace at this school and the students enthusiastically and sensitively debate a great range of issues. These range from the ethical implications of the use of nitrates in munitions and food production and the pros and cons of nuclear power to racism, non-violence, vegetarianism and other contemporary issues in religious education. The response of students is very mature, thoughtful and constructive. In some registration periods teacher promote discussions of the news headlines. Throughout their school week students confront issues, which require moral judgements many of which do not have straight answers, and they apply careful logic and informed good sense to the ensuing debates. In one upper school assembly spirituality and moral considerations were brought together well. The act of collective worship reflected on world poverty and other challenging moral issues before eventually concluding that the aim should be 'heaven on earth'.
38. The strong social awareness of students is demonstrated by energetic student participation in fund-raising activities. Very good relations exist between students and staff and students relate well to other adults who visit the school. This last point is well illustrated by the visit of the World War One Battlefields expert in Year 9 on History Day, with whom the students very quickly established a very cordial and positive relationship. Sports, musical activities, drama and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme continue to flourish, as does a merit scheme.
39. Very good cultural development is a particular strength of the school. Within the art curriculum there is strong cultural enrichment and links with other cultures are made; and in history the culture of the Islamic Empire is explored. High culture is promoted by curricular visits to art galleries and museums as extensions of the art curriculum; and modern foreign languages staff organise regular exchanges with France and Germany. Through this range of cultural activities very considerable numbers of students do have a strong cultural experience and are appropriately prepared for living in a multi-cultural society.

40. Personal and social education is very good with particular strength in citizenship in years 10-11. The programme includes topics concerned with health, drugs and sex education where sixth form girls volunteer to take part in some of the lessons. Students in years 10 -11 were very positive about careers education. The school makes good use of outside agencies such as the police and the health service. For example when a speaker from the Lincolnshire Aids Volunteer Group addressed the year 10 students, they listened attentively and took a full part in the discussion. Strong links with colleges and universities give students very good guidance on what GCSE / advanced level combinations might be need for particular career choices. Local industrial links provide two weeks work experience opportunities for all year 11 students within the careers system and local firms providing some support to design technology. Spalding Rugby Football Club has good links with the physical education department and shares the school facilities. Local clergy and churches are involved in the main religious education provision. The parent teacher association are very supportive of curriculum developments, raising on average some £10,000 per annum which is usually spent on major facilities, i.e. sports hall. Very good links with Spalding based primary schools, both LEA and private exist but they are more limited with the more distant rural primaries. They are good with the local girl's grammar and a recent DfES sponsored link with secondary modern schools is developing.

41. Good progress has been made developing the curriculum since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in curriculum liaison with feeder primary schools. The school week has been extended to 25 hours of teaching time and the statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education are now complied with. The place of information technology in the curriculum has been reviewed, a taught programme in year 7 focuses on basic skills with the remainder of the requirements for the statutory orders mapped into the curriculum offered by other subjects.

Sixth form

42. The social dimension is exemplified by the very positive relations which exist within the school, with older and younger students relating well to each other; and with girls being incorporated very quickly and comprehensively into sixth form life, and then themselves helping to provide mature leadership to younger students generally.
43. The range of courses offered at advanced level is very good with 26 subjects taught to GCE AS or A2 level. All departments offer an advanced level course with the provision for mathematics, psychology, sociology, law and business studies being significant strengths of the school. In all these subjects very strong student interest is matched by notable success rates. Results in sociology, psychology and law are well above the national average. The strength of this curriculum provision is derived from particularly well-organised and led departments with notable consistency of very high quality teaching. The lack of a post 16 religious education (RE) course is a breach of the statutory regulations and is unsatisfactory, however in the RE advanced level lesson seen good use was made of the opportunities to develop Key Skills. In interviews with post 16 students they were very positive about extra curricular opportunities on offer e.g. sport, drama, art and music for example with very good inclusion of girls into the range of opportunities provided. Girls, notably those from the local secondary modern schools, commented that they were worried prior to their arrival in the sixth form, but they were very positive about the way they have been supported in all subjects, with excellent tutoring from the sixth form pastoral staff. By end of the first term in year 12, girls' performance across the range of curriculum opportunities is at least as good as the boys and the sixth form curriculum provision shows excellent equality of opportunity. Excellent careers advice is embedded in the strong personal, social and health education programme delivered as part of the active tutorial scheme that involves contributions from the local community and the wider academic community. As part of this pastoral and departmental academic advice on courses and between subjects and academic departments specialising in particular courses mixed with strong UCAS entry support and good university links with Bishop Grosseteste in Lincoln, Huddersfield, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent are a strength of the school.
44. Some sixth formers exercise the option to do their work experience in France or Germany. Classical expeditions to Greece and Italy are made in alternating years during the autumn half-term holiday. Cultural exchange is also effected by an annual visit by the American People-to-People educational tour.
45. Teachers are very familiar with the individual needs of students and provide good support. Where necessary additional staff support and special resources are provided which enable students to gain full access to the curriculum. Students feel comfortable and valued. They are well motivated, confident and have good self-esteem. In this situation good progress is made and achievements are high.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

46. The senior management team and teachers at all levels make considerable efforts to ensure the welfare of individual students. Students believe that the staff are approachable and that they do their best to resolve any problems they have. The school's provision allows students to concentrate on their learning with considerable effort given to all aspects of welfare that help students maintain their academic concentration. However, the school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring students' welfare are unsatisfactory because there is no written formal child protection policy, there has been no staff training on the matter and teachers were unable to

identify the member of staff who held this responsibility. This said, the school does provide a caring and supportive environment in which students can feel safe and valued. There is good provision within the programme for personal and social education to help students to take responsibility for their own safety. The school site generally provides a safe environment and routine health and safety procedures and testing are in place. No unsafe practice was seen in lessons during the inspection.

47. All teachers are active in the pastoral care of their students. Form tutors know their students well, particularly when they have progressed up the school with the same tutor group. Students are confident that support is available to them when they need it. Heads of year and form tutors provide good advice to students and long term monitoring for those students who find it difficult to meet the school's expectations. Throughout the school, most teachers know their students well and successfully meet their individual needs both in lessons and in a wider context. They are effective in supporting them when they need it. The monitoring of students' personal development is satisfactory with procedures in place and tutors treat each pupil as an individual. Form tutors keep satisfactory records on students' personal development; whilst students themselves are encouraged to maintain personal targets in their personal planners. Tutors regularly review these. The personal and social education curriculum contributes well to students' development, helping students grow into responsible adults through sensitive handling of issues such as sex education and drugs education. The school focuses effectively on helping students settle into the school when they arrive from the primary phase.
48. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance and attendance is above the national average. Morning registration periods and the calling of registers in the afternoon are efficiently conducted and any absence is rapidly noted. Lateness after the registers have closed is noted and the appropriate code used when the absence has been authorised.
49. There are excellent procedures and policies to monitor and promote good behaviour. The strong pastoral care policy and programme of Active Tutorial work is a significant strength of the school. Procedures for dealing with oppressive behaviour are very good, and the anti-bullying policy has been updated, clearly outlining the school's approach and the responsibilities of individuals for its implementation. As a result at least in part of this quality of care students' attitudes and behaviour are a strength of the school.
50. Arrangements for assessing the students' academic achievements are satisfactory, The assessment policy of the school is coherent, and practice does not vary too greatly between individual teachers. Assessment is integrated into normal classroom activities, and linked with self-assessment by students of their strengths and weaknesses. A wide range of standardised tests is used, including reading age, Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) results and Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) scores. Not enough school-wide use is made of National Curriculum level related assessment in years 7-9. Many departments, e.g. art, geography, physical education, mathematics and French make good use of this nationally consistent data and in these subjects students do know what to do to help them improve. However, no structured use is made of National Curriculum level related assessment in English in years 7-9 and the declining standards of attainment in this area are directly related to this inconsistency of approach. Insufficient subject focussed guidance is used to balance the statistically led assessment system to match the best practice seen in other schools. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is satisfactory and has allowed the

constructive use of dis-application to provide individually focussed option choices. Target setting for GCSE is good and often very good.

51. A very good quality, up to date register of students with special needs is made available to all teachers. It provides very good pen pictures of students and strategies for progress. The register is well supplemented by high quality case studies that indicate a high level of individual care. The school goes to considerable lengths to provide for individual needs. There are individual education plans for all students at stages 2 and above on the register. The use of the information provided for teachers is varied and there is a need to ensure that all teachers make use of the very good information, which is available to them. Good use is made of external services to provide outside support where necessary. The support provided for students with statements of special educational need is very good. The school has maintained its good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of students since the last inspection.

Sixth form

52. The educational and personal support and guidance for students in the sixth form are excellent, as are the procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress, particular strengths being found in sociology, psychology, law and mathematics. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning in all sixth form subjects is very good as is the monitoring and supporting of students' academic progress. The attention given by academic and pastoral staff alike to ensuring an inclusive and supportive approach in all subjects is excellent and a significant strength of the very good sixth form provision. The diagnosis of and provision for individual learning needs is very good. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance provided to students is very good both in subjects and as part of the very effective careers education and guidance offered.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Just over three out of five parents took the opportunity to express their views of the school through the parents' questionnaire or the parents' meeting. Almost all were positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children make good progress. They particularly appreciate the range of academic opportunities and extra-curricular activities the school provides. A small number of parents were critical of the standards of behaviour in the school but the inspection team found no evidence of this and found behaviour to be excellent. Some parents believe the school should keep them better informed. Overall, parents' views of the school are very positive and the school has the confidence of its local communities.
54. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both well-written documents that give a good flavour of the school. However, the written reports on students' progress do not meet statutory requirements to explain progress through the subject provision in plain English and therefore the information the school provides for parents is unsatisfactory. There are appropriate arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers. An interesting regular newsletter on the life of the school, and regular letters home, keep parents informed on specific issues. The student personal planner provides a good way for parents to keep track of homework and also to communicate in an informal way with form tutors. The planners are being used and taken seriously by students and most staff with the majority of parents signing them regularly. The school has established good contact with parents of students with special needs. Recent letters sent to all parents indicate the results of

the latest reviews. All parents are invited to an annual Parents Evening and those with students in need of additional support are invited to Consultation Day. The individual programmes for many students provide for a close working partnership between the school and parents.

55. The parents association is a hard working and successful supporter of the school. Money is consistently made available to support curriculum provision. A good example is the way the parents have raised significant sums of money towards the cost of building the very good sports hall, required by the schools voluntary aided status. The parent governors make a good contribution to the school's governing body and the contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school are good. The quality of the partnership with parents is good, unchanged since the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership and management of the head teacher and key staff are good. The school has moved on significantly since the previous inspection report. The quality of teaching has improved noticeably and budgetary stability has been achieved in difficult circumstances. Good progress has been made in rectifying the curriculum weakness identified in previous report. The good attitudes and behaviour of all students noted in the last report have been maintained and developed with a very strong inclusive ethos.
57. Leadership ensures good clear educational direction in the main school with pastoral and academic support providing very good direction. The reflection of the school's aims and values in its work is very good overall and excellent in the sixth form and this is a particular strength of the headteacher. The commitment to high standards and equality of opportunity is evident throughout the school. The headteacher has worked steadily to improve the curriculum weaknesses noted in the last report. This is illustrated in the breadth of curriculum opportunities provided to all year groups: e.g the provision of three foreign languages in years 7-9 and the high quality provision of both law and sociology in years 10 -11. Pastoral and subject middle management is generally good throughout the school but very good in mathematics, psychology, sociology, law and business education.
58. The school's priorities for development are good. The school development plan (SDP) is appropriately focussed on standards and the development of the schools' facilities, with financial provision currently being made for a planned expansion of the sixth form facilities. Within this sound strategic plan the action taken to meet the school's targets has been good. Developments from the last post-Ofsted action plan are still being incorporated into the SDP, maintaining the schools focus on the quality of teaching and the enhancement of curriculum provision. The shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed of all managers is good. The senior management team is particularly committed to the school and its ethos and this is illustrated by their efforts to enhance the inclusive and supportive sixth form provision.
59. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is good. A long-term accommodation development plan has a secure financial base and the breadth and balance of the main school curriculum provision is now good. This is a significantly improvement since the last inspection where the curriculum provision was found to be unsatisfactory. The governing body's role in shaping the direction of the school is good. Its strong vision for the future has identified the medium term changes in the senior management and a planned programme of accommodation development for the sixth form as further opportunities to develop the school.

60. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and effectiveness of action taken are good. Teaching has been improved significantly since the last inspection, unsatisfactory teaching has been almost eliminated and the proportion of very good or excellent teaching has been increased to over one third. The key issues from the last inspection have been secured with some good progress on the enhancement of curriculum provision. Increasing the numbers of students on roll has eased the school's financial pressures.
61. The governing body's structure is very effective in bringing a wide range of interests and talents into the management of the school, their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is good. They are aware of effect of accommodation on restricting standards in many subject areas and the need to provide better ICT facilities within departments.
62. The induction of staff new to the school and effectiveness of provision for training of new teachers is sound. The school has a programme of mentoring meetings and a regular programme of school based training. However where this provision is currently required in English the lack of appropriate departmental schemes of work makes the current provision unsatisfactory. The management and organisation of the school's special educational needs provision is very strong. Provision is very well organised and based on a very good understanding of the needs of students. Arrangements to provide for their needs are good. The co-ordinator has been very successful in obtaining additional support and resources for students. Statutory requirements are met and the school is aware of the need to introduce the new code of practice. There is a governor with an active interest in special needs. Standards of provision for special needs have improved significantly in the last two years.
63. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are good. A programme of formal observation led by the headteacher provides written feed back to staff and this has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching already noted as has other observations by senior staff and some heads of department. The school's strategy for performance management is satisfactory, line manager observations, target setting and in-service training are linked to the department development plans. However, the lack of whole school in-service training on child protection issues is an omission.
64. Good strategic use of resources, including specific grants and other funding has allowed the school to produce an appropriately funded development plan. Departmental initiatives are funded through this plan and strong audit procedures of authorised spending are in place. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. The school makes good use of its limited information technology facilities for administration, financial audit and the monitoring of standards. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good overall with weakness currently in English and design technology. Learning resources are satisfactory in all departments but the school ratio of students to computers is below the DfES recommendations. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. It is good in physical education and art but having a negative effect on standards in all other subjects. Run down science laboratories and dispersed classrooms for English are examples of the difficulties faced by staff.
65. The principles of best value are applied consistently to the work of the whole school and the search for best value in all purchasing and development is very good. Local suppliers are regularly used within a secure competitive framework. Good use of staff expertise has extended the breadth and depth of educational provision.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

66. The leadership and management of the sixth form is a significant strength of the school. The delegation from the Headteacher and the working relationship with the Head of Sixth form is very good. The contribution of staff with management responsibilities in the sixth form is excellent. Leadership ensures good clear educational direction, which is sharply focused in the sixth form with pastoral and academic support providing very good direction. The very strong inclusive ethos of the mixed sixth form provides an excellent equality of opportunity that produces high standards. The reflection of the school's aims and values in its work is excellent in the sixth form.

67. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its sixth form responsibilities is good. A long-term accommodation development plan has a secure financial base. However the lack of provision of an appropriate religious education course in the sixth form is still unsatisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and effectiveness of action taken is good and very good in the sixth form. On balance the professional development of staff teaching sixth form courses makes a good contribution to their effectiveness, with that noted in the highest performing departments such as sociology, mathematics and psychology stronger. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good post 16 with significant strengths in sociology, psychology, business studies and mathematics. All post 16 courses are adequately resourced but access to ICT although satisfactory is variable. Good use of staff expertise in both the main school and the 6th form has extended the breadth and depth of provision. The cost effectiveness of the post 16 provision is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Review the co-ordination of English in years 7-9 and require the production of a scheme of work that reflects the statutory orders and the level related assessment requirements of the National Curriculum for English. They should further require the development of teaching that reflects the best practice of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Initiative. (Paragraphs: 2, 3, 5, 18, 21, 32, 62.)
- As a matter of some urgency formally put in place and in writing a policy for Child Protection that conforms with the LEA guidelines and matches the good custom and practice found in the school. Arrange for whole staff in-service training on Child Protection matters and ensure that all staff are aware of the people to be contacted and the procedures to be followed in the event of an incident. (Paragraphs: 46)
- Ensure that the annual reports to parents comply with DfES requirements. (Paragraphs: 54)
- Conduct an accommodation survey and bring to the attention of the local authority the need for the enhancement of accommodation in order to mitigate the cramped conditions and dispersed locations of many departments that is currently impacting on the further enhancement of standards. (Paragraphs: 64)

Sixth form

- The provision of the statutory requirements for a religious education course. (Paragraphs: 67,)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7- 11	121
	Sixth form	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		104

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7-11							
Number	4	23	39	25	6	0	0
Percentage	5	25	40	23	7	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	9	20	27	13	1	0	0
Percentage	14	28	38	18	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	670	215
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	6	N/a

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	32	2

English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.3
National comparative data	90.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	143	N/a	143

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	141	142	140
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	141	142	140
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (99)	99 (100)	98 (98)]
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (75)	94 (99)	98 (98)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	139	142	143
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	139	142	143
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	97 (97)	99 (100)	100 (100)
	National	65 (64)]	68 (66)]	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	80 (75)	96 (97)	62 (86)
	National	31 (31)	42 (42)	33 (29)]

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	102	N/a	102

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	97	100	101
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	97	100	101
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	95 (95)	98 (96)	99 (96)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	61.2 (60.6)
	National	39 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		N/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	162	58	220

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	22.9	22.1	22.6 (22)	3.5	5	4 (5.5)
National	17.8	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.7)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	3	100
	National		87

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those students who achieved all they studied	School	0	0
	National		N/a

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	9
White	858
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52.97
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.8
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	28.1
Key Stage 4	23.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	2,288,401
Total expenditure	2,235,711
Expenditure per pupil	2526
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,500
Balance carried forward to next year	90,190

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9.58
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.29
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0,87
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	885
Number of questionnaires returned	431

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	48	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	38	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	40	5	1	7
The teaching is good.	30	64	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	39	9	2	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	41	14	0	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	39	1	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	38	48	12	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	49	44	1	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	46	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	39	2	0	20

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents were very positive about the school both in their written comments and at the parents evening. Some parents expressed concern about declining behaviour but the inspection team found students behaviour excellent. Some parents expressed concerns about the use made to support student's education. The inspection team found this to be good in the main school and very good post 16.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- There is a shared commitment to high standards.
- Relationships are good. Students work co-operatively and relate positively to their teachers.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage students well, and question students in a manner that is both perceptive and inclusive.

Areas for improvement

- There is no scheme of work or structured teaching programme for years 7-9 that relates to the statutory orders or the National Literacy Strategy.
- As a result the planning of lessons does not always effectively address the needs of individual students, nor provide consistent pace and challenge.
- The management of the Key Stage 3 provision is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment, particularly in years 7-9 is underdeveloped.
- Dispersed accommodation that is also unsuitable for drama.

68. Overall, standards of attainment are satisfactory, though less so in Years 7-9. In the 2001 standard assessment tests, at the end of Year 9, the percentage of students attaining Level 5 was very high, and at Level 6 is well above the national average. However, in comparison to similar schools, standards of attainment in English were below the national average at the higher levels. Over the past three years the average points score achieved by students has declined, and is below the national trend. Students do not attain as well in English as in other core subjects, particularly at the higher levels, where the comparison with mathematics is unflattering. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, students' attainment in English language and English literature was above the national average overall, and very high in the grade range A*-C. In comparison to similar schools, attainment was average, and average for the school. Over the past three years, the level of attainment has been consistent, and is in line with the national trend.
69. Observation in lessons, and a scrutiny of a sample of students' work, confirms that, overall, standards are satisfactory. In Years 7-9 there is a good range of writing, showing increasing complexity and sophistication. By Year 9, students use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create effects. Their writing is generally sequential, their ideas organised in paragraphs, with appropriate punctuation and accurate spelling. The writing of higher attaining students is more confident. There is more development in the use of language, both for effect, and to interest the reader. Students encounter a range of styles and forms in both fiction and non-fiction. They are introduced to a variety of literary texts, and develop some critical awareness of plot, structure and character. Year 9 students, studying "Twelfth Night", were able to identify different layers of meaning, and to comment upon their significance. In their consideration of the ideas within the play, students, through improvised performance, were able to express a personal response, and to demonstrate their understanding of the text. Students are encouraged to read widely and independently for enjoyment, and many are independent and enthusiastic readers. Speaking and listening are strong features. Students take an active part in discussion, and are sensitive to the views of

others. Higher attaining students are more articulate, and perceptive in their responses, and can, from a range of sources, demonstrate the higher order skills of analysis and synthesis. Students in Years 10 and 11 have the ability to respond critically and sensitively to a range of texts. They display an understanding of how language, structure and form convey ideas and meaning. They can also make connections and comparisons, and show an awareness of the social and historical contexts. In their writing, students convey ideas coherently in a range of forms. Their narrative writing has greater control, and formal description is clear and coherent. They appreciate and comment on a widening range of reading, and are generally effective in presenting personal viewpoints. Students speak fluently, using an appropriate range of vocabulary to illustrate their views, and to give colour and meaning to the listener. In turn, they listen attentively, and with increasing sensitivity and perception. Many are willing to take a leading role in discussion. The few students from an ethnic minority background are indistinguishable academically from the other boys. The all come with above average levels of literacy and the quality of the inclusive questioning and task setting provides good challenge and support to individual boys.

70. The majority of students enter the school with above average standards of literacy, as is evidenced by their standard test results undertaken in Year 6. Overall, their progress in Years 7-9 is satisfactory. Students' speech is more confident and expressive, and in discussion they exhibit more effective listening skills. In their writing, students are developing different styles, with a good range of vocabulary that is both imaginative and appropriate for its purpose. However, progress is less effective, where insufficient thought has been given to the range of ability in the class, and the lesson lacks suitable challenge. The teachers' expectation of higher attaining students is not sufficient in Years 7-9, so that these students are underachieving, and are not making appropriate progress. Students' progress is better in Years 10 and 11, where teaching is more effectively planned, and supported by external examination criteria. In a Year 10 lesson on "Othello", students were analysing the text to extract information on the characters and the ideas being expressed. In response to challenging questioning, the students exhibited fresh insights, were able to develop a personal perceptive response, and demonstrate developing analytical and interpretative skills. Similarly, Year 11 students, exploring the presentation of news through the medium of radio, were able to interpret information and synthesise essential points.
71. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in years 7-9, and good in Years 10-11. The teachers have good subject knowledge, and are effective in the management of students. Basic skills are well taught, and homework is consistent and appropriate. Where teaching is good, planning is sequential. There is variety in the activity of the lesson, and the teacher moves about the class, supporting and encouraging students. The questioning of students is perceptive and inclusive, drawing out and enhancing the students' understanding. The teacher establishes clear objectives that are understood by the students at the start of the lesson and evaluates the learning that has occurred before the lesson ends. Teaching is less effective when the lesson objectives are unclear, although the intended tasks have been explained, and when planning is insufficiently detailed. Consequently, some lessons lack pace and challenge. Independent work is encouraged. The marking of students' work, although informative, is not always consistent, particularly in Years 7-9. Students are encouraged for the content of the writing, rather than the accuracy of the language.
72. The attitude of students is good. They concentrate, work co-operatively with each other, and are anxious to engage with the teacher. In the main, they work productively and imaginatively. They ask questions of the teacher to aid their learning, and willingly engage in independent study. Even when the teaching is less effective, the majority of students remain focused upon their work. The presentation of written work is of a

variable quality, but students do use information technology to improve presentation, and for information retrieval. The department has clear procedures for assessment, and a statement upon the marking of students' work. These are in line with school expectations. Regular assessment of students' work is undertaken, and moderation occurs to clarify grading and assess academic progress. Students in Year 7 take a spelling and reading test, and are supported where this is seen to be appropriate. However, insufficient regard is given to prior attainment upon entry to the school, and the evaluation of other statistical data is underdeveloped. Assessment information is not used effectively to meet the needs of individual students, nor does it inform curriculum planning. Assessment is more effective in Years 10 and 11 when used with external examination criteria.

73. The departmental leadership has provided a clearly defined philosophy for the provision of English within the curriculum, and recognition of National Curriculum directives. However, there are no structured schemes of work. This has serious implications for the quality of learning in Years 7-9, though less so in Years 10-11, because of external examination syllabi. Staff are well supported, relationships are good, and there is a shared commitment to high standards. The department meets regularly, and the meetings are formally recorded. Students' progress is assessed, and there is careful co-ordination of external examination courses, including internal moderation. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning occurs through lesson observation and the sampling of students' work, and where appropriate, action is taken. Other aspects of management are unsatisfactory. There are no detailed policy statements, no specific job descriptions, and no designation of responsibility within the department. Planning is insufficiently undertaken, as is financial planning and control.
74. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is equality of access and opportunity for all students. The training of staff with regard to the National Literacy Strategy has occurred, although the strategy has yet to be implemented. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for students to participate in theatre and museum visits, school productions and revues. Resources are good and well managed, but English classrooms are not adjacent, and are generally of poor quality. Recent changes, and difficulties of recruitment, have meant that an unqualified and a newly qualified, teacher currently undertake some lessons.
75. Although much of the quality of provision has been maintained since the time of the last inspection and results in GCSE English literature improved, overall improvement is unsatisfactory. There is still a need to ensure higher attaining students' progress effectively to achieve higher levels in the standard assessment tests at the end of Year 9. The quality of lesson planning remains inconsistent, and the needs of individual students are not sufficiently addressed in that planning.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Strong leadership and staff teamwork.
- Appropriate scheme of work and good student guidance.
- Very good teacher-student relationships and assiduous monitoring of student progress.

Areas for improvement

- Consideration could be given to extending the use of I.C.T
- Developing the use of investigative and practical work

76. Standards at the end of year 9 are good. There has been sustained improvement in recent years. All students have gained at least the national expectation and a very high proportion reaching the highest levels. Attainment in lessons is always satisfactory and usually good. In one of the best lessons, Year 7 students could calculate fractions of numbers and progress to predict the outcome of a complicated sequence involving fractions. Standards at the end of year 11 are very good. For the last 3 years no student has gained less than a grade D at GCSE. In those years the percentage of passes at levels A* to C was, at least 97. In 2001 40% gained A* or A.
77. Attainment in lessons in years 10 and 11 is consistently good. Students of all levels of ability are highly motivated, keen to succeed and respond well to dedicated teaching. One middle ability group in Year 10 could factorise algebraic expressions, perform all four basic operations with fractions and rearrange algebraic formulae. A similar group, in Year 11, could solve simultaneous equations by graphical methods, understand the concept of gradient and use associated formulae. The top group in year 11 have already taken their GCSE exam, gaining 11 A* grades, 14 A grades and 2 B grades. In lessons they are now doing work which will prepare them for advanced level study.
78. Students with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language, are integrated into normal groups and make the same rate of progress as other students. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place and is implemented. The national numeracy strategy has been incorporated in the scheme. Students are confident in handling numbers and can undertake mental calculations with a good degree of certainty. The few students from an ethnic minority background are indistinguishable academically from the other boys. The all come with above average levels of numeracy and the quality of the inclusive questioning and task setting provides good challenge and support to individual boys.
79. The quality of teaching throughout the school is always at least satisfactory, usually good and, occasionally, very good or excellent. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a perceptive insight into students' capabilities. They have a clear sense of direction, which is communicated to the students. Work is expected to be completed on time and to be well presented. Homework forms a substantial part of students' commitment and usually includes revision exercises as well as work on current topics. Teaching style is usually quite formal, often tinged with humour and understanding. Teachers are comfortable with a style, which is proving to be quite successful. The use of ICT is increasing and improving. A Year 8 class could use computers to generate a variety of number sequences and clearly enjoyed working in this mode.
80. Teachers offer a variety of extra curricular opportunities to the students, ranging from support for those who have met difficulties to extension classes for the most able. Over 90 students from Years 9, 10 and 11 responded to the national 'Mathematics

Challenge' this year. Attitude and behaviour is usually very good, even excellent, with occasional joviality which is never malicious and does not interfere with learning. Each student is assessed on entry and given a target grade, which is reviewed regularly. Progress is carefully monitored and students are advised about how to make progress. Those who fail to make satisfactory progress are monitored even more carefully.

81. The department is very efficiently managed. There is a clear sense of direction, which is shared by staff and students. The budget is adequate and is efficiently managed. Very limited LSA support is available. Lessons take place in a variety of rooms, which are dispersed about the school. Most provide bright learning environments with appropriate mathematical displays. One, in particular is in need of some refurbishment. There is an adequate supply of textbooks. Good computer facilities are available.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Committed hard-working team well led by the recently appointed head of department.
- High quality staff-pupil relationships.
- Positive attitudes of students to science
- Very good and effective technical support.

Areas for improvement

- Development of practical skills, especially in Years 7 to 9
- Increased opportunities for extension work.
- Opportunities to develop lateral thinking and relate different aspects of science.

82. Students enter the school with levels of attainment above nationally expected levels. In national tests in 2001, 14-year-olds attained levels well above national averages for all maintained schools, but below those for other grammar schools. Teacher assessments at level 6 underestimated student attainment compared with SATS, but were in close agreement at level 5. Over the last three years, standards of attainment have shown a slight increase in line with national trends. Attainment in science is above that in English, but below that in mathematics.
83. At GCSE, all students take double award science. At the end of Year 11, all students obtained grades within the A* to G range, with the majority of students achieving A* to C grades, nearly double the national average. The 2001 results are close to the three year average for A* to C grades, but attainment in science is low in relation to all other subjects taken at GCSE.
84. All students, including those with special educational needs or language difficulties, make satisfactory or good progress. In relation to their prior knowledge and understanding students achieve well in science.
85. From work seen in class, attainment by the end of Year 9 is well above average and in line with results in external examinations. Year 7 students, after a few exploratory experiments with simple beam balances, were able to make predictions about the ratio of masses/distance required to achieve equilibrium. By Year 9, students have a sound understanding of factors that affect the rate of chemical reactions and the importance of controlling variables in experimental investigations. However, practical skills are not so well developed as was shown by poor linear and volumetric measuring techniques.

86. Scrutiny of written work and class observations show levels of attainment by the end of Year 11 to be well above national averages. Year 10 students carrying out an experiment to find the formula of magnesium oxide were able to predict likely sources of error in their experimental technique and, in some cases, work out the formula from their knowledge of the periodic table. Year 11 students showed good prediction skills when considering the effects of changing current flow or the number of coil turns on forces generated by electromagnets. Very good analytical and evaluative skills were seen in coursework investigations from all the sciences. Practical skills are satisfactory, but powers of recall and the ability to relate facts to concepts are not always sufficiently developed. Good ICT skills in both word-processing and graphical drawing are evident in coursework. Good selective use is made of the internet for research on scientific topics as shown by a Year 11 class researching a topic on drugs for group poster presentation.
87. Students' attitudes to science are very positive. They are attentive, co-operative and appear keen to learn and make progress. They respond well when stimulated, particularly in lessons where they are engaged in a variety of activities and working in groups. They take pride in their written work, particularly in the organisation and presentation of coursework. High teacher expectations play an important part in producing such positive attitudes. The few students from an ethnic minority background are indistinguishable academically from the other boys. They all come with talents for scientific enquiry and the quality of the inclusive questioning and task setting provides good challenge and support to individual boys.
88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject, make good use of resources and know their students well. Class management skills are sound and the high quality of student-teacher relationships is a particular strength. Lessons are well planned and conducted at a suitable pace, though more use could be made of extension material to ensure all students are fully occupied. Standards of marking and commentary in students' notebooks are variable, but students understand the grading system and can relate their performance to the target minimum grades. Some helpful and positive comments were seen in notebooks and coursework from all Years; the ready accessibility of teachers ensures that the quality of feedback is good.
89. The department is well led and managed. Aims are clear and staff work well as a team with a shared commitment to ensure students achieve the best possible results. A scheme for monitoring and recording assessment is now in place, but further refinement is required to satisfactorily inform students' progress. The department makes a useful contribution to the school's literacy programme through comprehension work with scientific texts. Teaching is effectively underpinned by first-class support from an efficient and dedicated technician team. Servicing of one of the laboratories is made particularly difficult and hazardous because of its location – separated from the prep room area some distance along the main school corridor.
90. Since the last report, monitoring of teaching has been introduced and resources have been improved. ICT use is much in evidence both as an aid to teaching and as a means of presentation in written work. However, levels of attainment, while improving in all Years, are still nationally below those of Year 9 students of similar ability. Extension work is being used, but this practice is not consistent across all Years. The unsatisfactory location of one laboratory has not been rectified.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning.
- Very positive attitudes of students.
- Standards achieved by students.
- Good management of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT in Years 7-9.
- Insufficient 3D studies in Years 8 and 9.
- The use made of available assessment data.

91. In Year 7 there is a wider than expected range in standards. This reflects the range of art experience students have had before joining the school. Higher attaining students make vigorous confident drawings while lower attaining students' drawings reveal a lack of experience in drawing from direct observation. However, students make good progress as they follow a well-planned art course, which ensures that the basic skills are established and developed so that by the end of Year 9 standards of work are above average and most students have reached or surpassed expectations. Well-established drawing skills underpin students' work in painting, printmaking, and lively graphic design. Students examine the practice of artists and can relate their own work to it. They develop some understanding of the meanings and roles of art in other cultures. For example, in Year 7 students research the function of masks in cultures from around the world. They develop designs for their own masks and produce them in a range of materials. Students are able to use a range of media and techniques, taking into account purpose and audience. In Year 9 students develop effective and often amusing typefaces reflecting their own interests, such as break-dancing and martial arts. Though the use of sketchbooks has been established, they are not used well enough as a means of gathering images, developing ideas, experimenting with media and making notes. Work in three dimensions is not sufficiently developed over the three years. Students use ICT well as a means of research, accessing information about artists and images of their work. They do not yet use ICT as an effective tool to generate their own images, or to edit, modify, store and retrieve them.
92. GCSE results for 2001 were very high compared with all schools nationally and have improved each year for the past three years. Students did as well in art as they did in other subjects. Almost all students gained a grade A*-C, with over a third gaining A* and A. Standards by Year 11 are high. Students make good progress over the two years and work with increasing independence as they approach the GCSE examination. Underlying drawing skills are well developed and students can talk confidently about their work. They can clearly describe how they have developed it and what their intentions are. They research the work of artists and relate their own work to it in written commentaries and through analysis. They sustain their studies to produce significant amounts of work in a good range of media such as ceramic sculpture, etching, silkscreen printing and painting. Following a visit to Sandringham, a Year 10 student has produced a silkscreen print that acknowledges the work of the Pop Art movement, while others produce etchings, paintings and relief prints. Year 10 and 11 students work with increasing independence in their choice of themes, their development and their realisation. Students are able to bring their interests and feelings to their work. A Year 11 student has produced a screen print in response to the September 11th attack on the World Trade Centre. It transforms the now familiar image into an evocative icon in the style of Roy Lichtenstein. Sketchbooks are used to collect and present the development of their work, though these are not yet as well used as

they should be. Artists are chosen from a limited range and contemporary art is not well explored.

93. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. In all Year 10 and 11 lessons seen it was very good. It was good in three quarters of year 7-9 lessons and it was excellent in the remainder. Teachers have very good subject knowledge with the ability to teach a good range of technical skills. Students are able to learn techniques and skills that match their aptitudes and interests, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have high expectations of students and challenge them to produce their best. Using questioning and prompts, teachers help students to think carefully and express their ideas clearly. They use good examples of students' work and good quality resources. Effective demonstrations motivate and inspire students and challenge them to achieve higher standards. In a Year 8 lesson, a teacher skilfully demonstrates the use of an airbrush to produce tonal perspective. The students are delighted and amazed and break into spontaneous applause. They go on to produce very varied and effective designs for their own airbrush paintings. Work is very well planned to build skills and knowledge on students' previous learning and to allow them to bring their own interests and views to their work. However, students are not encouraged to record and define specialist vocabulary. The extensive programme of gallery and field visits is well integrated into planned work and makes a very valuable contribution to students' learning.
94. Students' behaviour in lessons is always very good. They are keen to offer answers, ideas and opinions in class discussions. They are polite to each other and to teachers and supportive of each other's ideas and opinions. Older students take responsibility for their work and materials and make very good use of lesson time.
95. The subject is well managed. The department head gives clear leadership and there is a shared commitment amongst teachers to high standards. A well-managed and pleasant learning environment is established and maintained by teachers. Assessment is used well to monitor student attainment and to keep them well informed of their progress. In Years 7-9 this is not yet related to National Curriculum levels. Available assessment data is not used to inform planning. For example, the end of Key Stage 3 results are not made use of. However, testing of students on entry has been developed and together with other assessment information, will provide a very valuable gauge of progress through Years 7-9. Close monitoring of student progress, particularly in Year 11, with detailed analysis of their coursework, has resulted in rising GCSE results over several years.
96. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Already high standards have been raised further and the subject now attracts a higher than average number of students to study GCSE. There has been substantial investment in ICT equipment and some good practice has been established, especially in GCSE and A-level courses. Sketchbooks have been introduced across all years and some progress has been made in introducing their use in students' practice. The standard and range of ceramics has improved in Years 10 and 11. Planning now reflects National Curriculum requirements and the curriculum is planned to build progressively on students' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Positive student attitudes to the subject.
- Overall improvements in GCSE result.
- Team of staff committed to raising standards

Areas for improvement

- Apply a wider range of teaching strategies to further raise attainment.
- Increase the use of assessment to inform Key Stage 3 lesson planning.
- Under use of ICT and Computer Aided Design (CAD)
- Lack of subject policies in literacy and numeracy.
- Inadequate technical support and maintenance

97. At the end Year 9 overall standards are slightly below national expectations. Students display a keen interest in the subject and are eager to learn. Students work well in groups and display good independent learning skills. Focussed practical tasks provide a firm structure in which students can think analytically and develop creative skills. Ideas are effectively communicated in sketch form although graphics skills lack refinement; very limited use is made of ICT to generate final solutions or production drawings. Making skills are well developed; student's shape and form materials using a range of tools confidently and produce accurate final products. Standards in electronics are sound. Knowledge and understanding of the working properties of materials and components is weak; this inhibits learning progress.
98. Standards in GCSE 2001 results, although showing an overall improvement since 1998, are below that of similar schools and reveal that students performed less well in the subject compared with other subjects. Course folders are developed systematically. Research skills vary; more emphasis needs to be placed on the development of sketched and digital photographic records rather than rely on commercial materials and unedited Internet material. Students are confident generating ideas but the range needs to be extended. Analysis of ideas needs to be more comprehensive and incorporate more technical detail. Oral contributions are confident but are often imprecise and lacking in technical depth, for example knowledge of materials properties. This restricts the development of wider technical understanding. Ongoing evaluation of design ideas needs embedding more firmly when generating and analysing design ideas. Effective assessment and target setting techniques need to be further extended to improved coursework management and performance.
99. The curriculum allows students to gain relevant technological experiences in both key stages although curriculum time allocation remains limited, teaching groups are often big and the range of material experience is narrow, for example restricted access to vacuum forming and injection moulding and no textiles experiences. Practical areas, although limited in terms of number of spaces, have been well adapted and have an appropriate layout for the delivery of the courses on offer. Refurbishment by staff has been thoughtfully planned and completed to a safe standard. Literacy and numeracy skills need to be developed in a more structured fashion across teaching groups, for example a numeracy policy detailing a consistent approach to dimensioning. Pupil grasp of technical concepts and terms is weak.
100. Overall, provision of ICT hardware and software is poor for students of this ability. Although regularly incorporated in folders, ICT skills need to be developed beyond text processing and the construction of simple charts. Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM) introduced in Years 8 and 9 requires further investment and development. Adequate Computer Aided Design (CAD) hardware is needed to further develop skills and understanding.

101. Student's attitudes to work are good, often very good in Years 7,8 and 9. They are interested and keen to learn. They co-operate well together, collaborating and sharing ideas in design development and sharing equipment. They work well independently when required to do so. Overall students in Year 10 and 11 display maturity in their approach to their analytical design work, but pace of work and concentration spans are often inconsistent.
102. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory; it is consistently good in Year 7, with one lesson unsatisfactory in Year 10. Lessons are adequately planned and teachers display a very secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. Approaches to the teaching of the design process are also secure. Good use is made of exemplar work in classroom display and clearly contributes to the establishment of sound expectations. Students in all years would benefit from more challenge and pace in lessons, particularly in Year 8 and 9, to effectively impact on learning and extend levels of knowledge and understanding. Students would benefit from the deployment of a wider range of teaching strategy, particularly in Year 10 and 11. Course and task booklets are well structured but require different formats and a greater in-depth content for high and middle ability students. Approaches to assessment need to be better co-ordinated across the subject area, particularly in Year 7, 8 and 9, where regularly level assessment needs to be used to inform schemes of work and lesson planning. Lesson planning needs to highlight clear learning objectives, which are regularly communicated to students.
103. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Priorities for management need to be established, including the delegation of routine work, for example planned equipment maintenance. This will release more time to be spent developing assessment techniques to improve lesson delivery. Classroom observation needs to be systematically undertaken and used to inform planned in-service training programmes. It will also provide the basis for a more rigorous approach to the effective monitoring of student learning progress. A more structured approach to literacy, numeracy and ICT will provide more challenge in lessons for students. Technical support time is currently inadequate. Recent practical area refurbishments have been well managed. Overall standards since the last inspection have not significantly improved; some aspects of provision remain limited, for example curriculum time allocation and CAD provision. Whilst recent staff difficulties have been unsettling, monitoring and management of teaching needs to be more effective.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Improving results and take-up at GCSE
- Understanding of the relationship between monitoring, tracking, advice and outcomes.
- The GCSE fieldwork component
- Challenging students to make the most of their opportunities

Areas for improvement

- Clearer use of case study exemplars.
- Greater use of ICT and its integration within lessons and student work.
- Greater attention to the presentation of work and consistency in applying the marking policy.

- Accommodation – dispersed, poorly decorated and furnished.

104. Standards in years 7-9 are consistently well above the national expectation. In the last four years more than 9 out of 10 students consistently reached the national average and nearly 7 out of 10 reached the higher grades. Achievement is therefore in line with that expected of selective schools.
105. In years 10 and 11 attainment is impressive at GCSE. There is a steadily rising trend in results over the past four years in terms of both higher grades and the points scores of students which are well beyond the national expectation. In 2001 results were very good indeed. 100 per cent gained a D grade with 58 per cent attaining the highest grades, A* and A. Since 1998 and in comparison with their other subjects, students taking geography to GCSE level consistently have a higher level of achievement than those taking geography nationally and in Lincolnshire.
106. The quality of teaching seen in the lessons observed was always satisfactory, mostly good or very good with some outstanding. Staff are established subject specialists with an in depth knowledge of their subject and they adeptly communicate to students. Teaching in Years 7-9 does vary, most was at a good pace and high standards are expected of students in terms of growing knowledge and understanding of geography as well as being able to express points, especially when speaking or in discussion. Lessons are well planned, in a structured time sequence and designed to get the best out of the lesson time available.
107. Students are expected to work hard and their learning is monitored through careful questioning as well as exercises assessments and exams. This applies equally well in Year 7 and in Year 9. However, whilst most lessons proceed very well a minority, especially those that are least participative, can become insufficiently challenging in places with students becoming passive receivers instead of active learners. Most students are good listeners but they also respond extremely well to opportunities for research, collaborative work and debate. Lessons that have these features were very good contributing significantly to the high achievement and progress made by students.
108. From the scrutiny of work undertaken, there is much evidence of developing knowledge, understanding and skills, indicating achievement moving forward, assessment objectives being reached and progress over time. However, in years 7-9 too much work was sloppily presented and standards of grammar were not high enough though the geography content was normally fine. There was seldom any evidence in students' books of ICT usage despite that the department Handbook indicating there should be. Marking policy is inconsistently applied, with not enough constructive feedback or evidence of the translation of target setting after assessment into suggestions for improvement in the students' books.
109. Teaching in Y10-11 to the option groups overcomes these areas for improvement. It is organised, efficiently delivered and to good effect, as the rising examination results show. Some carefully crafted lessons running at a challenging pace getting the best from students were seen in KS4. The coursework requirements for GCSE are very skilfully developed and this component contributes particularly well to the high marks achieved by most candidates. The teaching here was of high quality.
110. In years 10 and 11 it is clear that written work is more systematically monitored and that feedback is given regarding the improvement needed and that staff are regularly overseeing progression and development. The coursework/fieldwork seen is of a consistently high standard, carefully crafted, includes ICT – either word-processed or incorporating Excel spreadsheet work and digital imaging. In several lessons observed

and the field work for GCSE there is impressive capability to handle, understand the use of and apply appropriately, a variety of statistical techniques.

111. Of particular note has been the competence and confidence of students to speak, make presentations to others on geographical topics, work individually or in groups and pairs. The staff are to be complemented on having developed these skills of communication to a high level. Relationships between staff and students are very good and students questioned confirmed this speaking highly of their teachers, their expertise and knowledge and the reputation of the Department. These are often major factors in why they choose to take geography. Relationships seen between students in lessons were equally positive, in group work, pairs or whole class lesson work when helping each other could be seen frequently. The effect of these positive influences is to develop the pre-requisites for examination success, but also a wider appreciation of the contribution of geography to the world the students live in. They are enthusiastic and readily say that they enjoy the subject. Behaviour is normally very good. These are the hallmarks of the effective teaching seen and the good results obtained overall.
112. The Department is being very well led. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction and a team consensus of what is to be achieved by dedicated, hardworking subject specialists. Administration has been brought up to modern standards and the degree of information held and used for assessment purposes, including the in-house reward system, merits commendation. Schemes of Work have been rewritten. The department does understand the need to stretch these able students towards the high-grade end of the spectrum. The monitoring that takes place indicates that duty is practised but a careful focus needs to continue to make sure that the entire ability reaches its potential and maximises scores. The Performance Management system is in place and on track for completion of the first cycle. Further work will develop the raising of achievement agenda within Geography. Funding to geography is adequate but not generous although special bids have been made for specific purposes such as new books for the new GCSE specifications and the weather tracking PC system. Resourcing is therefore adequate overall, but accommodation is not and requires attention.
113. Overall, the Department is highly successful and going forward. There is a clear understanding of future priorities for development including: more ICT, tightening of KS3 levelling, new field work, library books, improved teaching pace and tighter key skills.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- GCSE results in 2001, especially at A*/A grade
- Imaginative teaching and the development of an historical learning pathway from Year 7 to Year 11
- Helpful marking and positive pupil responses

Areas for improvement

- Subject-specific target-setting in school reports
- Greater direct use of ICT at Key Stage 4
- Exploration of further challenges for gifted and talented historians in the light of the 2001 GCSE results

114. Standards in History at Key Stages 3 and 4 are well above the national expectation because students are being nurtured on a highly thoughtful historical pathway from Years 7-11.
115. In 2001 the GCSE results were outstanding, in that nine out of ten boys secured an Higher Grade [A-B] pass and 61% obtained A/A*. The average points score was high by comparison within the school and was well above the national average. It was the only subject at the school to secure a 100% pass rate. These results were achieved with a 52.9 % entry level, which is well above the national average and further reflects the reputation of this subject within the school. These results confirm a trend of improving results since the last inspection and now raise the issue of the need for further strategies to provide challenge for exceptionally able historians working at GCSE level.
116. Evidence seen in classroom observations and scrutiny of students' written work confirms that the 2001 standards are being maintained in the present Year 11. This was clearly exemplified by a Year 11 class, which embarked on a discussion of the politics and implications of the Arab-Israeli conflict in a manner more akin to Year 12. The evidence from Years 10 and 11 is that students are able to assess and interpret historical evidence. They draw valid conclusions and make parallels in a very sophisticated manner, and this pattern is slightly stronger in Year 10 where students have a background of very high assessments from the end of Year 9.
117. In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 58% of students were recorded at Level 6 or better. This evidence of high attainment places the school's results well above the national average, and the evidence is that they were based on thorough and rigorous testing which was very cautious in nature. This evidence from the most recent Year 9 explains why the present Year 10 is demonstrating such high levels of attainment. This high standard is being sustained because the classroom observations and work scrutiny in Year 7-9 confirm high standards throughout, with evidence of even higher standards in Year 7 where students readily analyse historical evidence and situations, exercise empathy and write extremely fluent and thoughtful prose at an exceptional level.
118. The increasingly good levels of attainment have occurred because good levels of progress have been achieved through an encouraging and supportive learning environment. This is enabling students to build successfully on their high levels of general attainment on entry. The good Year 9 assessments reflect good levels of achievement, even against these high levels of initial attainment.
119. Attitudes in History classrooms are always enthusiastic, receptive and sensitive. Students are respectful of each other and discuss sensitive issues such as the impact of the Nazis in Germany or the implications of the introduction of trench warfare in World War One in a thoughtful and responsible manner. Relationships with the teachers are always very positive and behaviour is good, so that classroom management is not really an issue. The whole atmosphere is characterised by a two-way dialogue between students and teachers, with many students recognising that the teacher's role is as much to be a resource as to provide direct teaching.
120. Teaching is generally good, sometimes exceptionally good, and always sounds. It is characterised by good subject knowledge, varieties of teaching and learning strategies. All of these promote pace, the promotion of a positive and reflective atmosphere, regular on-going assessment within lessons and formative marking, a strong emphasis on positive values and good planning. There are good arrangements for cover lessons. The assessments are thorough and accurate. Assessment data is being used to

support the learning and progress of individuals and groups. Subject-specific target-setting is fully in place in marking, and students are seen to respond well to this, but this strength is not carried forward into reporting.

121. The curriculum is rich and exciting. The good range of opportunities includes external visits to locations such as the Royal Armouries in Leeds and the Belgian World War One Battlefields. An annual History Day in school where an external expert sets the scene of the World War One trenches provides opportunities for students to practise empathy through the direct handling of many appropriate artefacts. Sensitive topics are incorporated in the curriculum, such as Nazi Germany and the breakdown of democracy at GCSE and the Islamic Empire in Year 7, and these aspects of the historical learning pathway are very significant in promoting positive values amongst the students. Whilst ICT is fully incorporated in the curriculum for Years 7-9 on a termly basis, it is less advanced in Year 10 and 11.
122. Management is good and thoughtful. It is developmental and has responded systematically to the last report, in terms of re-aligning the curriculum to National Curriculum requirements, and present-day expectations in terms of the literacy strategy.
123. This is a department, which has already demonstrated that it has the capacity to secure further improvements in the future by the standards that it has recently accomplished.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**, but with several weaknesses.

Strengths

- The commitment of the majority of teachers to the use of ICT across the school curriculum
- Teaching of basic processes in discrete ICT lessons
- The work of technical staff in supporting class teachers' lessons using ICT both in ensuring the smooth operation of the system and also in giving advice about software to students and teachers

Areas for improvement

- Assessment of students' attainment is insufficient to enable staff to provide appropriate levels of challenge.
- There are insufficient specialists in ICT to meet the full demands of the subject curriculum.
- The course does not encourage students to think independently when applying ICT to their work.

124. In the CLAIT course followed by almost all students their standards are below expectation for national curriculum ICT by the end of Year 11. Students in Year 11 seen using ICT in their work across the curriculum during the inspection meet the needs of the tasks that they have been set. An improvement in standards to almost national expectation is apparent in the work of year 9 and 10 students, as they are following a different course that gives them greater scope for independent work. The

same is true of the one group in Year 11 following the Key Skills course. This represents an improvement over the very low capability of students entering Year 7, who have had very little teaching of ICT in their previous schools. Students in the sixth form have a wide range of capability as they come from different schools with very different experience of ICT, with some entering the school with very low capability. By year 13 they have all reached a standard that allows them to make use of ICT to further their studies. Boys' capability is higher than that of girls. Achievement in ICT is therefore satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form.

125. Almost all students in years 10 and 11 have sufficient knowledge of processes to be able to apply their use of ICT to given circumstances, but they are over-dependent on specific instructions from their teachers. Year 11 students following the CLAIT course work below levels of which they are capable because are insufficiently challenged to higher levels of thinking in relation to the application of ICT. In the Key Skills level 2 course that they are now following in year 10, with one group in year 11, more than half of the students can select relevant material from internet sites for the travel brochure that they were preparing, but depend on the use of sites suggested by their teacher.
126. Although they know how to find a specific web site or look for a subject, their ability to refine searches is weak. Their work across the curriculum shows that they have experience of the prescribed range of applications. Students using spreadsheets to analyse data can enter it into given sheets, search, sort and graph the information and then make accurate statements about its significance. They do not reach the higher levels of considering the purpose of the spreadsheet and designing it to meet the needs of their enquiry. Some students with lower levels of attainment have insufficient knowledge of standard procedures, although they can attain the desired results by inefficient means. For example, in one year 10 class creating a business plan only one boy could use the organisation chart in the software, while several others were unaware of the existence of text boxes or the tabulator key.
127. Students in Year 9 are working at levels similar to those of those in year 10, and are following the same key skills course with similar outcomes. Their work is therefore nearer to national expectation for their age group, but they are still working below expectation as they are not fully independent in their use of ICT. They can use computer assisted design software to produce a range of designs in design and technology, but those seen have not reached the level where they can independently meet the requirements of a design brief. At the end of Year 8 they produce presentations that show good technical capability, but few consider the needs of the audience in their work. Their presentations are therefore lively but can be difficult to read, with animations chosen without regard to meaning.
128. Teaching of ICT is satisfactory in terms of basic processes but teachers have insufficient information about standards to be able to build on students' strengths or improve their areas of weakness. Students' ICT capability on entry to the school is well below that for the age group, but the school receives no information about students' standards or experience in the primary schools. The department does not test students or ask them about their prior experience. Levels of attainment remain low throughout year 7 because the course teaches basic skills more appropriate to primary education with limited opportunities for independent decision making. This is largely because the small amount of time available for discrete lessons, one lesson in two weeks constrains learning. In the Year 8 work on spreadsheets students will produce an amended account sheet for a tuck shop, with formulae to enable simple calculations. The outline is heavily directed with limited independent thinking because

of the time constraints, and there is no opportunity to extend students by asking them to solve a problem in another context.

129. Staff feedback to students lacks the detail required to move their standards up. Although they comment orally on students' work they only retain Key Skills coursework for marking. The students' main records are grades for external moderation of the certificate courses. Teachers write reports in terms of areas covered rather than students' attainment. As a result, students are not sufficiently aware of their strengths or areas for improvement in ICT. Those seen during the inspection concentrated on outcomes rather than improving their skills, for example when word-processing or searching Internet. The school has introduced procedures for assessment in ICT since the last inspection, but these do not provide the level of information on students' standards that would enable them to be moved on individually. Achievement is therefore unsatisfactory in ICT, in spite of the good range of opportunities to use it across the curriculum. Here, students expand their experience in several ways, such as the use of email to correspond in French or the opportunity to view Parliament in action during a sociology lesson. They therefore learn across the curriculum about a wide range of opportunities to extend their knowledge and to communicate effectively using ICT.
130. The situation in the sixth form is better in terms of building on students' individual capability, as sixth form staff require students both from the main school and from other schools in the area to evaluate their own ICT needs at the start of year 12. From this information the staff plan a key skills IT course that is clearly related to the students' learning needs, set in contexts that will help their sixth form studies. Although the time available is very limited, students grouped in higher attaining sets take the key skills level 3 qualification as a matter of course, while every student is encouraged to try the examination. Through activities such as electronic application for higher education, computer-based careers analysis and the requirement to use ICT for production of some coursework, staff encourage students to work on improvement of their capability. These factors make it possible for non-specialist staff teaching the course to succeed in raising students' levels of attainment to the extent that all students seen in year 13 are able to use ICT with confidence where it is needed in their studies.
131. The school recognises that the course followed by years 10 and 11 students until now gives unsatisfactory coverage of the requirements for ICT, and so has introduced the Key Skills level 2 course for years 9 and 10 concurrently, with the aim of achieving qualification by the end of year 10. Aspects of ICT not covered in this course are met in science where students have experience of data logging and also in design and technology where they work on computer assisted graphics and control technology. There is one small group whose experience is thin because they do not take a technology course, but otherwise the statutory requirements are met in full. This is an improvement over the situation at the last inspection but there is no information technology specialist, although some of the staff have a high level of competence in particular applications. For all teachers of ICT, however, their main responsibilities lie elsewhere, and so it is difficult to provide a course with similar experience for all students.
132. There is a good range of opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum, with all departments providing some experience of ICT, although this is not true of all staff and therefore of all classes within departments. Science and technology staff use more than their statutory requirement to teach data-logging, computer-assisted graphics and control, with good use of presentation software and word-processing. Teachers in these departments are beginning to make good use of interactive whiteboards in their

explanations to students. Almost all departments have researched useful web sites and use them for enquiry, while modern foreign languages use a good range of database, email and word-processing. During the inspection a German class was using specialist software effectively to reinforce vocabulary for their GCSE coursework, while history groups researched social conditions in the industrial revolution by conducting their own searches of a census file. Business Studies groups use ICT throughout their course.

133. These opportunities are possible because the school has improved the amount of equipment since the last inspection, with two suites available for booking by all and small specialist areas in some departments. Provision is now just below national average, and there are plans to build an additional suite in the near future. There is a good range of relevant equipment to be used in conjunction with the computers. The network is reliable, thanks to the expertise of the network manager and technical assistant, both of whom are happy to advise students on software issues as well as to deal with technical problems. Teachers have all been trained in the use of ICT. The school has created some exemplary practice by the recent purchase of laptop computers for teachers who wish to enhance the application of ICT to both the curriculum and to the administration system. All of these steps have made it possible for almost all staff to teach with confidence in ICT rooms, and thus to bring about the great improvement in ICT cross-curricular use since the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the provision for modern foreign languages is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards in French
- Quality of teaching

Areas for improvement

- Management of German
- Independent use of the foreign language by the students

134. Results at GCSE in French are excellent. Compared to their performance in other subjects, students perform significantly better in French. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection. In German the results are very good; students perform marginally less well than they do in other subjects.
135. In work seen, the standard of work of students at the age of fourteen is very good in French and good in German. Overall progress is good. Students speak confidently. They have good recall of previous learning. Levels of pronunciation are good. Written work is careful and accurate, and students demonstrate a very good knowledge of present, past and future tenses. Understanding of spoken and written texts is very good. However, independent use of the foreign language for routine classroom transactions is limited. Students with special educational needs and those from an ethnic minority background are well integrated in lessons and make good progress.
136. The standard of work seen of students at the age of sixteen is again very good in French and good in German. Students continue to speak confidently. They answer their teachers' questions accurately, often giving extended responses without being prompted. In structured role-plays, as part of their examination practice, they demonstrate speaking skills of a high order. They demonstrate knowledge of a very

good range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. In spite of these well-developed oral skills, students do not use the foreign language often enough for “real” purposes in the classroom. Overall, students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress by the age of sixteen.

137. Teaching throughout the school is very good. Again, this is an improvement on the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In all French lessons, the quality of teaching was either good or very good. Teachers have an excellent command of their subject. They challenge their students, especially in French, by extensive use of the foreign language, although more insistence on using the foreign language for everyday communication would raise standards even higher. High expectations are reflected in the rigorous correction of errors. Very good planning of lessons is a strength of the teaching; there are planned opportunities for students to engage in a variety of activities which enable them to practise all four language skills. A brisk pace to most lessons ensures that students are kept on their toes. Effective use is made of the foreign language assistants to help students develop their knowledge and understanding. The teaching of modern foreign languages makes a very good contribution to the development of students’ literacy skills by encouraging them to think about language, to use grammatical terms, and to recognise patterns in the foreign language and compare them to their own language. On the very small minority of occasions when the quality of teaching is less than good, there is a lack of coherence to the lessons and consequently students are not as fully engaged in language learning as they might be.
138. Students work very hard in foreign language lessons. They work at a good pace. They are enthusiastic and willingly engage in active participation. They sustain concentration and think for themselves in working out language patterns. All of this, together with the very good teacher-student relationships evident in the classroom, contributes positively to the high standards reached.
139. The use of ICT makes a very positive contribution to the learning of French and German. The use of email is currently being developed in order to communicate with the students of the exchange school in Provence. Students’ work displayed in the classrooms provides evidence of word processing and desktop publishing skills. Students use the internet to research tourist information sites as part of their GCSE coursework.
140. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department is highly respected by her colleagues. Her hard work and guidance are much appreciated. The monitoring of classroom practice is very good. There is a strong commitment to high standards and a shared sense of purpose. Schemes of work are well planned. The addition of Spanish to the modern foreign languages curriculum, following a successful experiment in the sixth form, enhances the range of learning opportunities offered to students. Although Latin is not in the strictest sense attached to the modern foreign languages department, there is a very good record of success for the subject in the main school and the sixth form, where it is highly valued by its students. A very good assessment programme based on key pieces of work and supported by the school’s setting of target minimum grades enables teachers to monitor very carefully the progress of their students. Learning resources are good and well used. A rich programme of exchanges and residential visits makes an important contribution to the interest and motivation of students. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Two dedicated rooms for the teaching of modern foreign languages is insufficient, and the nomadic life of some teachers has an adverse effect upon what they can always do in the classroom. More support in the management of German would help to raise standards.

The current practice of entering students for GCSE German at the end of Year 10 militates against both the achievement of the highest grades and the recruitment of larger groups for study in the sixth form.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching makes learning enjoyable.
- Students show enthusiasm for music through extra-curricular groups
- Examination results are good with numbers increasing

Areas for improvement

- Further refine national curriculum assessment
- Limited instrumental resources from other cultures

141. Standards in music are generally high and improving. Year 7 students come from a large number of primary schools, many with no music specialist teacher. Teacher assessment of their attainment after three years at this school shows a substantial majority has reached the expected level in recent years. In 2001, very few fell below level five and some reached level 7. High-attaining students could make faster progress in some lessons. A substantial number of students choose music at GCSE. Results have improved during the last three years to well above the national average. Nearly all candidates were awarded A*-C grades in 2001, comparing well with other subjects in the school. Standards seen in lessons remain high. Most of the over fifty students across Years 10 and 11 benefit from instrumental tuition, either in school or privately, which has a very positive effect. The small number of sixth-formers studying music in each of past three years have generally attained high grades with a points score above the national average. In most years, a pupil goes on to study music in higher education. This is the intention of two of the six boys and girls in Years 12 and 13 currently.
142. Students enjoy their music lessons, concentrate and generally achieve well in them. Written tasks for homework include some that demand reflection on their learning and encourage creative use of word processing skills. Groups of Year 7 students record performances with percussion and keyboard of their imaginative realisations of a thought-provoking concept, the awakening of time. In lessons, some Year 8 students with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other students in devising a melody in ragtime style, having already performed the underlying chord sequence with fingered triads. Those with developed keyboard skill sometimes lose concentration when they find the tasks easy. Year 9 students engage in appraisal of each other's melodic variations, using or recognising technical terms, and go on to develop and refine these. Those more musically able offer support to others when necessary in an atmosphere of collective learning and endeavour. Y10 students can discuss the use of music in film after viewing a clip from Jurassic Park, identifying features of the music analytically. In a composition exercise on 'Dawn' most show independence in using keyboards or their own instruments, though a few are over-reliant on the teacher.
143. Performance ability is varied, but all can play fluently, and many expressively. Year 11 students are producing enough finished compositions to select the best for submission. In many cases these are produced with the aid of computer programs at school or at home. They show an above average ability in identifying wrong notes in a

listening exercise. Performance is a notable strength among sixth form students. There is a refreshing independence of spirit, shown in some compositional work and varied musical interests. Some students find stylistic harmony, part of the syllabus chosen, more difficult. Most of these students still contribute willingly to the school's performing groups, sometimes taking over direction. They provide very good role models for younger students.

144. Teaching is good, a judgement reflecting many very good features and some points for development. At its best, teaching demonstrates very good relationships with students and has high expectations of their involvement in learning. It prompts them, through sensitive questioning and well presented tasks, to show their knowledge and understanding and be confident in it. Use of resources is often very good, for example in using new technology such as keyboard memory to free the teacher to observe students or portable minidisk to record students work with maximum efficiency. The limited spaces are used well for group practical work. Teachers encourage and praise and usually suggest extension tasks to higher attaining students. Teachers' subject knowledge and skill is very good, shown in class work and the direction of extra-curricula groups. Where teaching does not reach this high standard it is because the pace of learning is too slow for the more able. There is a need for greater planning for anticipated differences between students, with individual education plans for students with special educational needs to hand in the department.
145. Sixth form teaching is generally very good. However even greater preparation for these small groups and more thought about the best use of taught sessions, would enable swifter and more assured learning.
146. Leadership and management are good. Very good teamwork has enabled a smooth change of roles between the two teachers recently. Visiting instrumental teachers feel that their work, which involves a tenth of all students, is administered well and valued. Proper attention is given to development of the compulsory curriculum and to review of examination boards used. Developments and targets are appropriate for example to increase the number of A* grades awarded in GCSE, and to introduce the use of computers to younger students. Music is well supported by the senior managers in a variety of ways and staff from other areas takes part in the regular choir rehearsals. However, while there are ongoing developments in assessment procedures, with recent professional development undertaken and valued, these are overdue and need prioritising to be effective in improving the rate of progress made by current students.
147. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Numbers of students choosing GCSE have increased and results improved. Schemes for Year 7,8, and 9 classes now embrace music of a wide range of cultures. The use of computers and other aids to learning has kept pace with developing technology. However there is a need for more computers fitted as music workstations. While most resources are good, there is a dearth of instruments representing non-European cultures. Assessment policy and practice is developing, but does not yet ensure that students in the first three years are aware of the National Curriculum levels of attainment they are working to reach.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall the quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment at both key stages are good.

- Quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is good. Lessons are well sequenced and progressive which facilitates good learning.
- Relationships in classes are very good.
- Students have very good attitudes towards the subject. They are responsive, hard working and very well behaved.

Areas for improvement

- Better use should be made of formal assessment information.
- The opportunity for study for the GCSE should be provided.

148. Teacher assessments against national criteria, at the end of Key Stage 3 show that attainments in 2001 were much better than national averages with a substantial proportion of students performing above the nationally expected standards. School teams and individuals achieve many successes at local, regional and national levels in many sports in all years groups.
149. Standards of work of present students are good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Students in Year 7 are developing fluent, well-controlled and imaginative sequences of rolls and balances in gymnastics. In Years 7 and 8 standards of rugby are good; students have a firm grasp of basic laws and have well-developed handling and tackling skills. In Key Stage 4 boys play volleyball and basketball to a good standard. They understand tactical and team-play and have a wide range of personal skills. Key Stage 3 students make good progress in a range of activities, some of which are new to them. Sound progress is maintained in Key Stage 4. Standards of achievement are always satisfactory. The arrangements for setting and group size allow students to make progress on tasks, which match their levels of attainment. Gifted students reach high levels of attainment; several perform at regional level and a few attain national standards. All students are fully included in lessons.
150. Standards of teaching and learning are good at both key stages. Lessons are well planned and organised. They are well sequenced and progressive and proceed at a strong pace. Very good learning took place in a Year 7 gymnastics lesson when clear explanation, followed by helpful coaching and positive feedback enabled students to understand the objectives of the lesson, the progress they were making and what was needed to improve. Learning is facilitated by very good relationships. There is mutual respect between teachers and students. Students are aware that teachers have a strong command of their subjects, they listen carefully and work hard to improve performance. In Key Stage 4, in basketball and rugby, students respect the knowledge and experience of teachers who intervene effectively in small game situations to introduce coaching points. Questions and discussion to check understanding and stimulate imagination and inventiveness are important features of many lessons. Almost all lessons begin with a thorough warm-up and teachers use these occasion to introduce and reinforce learning on the effects of exercise. Students are independent learners and can be trusted to work constructively on tasks in co-operation with others and minimum supervision. Students receive much helpful feedback, individually and in class groups, and they are encouraged to evaluate their own performances and that of their peers. In Key Stage 3 gymnastic students were able to analyse sequences and pick out strengths and areas for improvement.
151. The attitudes of students are very good. They are highly motivated and very well behaved. They respond quickly and appropriately to teachers. They are helpful and show initiative in setting out apparatus for lessons. Students enjoy PE, they arrive in good time for lessons and the great majority are well turned out. Consideration for others is strong and competitive games are played in a very good spirit.

152. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. It provides a good range of opportunities but does not offer GCSE at Key Stage 4. The GCSE option would be a popular choice and provide a good stepping-stone to sixth form work. There are good procedures for assessment of performance but at this stage insufficient use is made of the information to guide curriculum development. The department is aware of this shortcoming and is taking steps to remedy it. The department benefits from strong leadership with a clear focus on high standards. An experienced team of specialist teachers works very closely together with a commitment to common aims.
153. The good standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained and the lack of balance reported in Key Stage 3 curriculum has been fully rectified.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in Religious Education is **good**

Strengths

- GCSE Short Course examination results in 2001, especially A*/A grades.
- Imaginative teaching
- Spiritual moral social and cultural education
- Pupil responses and attitudes

Areas for improvement

- Subject-specific target-setting in reports to parents
- The use of ICT within the curriculum
- Resources for the GCSE course.
- Promoting the pathway from GCSE Religious Studies to AS Level

154. Standards in Religious Education are above national expectations and this has been achieved in the context of a thorough re-alignment of the curriculum since the last inspection.
155. In 2001 the GCSE Short Course Religious Studies results at Higher Grades [A*-C] were well above the national average at 94.6%, with the remaining five out of ninety-two boys securing an overall pass grade. These were exceptional results, especially as 67.4% obtained A*/A grades, and this raises the issue of establishing a clearer pathway to promote recruitment to the AS Religious Studies examination course because at present there is insufficient correlation in terms of take-up.
156. Classroom observations and scrutiny of students' written work confirm that the 2001 standards are being maintained in the present Year 11 and that the current Year 10 are moving towards that standard. Students generally are developing a sensitive but critical attitude towards the controversial issues of modern times, which impinge on religious ideas such as vegetarianism and racism. Students were seen exploring these issues with great sensitivity and insight, and they reflect their thoughtfulness in their written work.
157. Throughout Year 7-9 attainment is high and students are seen exploring various aspects of Christian belief along with a careful grounding in the beliefs and values of other world religions. They demonstrate that they can make meaningful comparisons between the values and ideas of various religions and can explain why various practices and beliefs are significant. In Year 9 a class was seen watching a brief video

sequence relating to the massacre of a peaceful demonstration by British soldiers at Amritsar. The class discussed this episode with great maturity and insight, as did a Year 7 class which was assessing the relative importance of all the events in the Christian cycle of festivals. The quality of written work is very high, with students writing extensive and thoughtful prose from Year 7.

158. Attitudes to Religious Education are always good and frequently very good. Students demonstrate significant degrees of sensitivity in handling potentially controversial materials and issues. Relationships within classrooms are always good, both between students and between staff and students. This is an important factor in the good levels of progress that are being achieved. The school already checks the relevant knowledge background of students on entry to the school and is uses the Lincolnshire assessment materials to assess levels achieved, and so will be able to identify the degree of value-added that is being achieved in Religious Education.
159. Teaching in Religious Education is always good and sometimes very good, and this is an improvement on the situation at the last inspection. The teaching is imaginative and generally challenging. Students are being carefully introduced to a range of religious ideas and experiences, which will prepare them for their life in and beyond Spalding. It is characterised by good teacher knowledge; careful planning; strong pace; careful assessment; a strong emphasis on continuity; and a wide range of learning strategies, which include the very careful use of video and structured debate. There is still a measurable amount of question-and-answer but this is a product of a determination to maintain the pace of learning in an inevitably limited amount of curriculum time.
160. The curriculum has been remodelled since the last inspection: at Key Stage 3 the new Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus has been adopted in a very effective manner; and at Key Stage 4 the GCSE Short Course has been introduced as an entitlement for all students. As a result there is now full compliance with the statutory requirement at Key Stages 3 and 4. The curriculum provided is being delivered in an exciting and energetic manner, with a variety of strategies being employed, and this is what has helped to raise standards of attainment markedly in Religious Education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a particular strength of Religious Education at this school because students are very carefully prepared for life in the modern multi-cultural and multi-faith society. The preparation has been so thorough that the students are responding very sensitively and respectfully to the curriculum provided. Throughout the students are exploring issues which arise from religion and so they are exploring spirituality in other people's lives and it potential for them. They consider Gandhi's view on non-violence in Year 9 and Hindu food attitudes and customs in Year11 in a very mature manner. ICT is not yet a feature of the regular curriculum.
161. Assessment of students' work are thorough and accurate, and are conveyed clearly to students by formative marking which identifies strengths and weaknesses, and recommends priorities for future action. On-going assessment in classrooms is a regular feature of classroom practice and enables staff to identify progress. By contrast reporting is weak in Years 7-9 because it lacks those positive characteristics, which are evident in the assessment process.
162. Religious Education has careful and thoughtful leadership. There is strong evidence of co-ordination and coherence within the teaching and learning strategies, which is a result of monitoring; and a major curriculum review has been successfully completed since the last inspection. No action has yet been taken to address non-compliance with the statutory requirement to provide Religious Education at sixth-form level but there is strong capacity to secure further improvement.

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

In the inspection, 12 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	1	100		100		4	
English Literature	1	100		0		0	
Music	4	100		75		3.5	
Business Studies	7	100		14.3		2	
Psychology	2	100		0		3	

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English Language	12	100	92	56	37	7.5	5.28
English Literature	25	100	95	8.3	30	5	5.91
Mathematics	35	97	87	40	43	6.23	5.8
Further Mathematics	1	100	/	100	/	10	/
Biology	15	73	88	13.3	34	3.33	5.25
Chemistry	20	90	90	20	43	4.6	5.9
Geography	21	90	92	33.3	38	5.24	5.74
History	22	95	88	32	35	5.27	5.45
Sociology	15	100	86	80	35	8.13	5.32
French	4	100	89	50	38	6.46	5.29
Art and Design	13	100	96	46	46	6.77	6.57
Business Studies	32	100	92	44	32	6.28	5.5
Psychology	30	100	/	93.3	/	8.87	/

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**. Provision for AS and A-level mathematics is excellent and is a major strength of the school.

Strengths

- Standards attained are high in all areas of mathematics
- The quality of teaching of AS and A-level is excellent and students make at least very good progress in their learning
- Students have a very high regard for the quality of teaching, and this contributes greatly to the popularity of the subject.
- Students are kept aware of their progress and given good guidance on how to improve
- The department is very well managed.

Areas for improvement

- None

163. The inspection covered the modular course that leads to AS, A-level mathematics and A-level further mathematics. This includes modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and dynamics and statistics. There were no lessons for the re-sit GCSE course during the week of inspection. The teaching of the application of number leading to the key skills qualification is included in the school provision but could not be observed due to timetable arrangements.
164. Standards attained in A-level examinations in 2001 were above the national average though not as high as previous years. This was directly due to the standards of students on entry to the courses. Students made at least very good progress. Overall standards attained have remained well above average since the previous inspection. Standards of students in Year 13 are particularly high, with records indicating that about three-quarters of students on target to achieve A or B grade at A-level. In addition about half of these are likely to attain an additional A or B grade in the higher standard further mathematics A-level course. A scrutiny of students' work confirms that standards are high and that students gain a wide breadth of knowledge and understanding. The standards of students when they start the course are varied as no students who have a C grade or above at GCSE are refused entry, even if they have not covered the GCSE higher level course material, but overall standards are above average. About a sixth of students, including girls, join the school in Year 12. No comparison can be made between the attainments of boys and girls due to small numbers of girls that join the course. Where necessary, students are given additional support to help them catch up with the majority of the class.
165. The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers have at least very good subject knowledge and expertise in presenting the subject to their students. They use this to carefully structure lessons, to ensure that all students understand all stages of processes and gain the required knowledge and understanding. In all lessons and topics they consistently use and insist that students use correct notation and vocabulary developing good practice. Students are introduced to alternative notation and inherent pitfalls and misconceptions, and are thus well prepared to cope with

problems expressed in different ways. In a lesson introducing a statistics topic the teacher carefully and efficiently revised the work covered in Year 11, discussing the key problems when working with probabilities. Clever questioning made students think and information drawn from the students was used to move the lesson on. In an excellent lesson, when students taking the further mathematics course were learning about a theorem associated with imaginary numbers, the teacher constantly linked in other areas of mathematics, thus revising and reinforcing previously learned skills and understanding. In this lesson students demonstrated a very wide breadth of knowledge and understanding of pure mathematics at a very high level. Marking of set work is very good, helping students to see their problems and improve their work. Students often respond by writing their own comments on their marked work for future reference.

166. Mathematics is a very popular choice for A-level study. The major reason is that students have a justifiably high regard for their teachers, with some describing their teachers as 'absolutely amazing'. They have confidence that they will be well taught. Students listen carefully in lessons and are well motivated. Thus together with the excellent teaching students make the best possible progress.
167. Post-16 mathematics' provision is very well managed. Teachers are given the opportunity to teach their own specialist areas of mathematics, for example mechanics and statistics, thus making provision as efficient and possible. Records of students' progress and standards attained are carefully maintained. These are used to give students a clear picture of their projected examination grade at any time and help them improve this grade. Teachers are helped to improve through regular observations of lessons and constructive criticism. Information and communication technology, in particular graphic calculators and computer programs are used to support learning. Students are taught how to use their calculators to find and use information such as the binomial coefficients. There is adequate provision for students who wish to retake a GCSE examination, although this is rarely required, due to the standards attained in the school in year 11. Due to unavoidable timetable constraints, some of this work is covered at the expense of physical education lessons and some out of normal school time. A suitable basic numerical skill element is incorporated into the compulsory Year 12 programme, although the mathematics staff does not manage this.

Science

168. In science the focus was on biology and chemistry, but physics was also sampled. In physics, A level examination results in each of the years 1999 to 2001 were below national averages. However, over the same period, results have shown a steady improvement. No AS examination was taken in 2001. Two lessons were observed. Both were at least good. In one, very good questioning by the teacher ensured student level of understanding was enhanced to the full.

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good use of teaching resources.
- Very good attitudes of students.
- Good use of ICT

Areas for improvement

- Development teaching strategies to encourage independent thinking and learning.
- Improve use of assessments to monitor and inform students' progress.
- Maintain sufficient challenge for able students.

169. The GCE A level examination results last summer were well below the national average and represented a decline in performance over the previous two years. In relation to GCSE performance was disappointing. In the AS examination, all students who took the examination gained a pass, and half obtained either A or B grades. This represents satisfactory or good progress in relation to GCSE. In both examinations male and female students did equally well. The retention rate was high on both courses.
170. The standards of work of current students are average. In Year 13, students are achieving well in relation to predictions based on GCSE. In lessons seen, opportunities to develop research skills using the Internet resulted in some very good presentations on a range of genetic diseases, their causes and treatments. Pairs of students had researched their topics thoroughly and presented their findings to the rest of the class confidently using Powerpoint software. Other students, however, studying linkage were challenged to explain how non-Mendelian ratios could arise from backcross breeding experiments. Written work is satisfactory, but folders reveal an over-reliance on printed hand-outs and too little evidence of individual input. One student with English as an additional language is making very good progress.
171. Students in Year 12 are achieving well. In carrying out an experiment on the effect of detergent on leaf discs of red cabbage, they showed good practical skills in designing the experiment so that the effects of different concentrations of detergent could be accurately recorded using a colorimeter. Some students had difficulty in relating the investigation to the structure of cell membranes and the eventual disruption of the phospholipid bi-layer, but were generally able to predict the likely effects of changing the concentration of detergent or altering the temperature on the course of the experiment.
172. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Objectives are clear and the pace of lessons is matched to the ability of the students. Teachers show good subject knowledge and respond confidently to students' questions. However, an over-emphasis on handout sheets and learning by working through past examination questions may discourage students from making sufficient effort to develop their knowledge and understanding and therefore fail to maintain sufficient challenge for able students. Good practice was shown in the lesson where Year 13 students listened to one another's presentations on genetic diseases. This enabled them to develop critical appraisal skills in relation to each other's work. As a result of syllabus changes, there is less opportunity for continuous prose writing and this is reflected in the nature of independent learning tasks. Much of the written work demanded of students takes the form of structured questions linked to investigations. Day-to-day marking is satisfactory; written and verbal feed-back re-enforce student learning. Students learn well. They are attentive, respond well to supportive teaching and work well in small groups. They join in class

discussions though some students are more confident than others in offering their contributions. While some folders show good organisation and presentation, others will not provide a satisfactory basis for examination revision. Study skills need to be developed. Students are confident in using ICT to enhance their learning but there is a need to improve the use of assessments to monitor and inform students' progress.

173. Leadership is sound. There is a strong commitment to build on what has already been achieved and raise standards. The schemes of work for AS and A2 have been updated and there is a willingness to review and adapt teaching methods. The department is building up a useful set of resources with which to supplement A level textbooks. Target setting and the monitoring of student performance are established, but need further refinement to ensure students have specific learning goals.

Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision in Chemistry is **satisfactory**. Standards are slowly improving but are not yet in line with National averages. Teaching and learning are good overall. Marking is not consistently constructive in helping students to improve. The level of challenge for more able students is inconsistent

Strengths.

- The results are below average when compared with national results and are at a satisfactory level when students prior attainment is taken into account.
- Students make good progress and are supportive of each other.
- Teaching, overall, is good with some stronger features.
- The subject is well led and has a good range of resources.

Areas for improvement

- To ensure that sufficient challenges are created for more able students.
- Extend the marking practices to ensure that students know how to improve.
- Make sure that assessment information has an influence on teachers' planning.

174. The GCE A-Level examination results show the subject to be gradually improving but remaining below National Averages. Of the students who took the examination and passed the proportion gaining the highest grades was below average. The results show that male and female students are doing equally as well as each other. Very few students did not complete the course. Students with modest GCSE results did well and gained slightly better grades than expected from their GCSE results.

175. The standards of work of current students are average. In year 13, students are achieving well in relation to the predictions of previous performance. In lessons seen, they are doing well because of the effective teaching they receive. Lessons are carefully planned and they are clearly focused on the learning needs of some students. However the learning needs of the most able are not well catered for, as the work designed for them is not sufficiently challenging. In one lesson on determining organic structures using mass spectroscopy students can explain what a parent ion is and what mass and charge ratios are. Students are able to calculate molar masses easily but are not challenged by more difficult examples.

176. Students in Year 12 are making good progress and are achieving well. They show a good understanding of organic Chemistry and basic concepts such as atomic structure and bonding. All are able to work the oxidation numbers of KIO₃ and KI but are a little less confident in calculating molar masses at first. Students are making progress and moving on from their GCSE course. Students show good presentation skills using ICT and good research skills in their work on famous chemists.

177. Teaching is good overall, and students learn well as a result. The principal features of the best teaching are clear objectives, good use of and well prepared resources, good questioning strategies and the encouragement of independent learning. These features were seen in a practical lesson on the reaction of Halides. The teachers skilful questioning drew previous knowledge from the students which enabled them to think scientifically and join previously learned concepts to form logical predictions.
178. Much of the written work demanded of the students takes the form of structured questions, which follow up the work in lessons. Marking is promptly done and accuracy is checked but written comments do not always tell students how they could improve their work and reach higher levels.
179. Students learn well. They are very attentive, work productively and respond well to the supportive teaching they receive. Behaviour in lessons is always very good and very good listening skills are always exhibited. These enable students to learn well from each other. Male students are more confident in offering ideas in open situations but female students are more incisive in identifying areas where their understanding is weaker and asking for guidance. This means that all students benefit from these traits and this combined with sustained levels of concentration lead to progress being made in every lesson.
180. Independent work is encouraged and students are confident researchers using both ICT and text. They are able to extract information, make their own notes and find ways of presenting information in easy to understand ways. A good example here was a presentation on the work of Jon Jacob Berzilius that skilfully combined his major discoveries as well as the historical events of the time that put his work into context.
181. The overall good teaching and learning result from the work in the subject being well led and managed. The planning documents effectively reflect the subjects' requirements and generally identify a range of approaches that encourage effective learning. A good range of support materials has been developed. The performance of students in tests is monitored but this information is yet to affect the standards achieved by fully influencing the planning of future lessons. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is developing well and has started to identify the good practice within the department.

BUSINESS

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

Strengths

- Clarity of purpose of teachers' expositions.
- Test/examination results and the moderation of coursework.
- Internet research and the use of case studies.
- Learning and study skills.
- Value added.
- Variety of activities.

Areas for improvement

- Implementation of Key Skills.
- Outside links with employers.
- Punctuality/submission of work.
- Use of computers.

182. Standards of work seen in business studies are above average. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students' knowledge of business and economics cause the quality of their learning to be good. Students are able to plan and implement business ideas and investigate the costs and revenue for particular products and services and measure the cash flow. As a result students' achievements overall, in relation to their standards when they began in the sixth form, are very good.
183. Standards in Year 12 are above average. Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of business enterprise in relation to current business theory and practice. Students can independently investigate employment and businesses in the Lincolnshire community. The majority of students, but particularly able students, make effective use of relevant business terminology, concepts and computing methods to select up-to-date data. Students are aware that ICT lies at the heart of all change and growth in business today. The above average students appreciate the views of different stakeholders in relation to business and economic trends. These students are fully aware of the significance of inflation and recessionary trends. Good writing, debates and arguments were observed on the ownership and control of business, the management of people in business and the several functional areas of marketing, finance and production. Students are gaining an understanding of the moral, ethical and social cultural issues that govern and influence modern economic activities. For example, equal pay, unfair dismissal and discrimination on grounds of disability. Case study work is used to develop communication and computing skills. Students can undertake research both individually and in-groups. Coursework assignments encourage key skills development. There is some differentiation based on outcomes of student performance both orally and in written work. Teaching of average ability students and those with learning difficulties is unambiguous and enthruses students.
184. Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students have a good awareness of business theory and practice in their everyday life. The power of advertising is a part of that awareness and the influence that fashion has on their spending power is one example of that acute perception. They can recognise that different people are involved in business transactions and they are familiar with the different sectors of the UK and European economy. Students know and can talk about the variety of businesses within each sector, for example, the size of a multinational company such as the Shell Oil company whose turnover is greater than many small nations' buying or selling power.

The above average students quickly see the value of a case study approach to business studies as it develops their ability to seek and verify evidence. The thrust of every case is the making of a business decision. These decisions are taken on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative information. Students are able to justify their decisions. Most students understand and can see the value of electronic data sources to gather information that is current. Students spend at least two or three hours per week researching up-to-date information on economic trends searching for growth or decline indices. A majority of students focus on relevant theories and concepts related to the UK's position with regard to Europe. All students can use case studies, stimulus materials, textbooks and well-prepared teacher notes to enhance their writing in order to make it factually accurate. Students are encouraged to organise their time and develop their study skills. Self-motivation and discipline are good even amongst the average ability students. Clear, constructive teacher guidance forms an equally important feature of the standards achieved.

185. Examination results at the end of Year 12 and 13 are good. Across all courses, academic and vocational, an above average award rate has been achieved in 2000, 2001 and a similar performance is predicted for 2002. Able students have outperformed others but not significantly so. The highest awards have been achieved by a number of students predicted to achieve lower grades. There has been value added in the awards, over time, at the end of Year 13. Awards are good when compared to the attainment level noted for these groups of students at the start of Year 7 and the end of Year 11.
186. The quality of teaching is very good. The teachers provide a suitable learning environment, present business knowledge clearly, and act a resource to the students. Teachers give ideas for areas for investigation to students but leave them to work as individuals. They give help with the presentation of results and guide students in their use of electronic sources where appropriate. Learning comes both as a result of investigating business in the classroom and in its true environment by visits to local firms and work experience. However, more links are required to raise standards higher. Equally important are the economic theory inputs from knowledgeable teachers. The question style is always direct. It includes definitions, explanations and often analysis. Students with exceptional ability are able to demonstrate their talents by using their initiative and enterprise in their research work. Much of their writing has depth. Those students with learning difficulties find teachers supportive and their assistance necessary. Differentiation is by outcome. A greater differentiation of task would help the average attainers to make more progress. Learning is monitored and teachers meet on a regular basis to discuss teaching strategies and student progress. Changes are made to methods as and when necessary to improve, in particular, literacy and numeracy skills.
187. Leadership and management are very good. The teacher in charge of business studies monitors all policies. A variety of strategies are used to monitor the quality of learning in the classroom. These include informal classroom observation, sampling student work and moderation of assignments. Teachers are aware of the frequent developments taking place in business education. Planning is seen as essential and it is effective. Meetings take place on a regular basis both after school in the formal setting of a departmental/subject meeting and informally during the day as a part of some training exercise. The head accepts full responsibility for the subject's progress with consultation and for changes of course content/delivery taking place. These arrangements are effective in promoting higher standards. For example, teachers exchange materials and ideas on a regular basis. This encourages the development of business education. A management goal is to improve and upgrade the range and

quality of resources whenever possible. At present student access to good materials is good and it is developing all the time. Students' excuses for non-completion and late submission will soon be inadmissible. All staff contribute to this development.

188. There has been progress over time since the last inspection. Students are more actively encouraged to study outside class time and to utilise a wide range of business and economic resources including Internet access. A great deal of time is spent helping students prepare for examinations. Additional learning experiences are obtained via visits to local firms, and research work. Where appropriate the cross-curricular themes of careers, equal opportunities, citizenship are followed. The nature of business studies leads itself to develop a number of issues related to the above themes and teachers' delivery takes account of this.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

ART

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning
- The range and quality of students' work and their very positive attitudes.
- Good quality relationships

Areas for improvement

- Sketchbooks are not well enough used

189. The results for GCE A-level for 2001 were above average though no top grades were awarded. The standards achieved by boys and girls were similar and students performed as well in art as they did in other subjects. Well above average results have been maintained for the previous three years and the results of 2001 were untypical of the standards usually achieved. External moderation was thought by the department to be particularly harsh and this view is supported by the standards of work seen. The one student who entered the GCE A/S-level examination gained a grade A.
190. On the basis of work seen during inspection, attainment is high. Students build on their GCSE success and achievement is good. They work on extended studies of open-ended themes in a good range of specialist areas. They produce a wide range of responses, exploring the qualities and characteristics of their chosen specialisms. For example, a Year 12 student has learnt photographic darkroom skills since starting the course. He now produces striking experimental, distorted images of his own head. Most students choose to study for the full two years and enter GCE A/S-level and A-level together. Students continue to make good progress in Year 13, producing their best work. A Year 13 student makes a series of accomplished drawings and studies in a range of media, focusing on lilies and relating his work to that of William Morris. He uses digital images to build and manipulate his design and experiment with colour, then produces a successful, four colour silkscreen print. His work is of the highest quality. ICT is well used in students' studies. A girl scans her designs for a repeat motif into a computer, where she will edit and manipulate the design before producing a fabric print. Students' use of sketchbooks in their studies is not as developed as would be expected.
191. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It was very good in all lessons observed. Teachers support individual students well with technical advice, critical

encouragement and discussion and exploration of ideas. Individual tutorials give students information about their attainment and progress and a written analysis gives students a clear idea of how they might improve, with targets to aim for. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge, which enables students to develop skills in a range of media, reflecting their interests and aptitudes. Up to four gallery visits and study days per year are used well to inform students of wider art practice and this has a positive effect on the range and quality of students' work.

192. Students have a very positive attitude to their work and to the course. They have a high regard for the quality of teaching and the support that they enjoy. The subject is well managed. Work is well planned and the subject head is closely involved with the work and progress of all students, including those who he does not teach. He has secured sufficient funding to offer courses to suit students' interests and capabilities. Students benefit from a generous choice of a broadly based course or one specialising in, for example, 3D studies, fine art, photography or computer graphics.
193. The generous accommodation allows students to do additional work alongside other groups, which has a positive effect on the standards achieved. There has been substantial investment in ICT equipment and appropriate software and this is encouraging very good practice to be developed. Students benefit from good links with Lincoln University, where many go on to join the art foundation course and on to degree courses.

Physical Education

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are good
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. The very productive relationships in classes lead to a meaningful discussion resulting in increased knowledge and understanding
- Students have very mature attitudes; they are conscientious, independent learners.
- Levels of support for students are very strong. Students have a very good understanding of their progress

Areas for improvement

- There is a need for teachers to have a stronger command of some areas of A/S Level curriculum.

194. In 2000 and 2001 thirteen and fourteen students respectively were entered for the A Level examinations. In each Year all students except one were successful and the average points score per student was close to the national average. In the first year of the A/S Level examination all eighteen students were successful and six obtained the highest grade. No national comparisons are available for A/S Level results.
195. Current standards in the school are good at both A Level and A/S Level. Recent assessments and coursework indicate that all students should be successful in the 2002 examinations. The average points score at A Level should be better than last year and close to last year's average at A/S Level.
196. Students make sound progress. A Level students have a good understanding of factors which contribute towards elite performance and are able to draw on their own knowledge and experience to appreciate factors which influence the modern Olympic Games. A/S students are gaining a sound understanding of the concepts of play,

recreation and leisure. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls although boys heavily outnumber girls on the courses. Many sixth form students have attained high standards in a range of sports; they have competed at local and regional levels and some have achieved national standards.

197. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Objectives for lessons are clearly set out at the outset. Very effective use is made of 'study buddies'; students with complementary strengths are paired. Teachers encourage discussion within the study pairings. Initially students are more confident to express their views in the partnerships than to the whole group and the nature of the pairings is such that each student is exposed to views and opinions quite different from their own. The total knowledge and understanding generated by the partnerships is greater than the sum of the individual contributions. Teachers successfully use 'study buddies' to create confidence to express opinions before opening up discussion and debate and contributing knowledge themselves or through worksheets. Teachers put forward challenging or controversial views. The result is a very rich learning environment in which students can exchange a range of fact and opinion and obtain a well-informed broad view of issues. Lessons are interesting and proceed at a good pace. Teachers maintain good progression to the work and time is well allocated. Relationships in classes are excellent and students feel very well supported. They readily approach teachers, confident that help and advice will always be forthcoming. They feel well informed of their progress and areas for improvement. Not all teachers have come to terms fully with the depth of knowledge required of them by the newly established and content rich A/S Level courses.
198. Students are very mature young people. They are independent learners and take full responsibility for their own work. Their work in partnerships and groups is very constructive. They are good listeners and readily listen to and consider the views of others. They are aware of the dangers of bias and misrepresentation in reaching informed views. In classes the atmosphere is friendly and co-operative but work orientated.
199. The curriculum offers a wide choice of practical activities together with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and an in-house Sports Leaders Award for all students. The management and leadership of sixth form work is strong and progressive. There is a clear strategy towards strengthening provision and improving standards. A significant improvement since the last inspection has been the establishment of strong well-resourced A/S and A Level courses.

HUMANITIES

200. The focus was on geography, history, law and psychology. In addition a significant sample of work was examined in sociology. In the sociology lessons sampled, very subject good provision was enriched by excellent teaching. The excellent development of students new to subject is a significant feature of the department's very high examination results. One lesson was sampled in religious education, here students had a positive experience linked to Key Skills assessment.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Standards in the new AS course are well above average
- Students achieve well across the ability range including those gifted and talented or with special needs.
- Teaching and learning are now very good
- Students enjoy the subject and speak very highly of their experience in geography

Areas for improvement

- Forging a closer link between examples and theory/concept understanding
- The performance gap between post 16 and the main school and between genders
- Accommodation - which is now unsatisfactory for modern geography teaching

201. The provision in geography caters for some 50 students following AS and A level courses through two sets in each of years 12 and 13.

202. Recent standards overall have been average with attainment variable, even inconsistent. For A level in the past 4 years, the residual performance indicator has been below the national average though significantly so only once in 1999. Performance has varied yearly and that of girls, who may join the school in the sixth form, shows greater variation than boys with an average points score between 8.50 - 4.00 for girls whilst that for boys ranges between 5.73 and 4.40. The 2001 A level results give a 90.6 per cent pass rate with 33 per cent attaining A and B grades. This is slightly down from 2000 and the average points score for 2001 at 5.24 is behind all Lincolnshire Centres and the national figures for 2001. However, performance in the new AS level in 2001 was outstanding where the 35 candidates all passed, 54 per cent with grades A or B and an average points score of 3.49 - the 3rd highest in school. That is a very good base for the new A2 exams to be taken this school year.

203. The variation in the performance in geography between the Main School and the post-16 section and within the sixth form over time is an issue for the Department though new specifications for AS/A2 and GCSE may change the picture. The reasons for the variation are seen as the difference between Year 11 groups coming through, the variable nature of students joining the sixth form from elsewhere and the fact that geography had not previously been the choice of high flyers until recent GCSE results confirmed its new status.

204. Evidence from the observation of students in lessons and analysis of samples of their written work confirm that standards achieved by current students are above average and better than those of recent years. Students now studying for A2 have varied levels of GCSE attainment. Those with lower grades did very well in their AS exams and are as highly committed to doing well as their gifted and talented counterparts.
205. Students are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Their response to careful questioning are articulate, often incisive and show good knowledge of their modular units in either physical or human geography. They can work confidently in gathering data, assess its relevance and importance, work well with statistical techniques and arrive at sound conclusions. Particularly important is the way in which individual field study has been developed, showing considerable independence in learning, skilful use of ICT, complex statistical calculation, results analysis and conclusions about the hypotheses being tested. These are of a consistently high standard and reflect the skilful teaching, progress the students have made, research and communication skills. They make a significant contribution to the grades being achieved. Furthermore, the students have enjoyed the challenges and are keenly motivated to do well. There is a growing confidence when making presentations or debating in a discussion as seen in a year 12 lesson on the growing human problems facing mega-cities or when considering the relative importance of costs in hazard situations in year 13. The students studying geography have a mature approach and show a great deal of interest. They have been well guided to develop good study skills that allow careful scrutiny of textbooks, videos, internet sites and articles and the ability to select what is relevant for them. They make their own notes very competently.
206. The sixth form teaching is very good and sometimes outstanding. Staff are established subject specialists with an in depth knowledge of their subject and they teach to their particular specialism and strength in course options or modular units. That seen was brisk, demanding, used the teacher's in-depth knowledge and crafted to get the best out of most students. However, the variable competence levels and GCSE exam grades of those students' means that their contribution levels can also vary. A particular strength is the ability of staff to get the best out of all students by attending to the needs of all of them. Nowhere has this been better seen than in the handling, care and attention with the students who have special needs or where the gifted and talented have been guided into giving of their best. Some very sophisticated and intellectually challenging work has been observed in which staff have guided students towards their limits through their outstanding commitment and very good craftsmanship.
207. Assessment is now a strong feature seeking to raise attainment. There is plenty of practice in examination technique. There is a rich and varied range of tasks and activities that makes use of the departments increasing resources. All lessons have clear aims and end with a recap that consolidates the students' learning. Perhaps more attention now needs to be paid to providing actual examples when theory or concepts are being taught rather than leaving the ideas, issues or themes somewhat in isolation to be followed by worked case study at a later date.
208. The department is being very well led. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction and a team consensus of what is to be achieved by dedicated, hardworking subject specialists. Administration arrangements have been brought up to modern standards and the degree of information held by the department and used for assessment purposes but then fed back to raise standards is good. This gives accurate critical analysis of exam performance that has been used for effective changes to teaching and learning methods that are guiding students through the new modules. There are clear policies set out in a revised departmental handbook. The post-16 situation is well

understood and the reaction to Curriculum 2000 has been carefully evaluated with the necessary action following, including changing specification to suit expertise, interest and provide continuity.

209. The Performance Management system is in place and on track for completion of the first cycle. Further work will develop the raising of achievement agenda within Geography. Funding to the department is adequate but not generous although special bids have been made for specific purposes such as new books for the new specifications and the weather tracking PC system. Resourcing is therefore adequate overall, but accommodation for geography is not. Its location, furniture and state of decoration require attention. There are regular meetings to discuss departmental strategy, student progress and training needs – all designed to share and encourage best practice.
210. The department is well aware that its students are principally drawn from its own selective intake. It is well equipped to make sure that it continually monitors performance all-round so that all its students are stretched for maximum achievement and that it remains abreast of changing curriculum, teaching and assessment developments.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in Sixth Form History is **good**.

Strengths

- A Level results over the last four years
- Successful establishment of the AS Course
- Good teaching of Modern European History
- Positive student responses and attitudes

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning methods and materials for Early Modern European History
- Learning strategies for small Year 13 classes

211. Standards in History within the sixth form are above national expectations with many students demonstrating the ability to form and sustain complex historical arguments.
212. At A Level over the last four years the average pass rate for Higher Grades [A-B] has been 41% which is above the national average. However, the higher grade pass rate for boys has been 48%, as compared with 15.5% for girls. Whilst divergent, the latter results are in line with expectations from prior attainment on entry to the school. In 2001 the school secured a 95.5% overall pass rate, with twenty-one out of twenty-two securing a pass, and a 32% pass rate for Higher Grades [A-B]. This latter is slightly below the national average and its cause can be traced to markedly lower recorded attainment in Early European History. These results have been challenged with OCR, inconclusively, on the grounds that it is a pattern dissimilar to previous years but the school has also set about reviewing its approach to this aspect of the curriculum.
213. In the inaugural AS Level in 2001 the school secured a 94.4% pass rate, with seventeen out of eighteen candidates securing pass grades and 33.3% secured Higher Grades [A-B]. This indicates that the teaching has maintained the good pattern achieved by the school over the last four years. The evidence from written work and classroom observations in Year 13 indicates that this standard of attainment is being

fully maintained in Modern History and that this cohort are fully confident historians. The evidence from the small group studying earlier History in Year 13 is that they are within the overall A2 pass range but that the group proceeding to A2 does not fully reflect the full attainment range.

214. The evidence from Year 12 is that it contains many confident historians who expect to analyse and debate the content of the course, and who are frustrated if they cannot. Their performance fully reflects the capability that the boys previously demonstrated with the school's outstandingly high GCSE results in 2001.
215. The students' personal responses revealed that they had been attracted to the various courses in AS Level by the exciting and challenging nature of the History curriculum within the school. They felt that they had been well-informed initially and had been helped to settle into sixth form life very satisfactorily. They indicated that they continued to find some aspects of the History curriculum very challenging indeed but that it was of an inconsistent pattern because there was a marked variation in the quality of feedback and advice. It ranged from that which was extremely helpful and informative about strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve to, in a minority of instances, that which was bland and unclear. They had previously raised this matter themselves. A number of students indicated that they would be continuing their historical studies in Higher Education, so as to build on the generally very positive historical pathway which they had enjoyed from Year 7 onwards.
216. The teaching is largely very good, but sometimes only sound. Generally there is strong teacher subject knowledge but there is less consistency in the application of imaginative techniques. This explains the variation in quality from the very good, and extremely challenging and discursive, to the sound because the latter techniques are not creating sufficiently positive responses and are fact-laden, and could lead to under-achievement. Two particular features need review: the teaching and learning strategies for Early Modern European History; and the learning strategies appropriate for small groups in Year 13.
217. The curriculum is generally appropriate but there is insufficient ICT in terms of classroom activity. Some classes at Year 12 are now of a size, which could undermine opportunities for, student-focused learning. Relationships within classrooms are generally good but in a minority of instances improved communication in terms of academic feedback would reassure the students further. There is strong, determined and thoughtful leadership and it is fully capable of securing the improvements necessary to raise standards further.

Religious Education

Overall, the quality of provision in Religious Education is **good**

Strengths

- GCSE Short Course examination results in 2001, especially A*/A grades.
- Imaginative and thought provoking teaching
- The input into the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the sixth form
- Pupil responses and attitudes

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT within the curriculum
- Promoting the pathway from GCSE Religious Studies to AS Level

218. The quality of teaching and standards of written work in AS/A2 Religious Studies were sampled and the A Level and AS results for 2001 were analysed. The teaching was good and the written work was in line with national expectations of overall A Level pass grades, and this should maintain the pattern from the 2001 examination results. The lesson observed revealed that Religious Studies is fully integrated into the main body of sixth form practice and priorities. It was an occasion where students from Year 13 demonstrated their Key Skills capability in communication through the medium of short presentations on the various theories about the existence of God.

Law

The focus of the inspection was the AS/A2 level law courses. The GCSE courses were sampled. Overall, the quality of provision in law is **very good**.

Strengths

- Class teaching and clear guidance on research.
- Leadership and management.
- Discussions and debates and students' attitudes to their work.
- Teachers' specialist knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT
- Integration of Key Skills into assignments

219. Standards of work seen in the sixth form during the inspection are very good. Standards at GCSE are also very good. These standards are achieved because the teaching is very good. Students show a good mastery of legal knowledge, an ability to order knowledge in a coherent framework and some generic skills. Students' attitudes and developing insight into law also cause the quality of their learning in law to be good. As a result, students' achievement overall, in relation to their standards when they began in the sixth form, are good. There is value added in their achievements.

220. Standards in Year 12 are very good. Students show they can work autonomously but are not fearful of asking for help. Legal education is unique in that it seeks to attain a wide range of learning outcomes. Students manage many of these outcomes well. They gain a mastery of legal knowledge, they can order this knowledge into a clear framework and they demonstrate ethical and social qualities. At the start of Year 12 students come to the study of law with very little knowledge yet they make progress by

maximising their understanding: students are reading widely, thinking critically, reflecting and linking new information to previous knowledge. The model is for students to think about their learning and for them to remain in control of their participation in the process. Teachers work hard to make the learning active not passive or receptive. Self-directed learning is creating curiosity, exploring and reflecting. Data analysis skills could be strengthened for a few of the average attaining students. Students are hard working and highly motivated to succeed.

221. Standards in Year 13 are very good. Most students can thoroughly understand, absorb and cultivate a different set of legal ideas as well as adapting to a different way of thinking and interpreting legal texts. Students can explore legal knowledge and identify whether there really is a problem. The more able students can identify a range of possible solutions, in particular if solutions can be found in law or draw on other disciplines such as psychology which may illuminate the possible advantage or disadvantage of a particular solution. Most students' writing in Year 13 is of a good quality structured around clear sections. The structure, with a full index, makes the assignments easy to negotiate and assess. The higher attainers incorporate a mass of substantive material within a discursive style. The best work produced is legalistic in their explanation and analysis but nevertheless interesting to read. Students' oral skills are good. They provide a straightforward, yet stimulating and articulate discussion in class exploring the main arguments of, for example, judicial regulations of government and an international bill of rights. A greater use of data retrieval via electronic sources would raise standards even higher.
222. Examination results for law are close or above national average at all levels. Learning and achievements are fully inclusive. Students are gaining a good proportion of the higher A,B grades at both AS and A2 level. Students are making good progress from Year 12 to Year 13. There is value added in the results obtained. In all regards achievement is good especially for gifted students.
223. The standard of teaching is very good. Teachers initiate students into a process of reflection about their own learning. Students are increasing their knowledge, absorbing new information and skills that can be used in and adapted to everyday life. The high attainers actually retain the new knowledge. Practical information for the busy student is provided on the various mainstream legal topics treated at AS/A2 level. Good aides' memoires are given designed to provide a short compendium of sources and advice, giving examples of problems that are likely to arise with appropriate answers. Teachers incorporate a number of recent cases into their lessons and these are very useful to students. Students do consult books and some use electronic sources to supplement their notes. There are a variety and complexity of legal opinions, statutes, and statutory instruments for students to peruse when locating information. The guidance students receive on legal research is very good. It is well thought out, straightforward, practical and helps students to succeed by discussing difficult concepts and detailed rules and procedure in a clear and authoritative manner. All lessons are well indexed and footnoted. The layout of schemes of work is also attractive. The design, content and presentation of lessons raises standards.
224. Leadership is very good and focuses on raising standards. Resources are good and students have access to the Internet. Students learn well because they are highly motivated and work hard. Teachers keep them on task and provide a suitable learning environment. Schemes of work are subject to review and there is a focus on improving them. There is an exemplary vision of equal opportunity. Examination data is used effectively to monitor performance. There is value added at the end of Year 13.

225. Progress has been made in the teaching of law. Students are encouraged to use the Internet for research purposes. The subject is taught through a wide variety of methods and students are participating actively in the search for good law cases. Verbal and interpersonal communications are encouraged through student participation in class discussions.

PSYCHOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in psychology is **excellent**

Strengths

- Excellent 'A' level results
- Excellent teaching of research methods which impacts on standards and high level of staff subject knowledge.
- Pastoral and academic support and assessments set at an appropriate intellectual level.
- Quality of teacher/student interaction.

Areas for improvement

- Moderation of independent learning skills
- Use of computers to explore, develop and present information

226. Standards of work seen in psychology are above average. These standards are achieved because the teaching is excellent. Students' knowledge of psychology causes the quality of their learning to be very good. Students can demonstrate successfully more than one key skill in a suitably co-ordinated and wide-ranging, multi-task activity. As a result students' achievements overall, in relation to the standards when they began in the sixth form, are very good. There is value added at the end of Year 13.
227. Standards in Year 12 are above average. Students have very little previous experience of the subject. Students gain a critical understanding of the terms 'obedience' and 'conformity', for example. They understand why Schachter and Singer's studies provoked a public outcry particularly the ethical issues raised by their published work. Students know the use of drugs in research is frowned upon and, if drugs are used, consent has to be given. Students can demonstrate different explanations or perspectives relating to this research. Teachers use good social influence research studies to illustrate their lessons. The higher attaining students can write well and produce elaborate descriptions of a study or a theory. Students, for example, recorded that, according to cognitive psychology, it is possible to explain behaviour by referring to mental processes such as memory. The few average attaining students taking psychology occasionally run out of ideas but they are helped to think of correct explanations of the key approaches to psychology. Gifted students can collect data in two ways: empirically and rationally. All students, both male and female, understand that any theories, research and ideas that they have used and which are the product of someone else's work, must be referenced. Both genders perform equally well in class. Students in Year 12 fully understand that human development is a dynamic process, which means it is motivated or driven by certain forces. Students are aware of the implications, for example, of Freud's psycho-sexual stages of development.
228. Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students apply a scientific process to learning about human behaviour. They make observations and produce facts about psychology. For example, how does social/existential psychiatry (eg. the works of R.D. Laing) conceptualise abnormal behaviour. Students can construct a theory to account for a set of related facts and they can then progress to generating expectations

(hypotheses) from the theory. Gifted male and female students are especially competent to collect data to test expectations. Students can develop hypotheses by using their knowledge. They choose the appropriate models and theories creatively. The higher attainers are able to evaluate what has been done and draw conclusions from reliable data. Gifted students are better at spelling, punctuation and grammar. All students can write about cognitive psychology and analyse and evaluate a range of psychology theories and studies. Their work shows they know how to organise their information clearly and coherently using specialist vocabulary. The high attainers communicate their knowledge and understanding of psychology in a clear and effective manner. For example, they explore problems comparing different ways of solving them and then selecting options.

229. Examination results at AS level in 2001 was well above average at the end of Year 12. Gifted students perform better than other students over all grades but not significantly so. The differences between male and female results are small overall. Students make good progress from Year 12 to Year 13. The results at the end of Year 13 are well above average for grades A and B. There is value-added at both Years 12 and 13 in relation to the standards achieved on entry to the course.
230. The quality of teaching is excellent. The teachers of psychology show an appropriate interest in the core areas of cognitive, the social approach, attachment and deprivation, the psychodynamic approach, and physiological psychology. Lessons are planned effectively to develop an understanding of psychology as a scientific study of behaviour and experience. Students are well advised that psychology differs from common sense insofar as it seeks to collect objective and verifiable facts about behaviour and it constructs empirically based theories. One example is the relevance of the mind and body linking together as demonstrated in stress and emotion. The teachers are good at helping students to understand the logic or important concepts of psychology. There is some limited use of ICT during lessons. More use of the Internet would aid the quality of research. Students increase their understanding of psychology by discussing their writing or research with their teacher and fellow students. All students treat feedback constructively and use it to maintain the required standards and progress. For example, they attempted to explain psychological research into conformity with reference to self-esteem. The strength of teaching is the informed commentary and thorough analysis of relevant psychological studies and methods. Through the study of behaviour issues students learn of the responsibilities they have to each other as social animals and the social and scientific integrity that must be shown. Students are provided with a good stimulus and ideas to begin investigations for themselves. Teachers provide the starting points which come from observations, measurements, books, videos or other sources and brainstorming. It is very effective and the degree of support varies from student to student. Programmes of study use a variety of text books, videos and electronic sources.
231. Leadership and management are very good. The support and environment that is provided enable students to feel confident, valued and well placed to make the most of their opportunities in the sixth form. Regular attendance is a problem for a few students. Psychology has clear aims and these are relevant to their stated purpose. There are contacts with further and higher education, which benefit the students.
232. Good improvement over time has been made to aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. Students are provided with a good basis of factual knowledge of psychology. Students are well supported to thoroughly learn their material. Improvements to private study facilities access to ICT and a clear policy on key skills will raise the standard of care even higher. Memory is improved by the organisation of

material. The quality of written communication is assessed accurately. The teachers can organise relevant information clearly and coherently using specialist vocabulary when appropriate. Psychology is an inclusive discipline.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English, but theatre studies was also sampled. All students attained grades A-E in the 2001 GCE A Level examination, with half the students attaining the highest grade A. In the AS Level examination all students attained grades A-E, but in comparison to other subjects within the school, results were below average. Two lessons were observed. In one, good teaching enabled students to develop their interpretation of the text, and to recognise the influence of Brecht. Accommodation is unsuitable for improvised performance and impedes learning.

English

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

Strengths

- There is a shared commitment to high standards.
- The quality of the relationships is very good. Teachers are aware of the needs of individual students, students are very positive and enthusiastic.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their questioning of students is perceptive and inclusive, and they encourage intellectual inquiry and independent work

Areas for improvement

- The standard of attainment in the GCE A Level examination of English language and literature is below that for English literature
- Department planning is not sufficiently developed, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lacks rigour.
- Accommodation is of poor quality.

233. Overall, standards are good. All students entered for GCE A Level examination in English literature in 2001 attained grades A-C, and the majority the higher grades A/B, well above the national average. In the combined examination for English language and literature the standard of attainment was lower in comparison. All students attained grades A-E, and the percentage of students attaining the higher grades A/B was close to the national average. However, the number of students entered for examination in English literature was significantly higher than for the combined examination. Only those students not continuing with GCE A Level English literature were entered for examination at AS level in 2001. The standard of attainment at AS Level was below that of sixth form students in other subjects.

234. Observation in lessons and a scrutiny of samples of students' written work confirm that, overall, standards are above average, and achievement in the sixth form is good. Students are knowledgeable and understanding about the features of language. In a Year 12 lesson, in their consideration of contemporary advertisements, the students demonstrated developing analytical and interpretative skills, with regard to aspects of language, structure and presentation. They show a critical awareness of different approaches to the study of written texts, and are able to comment upon these from the perspective of their own critical viewpoint. This was evident in a Year 13 lesson, where students were discussing "A Streetcar named Desire" for examples of expressionism. They were recognizing the textual signals of character and expressing these clearly

and fluently. Students are able to establish links and connections across a range of texts, and in their presentations and arguments appreciate the influences of the historical, social, and cultural contexts. Students studying "The Color Purple" commented upon the social deprivation of the black American community, appreciated the historical context in relation to slavery, and from their wider reading of American literature, recognised the persistent themes and common style of writing.

235. In their writing, students use language accurately, and are fluent and imaginative. They use a broad range of descriptive and specialist vocabulary that clarifies the meaning and enhances the readers' interest. In both their writing and contribution to discussion in class, students show evidence of wide reading, and offer examples of perceptive and sensitive criticism, with an apt choice of quotation to illustrate their argument. For example, a critical essay on "The Catcher in the Rye" demonstrated not only an understanding of the theme within the novel concerning the nature of relationships, but illustrated further detailed and careful reading. The quality of students' oral skills is particularly good. They listen well, participate fully in discussion, and make thoughtful comments in clear and expressive language.
236. Students show good progress in their sixth form English courses, both in thinking and writing skills. It is particularly evident where the teachers' expectations are high, where teaching is challenging, and where students are committed, and prepared to work independently. There is a clear development both in the quality of students' writing, and the range of reading that they undertake whilst in the sixth form. Their written work shows that they have been encouraged to read widely, for example, Shelley's "Frankenstein", Milton's "Paradise Lost", and Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", and from these to look for similarities of subject matter expressed in different ways. Students are encouraged to use different forms of writing, such as pastiche, poetry and narrative, and to write intellectually and creatively. As a result, there is a developing maturity, and a growth of critical insight and understanding. Students also make good use of the internet for contextual, critical, and biographical purposes.
237. Overall, teaching in the sixth form is good. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, demonstrating a blend of scholarship, and an awareness of the students' learning needs. They convey to students both interest and enthusiasm for their subject. The teaching enables the students to experience a wide range of literature, some of which is about other cultures. Where teaching is good, planning is sound, the lesson moves briskly, and students are effectively challenged, both productively and creatively. The questioning of students is both perceptive, and inclusive, drawing from them an increased understanding, and further challenging them to think for themselves. Intellectual inquiry is encouraged, as is the expectation that students should take responsibility for their own learning through independent study. In consequence, students arrive at a personal viewpoint. Teaching is less successful when planning is insufficiently detailed and lesson objectives unclear. Where this occurs, both the pace and the intellectual demand are diminished. Students' written work is marked regularly and thoroughly, and the teachers' comments enable the students to know how they are progressing and how they might improve further. The attitude of students is very good. They remain focused, even when there are deficiencies in teaching. There is a clear commitment to their learning, they enjoy the subject, and their enthusiasm is often evident in the lessons. The relationships between the students and their teachers are very good, being relaxed, yet respectful. The teachers offer praise and encouragement, and the students recognise the support that is given to them. They also appreciate the encouragement that they receive to express their personal views when engaged in textual criticism. Students work intelligently, engage in discussion, ask questions, and collaborate with each other effectively. They understand the

importance of, and are willing to undertake independent study, both through the internet and by reading widely, to improve the quality and standard of their work. The department has clear procedures for the assessment of students' work and progress, and prior attainment is recorded. Students are clear about examination requirements, and can equate the level of their own performance against the known criteria.

238. Overall, management in the sixth form is satisfactory. The department is well led by an experienced teacher who works hard to ensure good relationships, and collaboration between colleagues. There is clear educational direction, and a commitment to high standards. The department meets regularly to share good practice, and to co-ordinate examination courses. These give direction to the teacher's work, but do not fully identify key skills. Recent staff changes, and recruitment difficulties, have meant that, at the time of the inspection, not all sixth form teaching was by qualified and experienced staff. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is enriched by educational visits, and dramatic productions and revues. It ensures equality of access and opportunity for all students. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated, but it is not rigorously undertaken. Planning, in both the short and long term, is not sufficiently detailed to bring about improvement and to build upon the department's strengths. There is no evidence of financial planning and control. Resources within the department are good. There is a good range of literary texts, and audio-visual resources. Information technology is in an early stage of development. Accommodation is of poor quality.

French in the sixth form

The focus of the inspection was on French, although German is also taught in the sixth form. A-level results in German in recent years have been very good, although the numbers of students entered have been small: in 2001, there were four candidates of whom three gained B grades and one a D grade. Two of the six students in 2001 gained A grades at AS-level. The teaching of A-level German students during the inspection was good.

FRENCH

Overall, the quality of provision is very good.

Strengths

- All of the teaching is very good or excellent.
- Monitoring of student performance.

Areas for improvement

- The development of grammatically accurate writing on abstract topics.

239. Over recent years results in A-level French have been very good. In 2001, five of the ten candidates gained A or B grades. In 2000, three of the seven candidates gained A or B grades. At AS-level in 2001, three of the seven candidates gained B grades. Four of those students have continued with the A2 course. There is no significant difference between male and female students in the standards reached.
240. Standards of work seen during the inspection are good in Year 13. Understanding of both spoken and written French is good. Written work is in both formal and informal registers, and demonstrates knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and structures. Errors occur mainly in attempts to use complex structures. Coursework is well organised and uses evidence from authentic French sources such as “Libération”, “Le Monde” and “Le Figaro”. The ideas expressed are often perceptive and well developed, and there is evidence of good creative writing. Most students speak confidently. Standards of pronunciation are good. Errors do not interfere with the communication of well-argued ideas. Students sustain a conversation on abstract topics such as the health services in France and the United Kingdom. They express mature views and react spontaneously to one another’s comments. Good progress is made on all fronts.
241. Students in Year 12 are also developing confidence in speaking on abstract topics. They sustain a conversation and use appropriate language to contradict or agree. They are coming to terms with having to read longer, more complex texts and with having to strengthen their understanding of grammar. The written work completed so far provides evidence of good progress.
242. The sixth form teaching is very good and at times excellent. Extensive use of French by teachers who are native speakers sets a strong challenge to students and contributes to the development of their listening comprehension. High expectations are reflected in the rigorous correction of grammatical errors and in the way in which students are encouraged to think for themselves. Perceptive questioning techniques are used to ensure that all students make valued contributions to the lessons. Time and resources are very well used so those students are always purposefully occupied in language learning. Homework is very carefully chosen to extend classwork and provide an appropriate challenge to students. A wide range of learning opportunities is provided for students, including extra-curricular activities such as visits to the cinema and work experience in France.
243. Students enjoy their work and want to succeed. They work hard. They participate willingly in all aspects of their lessons. They demonstrate good research skills, using the internet appropriately and making good use of dictionaries and other reference works. They greatly appreciate the support and guidance, which their teachers give them as individuals. They acknowledge the value of the work experience in France that

is arranged for them. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and students have a very good understanding of what is expected of them.

244. Management of French in the sixth form is very good. There is a clear, well-planned scheme of work. The teachers involved work well as a team and have a very good understanding of their students. Together they work well to try to ensure that students give of their best at all times.