

ADDENDUM

NAME OF SCHOOL: ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

URN: 107421
Inspection number: 192387
Registered Inspector: Mr J Dixon
Date of inspection: 22 – 26 April 2002

PART E

The following line to be included in the table:

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
Economics	13	100	89	38	36	6.5	5.52

Signed for and on behalf of the Registered Inspector: *J Campbell*

DATED: 17 JUNE 2002

INSPECTION REPORT

ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Ilkley

Bradford LEA

Unique reference number: 107421

Headteacher: Peter Wood

Reporting inspector: John Dixon
13155

Dates of inspection: 22 - 26 April 2002

Inspection number: 192387

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cowpasture Road Ilkley
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Noble
Date of previous inspection:	24-28 February 1997

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30996	Anne Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics	Curriculum
27983	Mary Sewell	Team inspector	English Special needs Inclusion	
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Geography French German	How well the school is led and managed
12985	Shirley Jeffray	Team inspector		
23418	Roger Yates	Team inspector	Art and design	Students' attitudes, values and personal development
30899	Ken Boden	Team inspector	Design and technology	How well the school cares for its students
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ilkley Grammar School was formed in September 2000 when the former 13-18 comprehensive school merged with feeder middle schools to cater for pupils aged from 11 to 18 years. The school operates on two sites just over a mile apart, but will come together on one site in 2003. Much bigger than average with 1,500 pupils and students on roll, Ilkley Grammar School serves the town of Ilkley and the surrounding predominantly rural area. Pupils' attainment on entry is well above average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is low compared with the national average. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than in most schools, although the proportion of pupils with statements of special need is close to the average for schools nationally. There is a small number of pupils whose first language is not English, but well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ilkley Grammar School is a very effective school. Pupils' attainment is high. Results in external examinations both at age 16 and in the sixth form are well above the national average, and have continued to improve each year since the last inspection. Teaching is of a high standard throughout the school. The head teacher and senior staff provide clear educational direction. The management of pupils and of the learning process is very effective. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good, and very good in the sixth form. Expectations of pupils and students are high;
- Standards are high: pupils' and students' attainment is well above the national average and above average for similar schools;
- Pupils' and students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good; they come to school to work;
- Relationships are very good at all levels. There is an equal partnership in learning which contributes strongly to the standards achieved.

What could be improved

- There are weaknesses in the curriculum. The school provides less teaching time than most secondary schools, and the availability of vocational courses is unsatisfactory;
- The school is not well equipped with learning resources – especially computers - compared with many similar schools;
- There are aspects of health and safety which need attention.

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 as a 13-18 school in February 1997 and the governors drew up an action plan to address the issues which needed to be improved. Improvement has been satisfactory overall, but there are still issues which have not been addressed and which are still unsatisfactory.

The school has implemented a range of strategies to remedy the under-achievement of boys. These have been effective and boys' performance is improving. The management of special educational needs has improved, and the school is becoming more inclusive, allowing greater access for all. There are more opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. The number of computers available to support learning has increased considerably since the last inspection: access to information and communications technology (ICT) is markedly better than before but is still unsatisfactory. Timetabled provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and in the Sixth Form has been improved, but it still does not fully satisfy the requirements of the law. Standards of pupils' and students' attainment have improved since the last

inspection. The proportion of lessons seen where the quality of teaching was good or very good has increased in comparison with the inspection of the 13-18 school in 1997.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

At age 14, the attainment of pupils is well above the national average. A greater proportion of pupils reach the higher levels than in many schools. Attainment in GCSE examinations is well above the national average, and above average for similar schools. A feature of the performance of pupils in the GCSE examinations is the very high proportion of A* and A grades achieved. In a number of subjects a third or more of the pupils entered achieved the highest grades, and in science over half of the pupils achieved this level. A high proportion of both boys and girls achieved the highest grades in a number of subjects. Results at A-level are well above average overall. Attainment is very high compared with the national average in sociology, and well above average in biology, chemistry, mathematics, design technology, English literature, psychology, history, business and French. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils sustain high levels of attainment throughout the school. Pupils and students at all levels, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The governors have set challenging targets for GCSE performance in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very positive. They come to school to learn, and concentrate well in lessons. Throughout the school there is a real atmosphere of concentration and commitment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. The main school building is a difficult one, with many staircases and narrow corridors, yet the pupils and students move about in a civilised and caring manner.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are very good. There is a relaxed atmosphere in lessons and in registration periods. Pupils respond well to a range of opportunities for personal development and responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, well above the national average. Rates of authorised absence and truancy are low.

Pupils are ambitious to succeed, and there is a maturity and a sophistication about their views. They are serious about their learning and very clear where its strengths and weaknesses lie. There is a shared sense of purpose in lessons between teachers and their pupils, and pupils help and support one another willingly. Pupils' behaviour, with very few exceptions, is very good in lessons and responsible as they move about the school. Behaviour in the crowded dining conditions of the lower school is exemplary.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	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 characterised by very effective planning and attention to detail. It ensures that pupils' learning experiences capture their interest and provide appropriate challenge so that their learning progresses well. Very good relationships between teachers and their pupils create a classroom atmosphere which is conducive to good learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils which the latter strive enthusiastically to achieve, and very good subject knowledge. Classroom management skills are very good. Good teaching was seen in all subject areas. It is slightly better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, and uniformly very good in the sixth form. Literacy and numeracy are taught well, building on what pupils have learned in their previous schools, and teachers across the curriculum are sensitive to pupils' development of basic skills.

Learning is good throughout the school and very good in the sixth form. Pupils are keen to learn, eager to participate in lesson activities. They listen and concentrate well and co-operate well in pairs and groups. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and their progress is often very good. The attitudes of a minority of pupils are slightly less positive in Years 10 and 11 on the occasions where the teacher leaves the class ten minutes early in order to go to teach at the other site. There are some quite high levels of non-participation by boys in physical education lessons, albeit supported by notes from parents. The comparatively low provision of ICT facilities has a negative impact on the breadth of learning overall, but pupils make very good progress and acquire appropriate skills in taught ICT lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of academic courses for high-attaining pupils both in the main school and in the sixth form. There is a lack of vocational courses for pupils and students whose educational progress might be better suited by them. The curriculum does not fully satisfy legal requirements in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, and the taught week is shorter than recommended.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are well supported and make good, and often very good progress. All pupils have access to the educational opportunities provided.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils who have English as an additional language are not disadvantaged by linguistic issues in any way. The school has taken on board the techniques and principles of the literacy and numeracy initiatives, and pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development, and there are good opportunities for cultural development. There were good examples of activities promoting spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for child protection. The help and guidance which the school provides for its pupils and students is overall good. There are some health and safety issues which require attention.

The curriculum has a good range of examination courses and makes some provision for gifted and talented pupils to achieve further or higher qualifications. The lack of vocational courses – due in the main to lack of space and physical resources – is a weakness, and the coverage of religious education for older pupils and students does not fully satisfy statutory requirements. The timetable arrangements to take account of staff travel between the two sites – although temporary while the school is on two sites - are unsatisfactory and waste time. There are fewer hours than recommended in the taught week. The school needs to produce up-to-date risk assessments relating to the school site and in specific subject areas. Registration procedures are in some cases unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher and his senior colleagues give clear educational direction to the school. The leadership of the head teacher has been particularly crucial through the difficult period of reorganisation, helping to keep the school focused and to sustain its high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors know where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. They fulfil their duties well as critical friends, and are determined to maintain and improve the standards which the school achieves.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes appropriate evaluations of its own performance in order to move forward and to plan for the future, but does not make sufficiently careful evaluations of day-to-day arrangements.
The strategic use of resources	The school has suffered from considerable under-funding over the years compared with similar schools, and its resources have had to be planned and deployed with care and precision.

The leadership of the school by head teacher and governors is good. Despite a period of considerable disruption to the school's routine, it continues to provide the stability and sense of direction which has ensured that educational standards have been sustained. The determination of head teacher and governors not to allow standards to slip led to the decision to retain staffing levels despite financial cuts. This has resulted in a considerable financial deficit which the school is currently negotiating to reduce. On a day-to-day basis the school needs to make clearer evaluations of the impact of its organisational and resourcing strategies, and where appropriate make adjustments which will improve the educational experience of pupils and students.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects pupils to work hard. • Pupils enjoy coming to school. • Teaching is good. • Pupils make good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not work closely enough with parents. • Parents are not kept well-informed about their child's progress. • The school does not provide a suitable range of out-of-school activities. • Pupils do not have enough work to do at home.

The positive comments made by parents were corroborated by inspectors during the inspection week, and form the major part of the findings of this report. Inspectors agree that the school could inform parents better of their child's progress, but plans have been made to improve and broaden this co-operation in the very near future. The inspectors did not find that there are insufficient activities outside school hours for pupils in the main school, or that teachers do not set enough homework.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is above average in size, with almost 300 students. There are slightly less boys than girls in both year groups, and all ethnic groups present in the school are represented. All students follow academic courses leading to AS and A level examinations and a minority study for the Advanced Vocational Certificate in business education. The stay-on rate is high given the very precise academic requirements set by the school for students to embark on a post-16 course. Some students transfer from other schools outside the area into the sixth form at Ilkley Grammar School.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is highly effective in providing for the needs and aspirations of its students. Teaching is very good. Students make good progress relative to their attainment at age 16. Attainment at all stages is high, and results in A-level examinations are consistently well above the national average overall and well above average in almost all individual subjects. Students show high levels of interest and enthusiasm, and there is a relaxed, mature atmosphere which contributes well to the learning process. The sixth form is very cost-effective.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good throughout the sixth form.
- Students achieve high standards, in many cases well above the national average.

What could be improved

- The range of curricular opportunities is not broad enough, especially in respect of vocational courses.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to use ICT as an integral part of their learning.

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	The quality of provision in mathematics is very good . Very experienced teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well -planned and students achieve well. Results in A-level examinations are well above average, but AS results were not as high in 2001. Not enough use is made of ICT to develop students' mathematical skills.
Chemistry	Provision for chemistry is very good . Teachers have good subject knowledge and are very enthusiastic. They communicate well with the students, whose attainment is well above average. Chemistry is a very popular subject, and students' attitudes are very positive. Students do not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance their learning.
Biology	The provision for biology is very good . Standards are well above average and students make good progress. Teaching is very good and prepares students very effectively for external examinations. Students' attitudes contribute significantly to their progress. Independent learning is an area for further development.

Physics	The school makes good provision for physics. Teaching is good: there are good levels of teacher knowledge and lessons have a relaxed, mature style. Students develop good practical skills, and attainment in A-level examinations is above average. There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT for independent learning.
Design and technology	The provision for design and technology is good . Teaching is good and there are good links with business, industry and the local community. Results at A level are well above average and have shown a rising trend over the past three years. The lack of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing facilities restricts the range of learning experiences available.
Business	The school makes good provision for business. Teaching is good and students learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and sound business experience, and their planning is effective. Results in the advanced GNVQ examination in 2001 were well above average. Access to computers is not sufficiently planned or consistent.
Economics	Good provision is made for economics. Teaching is good: lessons have clear aims and a variety of teaching approaches are used. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Students work hard and have positive attitudes to their work. Examination results are above the national average. Business links and access to ICT facilities are not sufficiently consistent.
Art and design	The school makes good provision for art and design. Teaching is good: students are set challenging work to which they respond enthusiastically. They make good progress and achieve good standards of work. Examination results are in line with the national average and improving. Computers are not used enough in lessons, and there are insufficient opportunities to visit galleries and museums.
Music	Provision for music is very good . The teacher has good subject knowledge and great enthusiasm for the subject. Teaching is very good. Good use is made of ICT to support and enhance students' learning. Students learn well and achieve high standards, but are not encouraged enough to work independently.
Geography	Provision for geography is good . Teaching is good, and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Good teacher knowledge and sound planning promote good learning by students. Standards throughout the sixth form are above average, and examination results last year were in line with the average for all schools. There is not enough use of ICT to assist learning.
History	The school makes good provision for history. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and are skilled at questioning students and causing them to reflect on their work. Results in A-level examinations are well above the national average. There is too much teacher-directed work, however, and students are not sufficiently encouraged to work independently.

Sociology	The quality of provision for sociology is very good . Teachers have an excellent understanding of their subject, and lessons proceed at a good pace. Teaching is very good, and challenges students to progress. Attainment in sociology in recent years has been well above the national average. There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support independent learning.
Psychology	Very good provision is made by the school for psychology. Teaching is very good and students learn very well as a result. Lessons have clear objectives and call on a range of approaches and materials. A-level results are consistently above the national average. Teaching groups are large and the accommodation cramped, and ICT use is not readily available.
English	The school makes very good provision for English. Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of students, whose oral and written work is often of a very high standard. Examination results are consistently well above the national average, but students do not engage sufficiently in wider reading round the set texts.
Modern foreign languages	Overall provision for French, German and Spanish is good . Despite staffing difficulties in German teaching in all languages is at least good, and often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and personal language skills, and students are committed and keen. Recent results overall have been above the national average. The use of ICT is not sufficiently developed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students undergo a rigorous process to assess what might be the best course of study for them to follow in the sixth form, although some felt that they were not sufficiently prepared for the demands which sixth form work would make on them. Nonetheless, they receive sound help and guidance on how to settle in and organise their work. They receive good help and advice about higher education prospects, but careers guidance is not planned or systematic enough.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There are clear and realistic priorities for development, and a clear commitment to sustain high standards of attainment at all levels. Management of subject areas is good, and the sound organisation of courses and quality of teaching input ensures that students make good progress.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They receive helpful and constructive advice about what subjects to study.• The school helped in settling into sixth form work.• Work is well assessed; students know how well they are doing.• Students enjoy being in the sixth form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Careers advice could be more consistent and helpful.• There are not enough extra-curricular activities for sixth-form students.• The school does not take sufficient account of the views of sixth-form students.

Overall, inspectors found that students' positive views were well-founded, but that there was insufficient evidence to corroborate or disprove what students said about the extent to which the school takes account of their views. Nonetheless, it is a strongly-held perception of which the school might well take heed. The extra-curricular activities which the school provides specifically for sixth-form students have reduced in number in recent times, and are fewer than in many similar schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching is good, and very good in the Sixth Form. Expectations of pupils and students are high

- 1 The teaching at Ilkley Grammar School displays all the qualities which contribute to good learning. As a result, pupils and students develop confidence in their own knowledge and skills and are able to demonstrate their learning well in external examinations.
- 2 Lessons are invariably well-planned and have clear objectives which pupils understand. Teachers have high expectations of pupils whatever their prior attainment. Most lessons begin with a thorough recapitulation of what the pupils learned in the last lesson or through the homework set. This constant requirement to be able to recall what they have learned is an important factor in reinforcing learning and developing confidence, and many teachers are very skilled at questioning pupils to ensure understanding and to elicit information.
- 3 In a Year 8 lesson in English where the pupils are studying a Shakespeare play, the teacher did not miss any opportunity to extend and reinforce pupils' learning, through skilful questioning, careful attention to detail, good use of humour and expert demonstration and presentation of the play itself. As a result, pupils were excited about their work and thoroughly engaged in their learning. The work which they had produced at home on the topic was of an exceptionally high standard. Work in mathematics always starts with expert revision of what pupils have learned, and during the lessons the teachers give very good one-to-one support to individual pupils.
- 4 Lessons are well-managed to ensure that pupils work in a number of different contexts and rehearse their knowledge and skills in different ways. In many subjects teachers make skilful use of pair-work and groupwork, encouraging pupils to share their knowledge and skills and to help one another make progress. In a Year 9 history lesson pupils used group time to talk intelligently about their work, which included independent research done at home and on the Internet, developing clearer ideas and understanding of how it felt to be a soldier in World War I. Investigative work is effectively managed in science lessons, and pupils' findings are examined as a class to ensure the meaning and implication of evaluation and anomaly is clearly understood.
- 5 Teachers ensure that pupils know and can use appropriate technical vocabulary in their subject, and pay attention to details such as grammar in punctuation in English, pronunciation and gender of words in modern foreign languages. Year 10 pupils in music, for example, showed an extensive knowledge and understanding of quite sophisticated musical terminology. Aspects of literacy are carefully managed in a number of subject areas, all of which contribute significantly to the precision of pupils' learning and to the need to develop good learning habits and accuracy in speaking and writing. Good advice is given to pupils about how to tackle external tests and examinations: some very good examples of this were seen in English, geography and art, where pupils were encouraged to think carefully about how best to express themselves in writing and in designing.
- 6 Learning is well planned by teachers in order to ensure that it has real significance in pupils' lives, and thus has a greater impact. The science course throughout the main school and in the sixth form is based principally on the practical applications of science. A lesson on solids, liquids and gases in Year 7 captured the pupils' interest because it

was related to their everyday lives. Sixth form lessons in modern languages discuss the social and moral problems facing the countries where the languages are spoken. Lessons in a number of subject areas expect pupils to think carefully and to be able to explain their reasoning, and in personal, social and health education and religious education in particular, pupils are encouraged to imagine themselves in others' situations and to think about their world from a different angle.

Standards are high: pupils' and students' attainment is well above the national average and above average for similar schools

- 7 Pupils' attainment when they come to Ilkley Grammar School is well above average, and the school helps them to sustain their high standards throughout. In the national tests which pupils take at age 14, results in 2001 in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well above those of schools nationally, and well above those of similar schools. All three subjects showed high proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels, although in all three subjects just over ten per cent of the pupils failed to reach the national expectation. The performance of girls was better than that of boys in all core subjects, but there was less difference between boys' and girls' performance than there is nationally.
- 8 In the GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils in the school achieving five or more grades A* to C is well above the national average, and above the average for similar schools. A very significant aspect of the performance of pupils in the school is the very high proportion of pupils who achieve the very highest grades (A* and A) in a wide spectrum of subjects. Results in science are outstanding: over half of those entered for dual-award science in 2001 achieved the highest grades as did around one-third of the pupils entered in design and technology, English literature, French, geography, history, home economics and religious studies. In all subjects, with the exception of German, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades and those gaining grades A* to C was above, and often well above the national average.
- 9 The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A* to G in their GCSE examinations was also well above average for schools nationally in 2001, and average for schools in similar contexts. Similarly, the proportion of pupils gaining at least one GCSE pass was well above the national average and on a par with similar schools.
- 10 The average total points score gained by pupils in their GCSE examinations is well above the national average and in line with similar schools. Pupils at Ilkley Grammar School averaged 7.4 points higher than pupils in schools nationally. The trend in GCSE examinations continues to rise in parallel with but well above the national trend. Both boys and girls achieved results well above the national average.
- 11 Students sustain high standards throughout the sixth form. The school's performance is well above the average for all post-16 establishments. Compared with all maintained schools, the attainment of both boys and girls entered for two or more A or AS level examinations was well above the national average. In terms of students entered for less than two A or AS levels, attainment was very high compared with all maintained schools.
- 12 Findings during the inspection showed that despite the recent upheaval of re-organisation the school is not relaxing its standards, and that the work seen at every level points to pupils' and students' attainment remaining well above average. It is clear also that many pupils achieve high levels of performance relative to their capabilities. Opportunities are given in many subjects for gifted and talented pupils and the highest attainers to tackle more demanding work or to extend their knowledge of topics, and

supplementary GCSE courses are provided outside lesson time. There are workshops for average and lower attainers to boost their examination attainment, and for 6th form students to consolidate their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language receive good support and progress well to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Some pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

- 13 The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Good examples were seen – especially in a lower school assembly and in some personal, social and health education lessons – of teachers taking the opportunity to ensure that pupils reflected on what is happening in the world and had some empathy for and understanding of the way others live. Good opportunities for developing cultural awareness were seen in English, drama, art, religious education, design and technology, and music. Pupils from the school take part very successfully in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including nation-wide and regional competitions, for example in mathematics and in public speaking and debate, all of which contribute to the culture of achievement which the school seeks to generate. In sport, too, the school has experienced success at a high level.

Pupils' and students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good; they come to school to work

- 14 A major factor in the success of the school and the high attainment levels of its pupils and students is the positive attitudes which all but a few display towards their work. Pupils from Year 7 onwards show a maturity and an interest in their approach to learning which enables them to reach the high standards set for them. The majority are ambitious to succeed, remain well-focused on their lessons and apply themselves fully and conscientiously to their work. The quality and amount of work completed by many pupils and students at home are outstanding. In Year 7, pupils are excited by their learning experiences, eager to pursue experiments and to see the outcomes of their work in science, design and technology, information technology and art. A Year 9 discussion lesson in religious education was buzzing with the activity of pupils sharing ideas and seeking to understand one another's points of view.
- 15 Behaviour matches attitudes in its maturity and its contribution to pupils' learning. The number of pupils excluded from the school on grounds of behaviour is low. Because they are keen to learn, pupils listen and concentrate, collaborate well in group and pair work, respect one another's views and help one another. In situations where there is often a time lapse between pupils working on open-ended activities and the teacher bringing the class together, pupils respond immediately to the teacher's instructions and the lesson proceeds without a delay. For example, in a Year 9 ICT lesson, where the attraction of the computers often distracts pupils from listening to the teacher's instructions, and in a Year 8 German lesson where there was an open-ended opinion poll activity and the pupils were on their feet asking questions around the room, pupils were immediately responsive to the teacher's instructions and no time was wasted.
- 16 Rare instances where pupils showed less enthusiasm for their work were seen on a number of occasions where the teacher was relieved by a colleague ten minutes early to go to a lesson on the other site. On these occasions, even though work was set and the incoming teacher was often a subject specialist, the impetus of learning was lost and occasionally the behaviour of the pupils fell markedly. There was an unusually high incidence of boys' non-participation in physical education, often supported by a note from parents, but which seemed not to fit with the quality of the teaching and the fine weather during inspection week.

Relationships are very good at all levels. There is an equal partnership in learning which contributes strongly to the standards achieved.

- 17 The very positive relationships which exist between most teachers and their pupils and between the pupils themselves produce an equal partnership in learning which encourages pupils to respond and participate in lessons, to interact well with one another and to share ideas. There is a smiling, relaxed atmosphere in most lessons which provides a sound basis for pupils to develop their confidence in answering questions and trying to get it right. Senior staff know the names of a high proportion of the pupils as they walk around the school, and there is an atmosphere of trust and maturity which is reflected in the majority of lessons.
- 18 The atmosphere in the lower school is particularly conducive to pupils' personal development and confidence as learners. A good example is set by the head of lower school, who generates an air of warmth and welcome for all who set foot in the building. There is a family atmosphere in lessons and at other times of the school day, and the pupils respond well to the positive community feeling which is present at all levels. Teachers always have a greeting for the pupils they pass on the corridor, and there is an easy social ambience despite the crowded conditions in the dining-hall.
- 19 In lessons, the relaxed atmosphere and pupils' social maturity lead to good learning and positive attitudes. Many examples were seen where the pupils showed respect for one another, listening carefully to one another's views in discussions, taking part sensibly and remaining on task in pairwork, prompting and helping one another where appropriate. In a Year 7 class in music, where the absence of headsets meant that the keyboards had to be played with the sound on and each had to be shared between two pupils, the good relationships between the teacher and her class meant that learning could take place and progress made without excess noise, silly behaviour or disruption. The School Council is a prime example of good relationships and co-operation. Younger pupils are in no way reticent at putting their views forward, and they are listened to and their contributions valued by older pupils, students and teachers alike.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Curriculum provision could be improved. The school provides less teaching time than most secondary schools, and the availability of vocational courses is unsatisfactory

- 20 There are a number of aspects of the curriculum which could be improved. At 23 hours and 50 minutes' taught curriculum time per week, the school provides significantly less teaching over the year than the majority of secondary schools. The recommended time of the taught week is currently 25 hours for pupils at this stage.
- 21 The teaching time available for pupils is reduced further by the arrangements which the school makes for teacher movement between sites. In order to enable teachers to make a prompt start in the other building, they are released for the last ten minutes of their preceding lesson. Work is set for the ten-minute period and is supervised, but inspectors noted on most occasions where this occurred that the pace of the lesson dropped, pupils' concentration faded and the productivity of the final ten minutes failed completely to match the standards maintained up to that time. Over an extended period, this arrangement can have a marked effect on pupils' learning, especially in the case of classes whose timetables include a number of early finishes each week. The stress on teachers is also considerable, when they have to set work for the class they are leaving, gather up their teaching materials for the next lesson, drive to the other site and begin their next lesson, all within the space of ten minutes. Whilst it is accepted that the present split-site operation is scheduled to continue for only one further year, the school should seek to address this problem as a matter of urgency.
- 22 Provision for teaching and learning is less efficient where, as in a small number of cases, all the lessons in a given subject take place in one week of the fortnightly timetable which the school operates. The continuity and progression of learning are broken, and both teachers and pupils find it difficult to take up efficiently where they left off.
- 23 The curriculum does not fulfil statutory requirements in some important areas. Provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and does not allow sufficient time for the agreed local syllabus to be appropriately covered, and there is insufficient planned religious education in the sixth form. The school does not provide a collective act of religious worship each day for all pupils. The requirements of the National Curriculum are not satisfied in terms of the school's provision for information and communications technology (ICT), which, whilst well taught as a discrete subject, does not adequately support learning in other subject areas.
- 24 In terms of the breadth of the curriculum which the school provides, there are adequate courses to suit the needs of academically-inclined pupils and students, but there are not enough vocationally-oriented options both in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form to provide more relevant, interesting and fruitful programmes of study for the more practically-oriented pupils.

The school is not well equipped with learning resources – especially computers - compared with many similar schools

- 25 There are some significant deficiencies in learning resources which are having an impact on the standards that pupils and students can achieve and which prevent the school complying with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The lack of resources is due in no small way to the low levels of funding made available to the school for some years: expenditure per pupil has been markedly less than in most similar schools. Whilst most subject departments are satisfactorily equipped with

learning resources and text-books, there are some where these items are in poor condition or in short supply. In music, for example, the purchase of domestic-quality headsets in the lower school has resulted in many breakages which have not been replaced, to the extent that the provision for music in Years 7 and 8 less effective than it might be.

- 26 By far the most significant deficiency in learning resources in the school, and one which has far-reaching consequences in terms of the quality of pupils' learning and the school's compliance with the requirements of the National Curriculum, is in the provision of computers to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Governors have allocated substantial funds to the purchase of computers over the past two years, but the school still falls well behind the majority of similar schools in computer availability. ICT is effectively taught in the school in ICT lessons, but it is timetabled only up to Year 10, after which the responsibility falls to subjects to fulfil this requirement. There are plans to provide sufficient computers to enable curriculum requirements to be met and to have a computer suite which can be booked by other subjects.
- 27 At present the inclusion of ICT opportunities is not a feature of departmental schemes of work, and although many sixth form students make good use of the computers in the library and elsewhere to research and to support their learning, there is a real lack of perceived opportunity for students in the post-16 business courses to use computers and the Internet in their studies. The LEA-imposed 'firewall' restricting access to some areas of the Internet and only recently removed has stood in the way of some sixth-form investigative work. Often the computer facilities which the school possesses prove unreliable because of the purchase in the past of hardware which is unsuited to school use. The school needs to evaluate its spending more carefully on capital items such as these.

There are aspects of health and safety which need attention

- 28 The school has good procedures for child protection overall, with well-trained and dedicated personnel ensuring that legal requirements are covered and pupils have a named person to whom they can turn.
- 29 There are some health and safety issues which need to be attended to as a matter of urgency: by agreement with parents, pupils in Years 10 and 11 and sixth-form students are allowed out of school during the lunch hour. The school needs to consider its position in this respect, because during this time it cannot be known who is on site. Arrangements for registering which Year 13 students on site are unsatisfactory.
- 30 Risk assessments are unsatisfactory and do not satisfy health and safety requirements. In a number of subject areas where there should be risk assessments for a variety of activities in which pupils are regularly involved, none are currently available, and the risk assessments for the school as a whole, where they exist, are out of date and urgently in need of renewal. The school's guidance on how to carry out risk assessments is too general and therefore unsatisfactory, and the whole-school health and safety policy is out of date. During the inspection a major health hazard on the main site was reported to the school and was dealt with immediately.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 31 In order to improve further the quality of education which the school provides for its pupils and students, governors and the head teacher should:

- **Improve the curriculum by:**

Ensuring that the taught week is in line with current recommendations and the majority of similar schools;

Making timetable arrangements which do not necessitate shortening of lessons to allow movement between sites, and which ensure an even distribution of subjects across the fortnightly cycle;

Ensuring that the curriculum complies with statutory and National Curriculum requirements;

Broadening the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form to include vocational subject choices.

- **Ensure that the school is suitably equipped with up-to-date teaching and learning resources of high quality by:**

Continuing as a matter of priority to increase provision of computers to enable ICT to support learning in all areas of the curriculum;

Ensuring that all subjects plan for the use of ICT in their schemes of work;

Ensuring that sixth-form students have appropriate access to the Internet to support research and investigative work;

Taking care to evaluate all purchases of equipment to ensure that they are of suitable quality for use in schools.

- **Ensure that the school's procedures for the health, safety and wellbeing of all its pupils and students are up-to-date and conform to statutory requirements by**

Revising and up-dating all whole-school and subject-specific risk assessments;

Instituting registration procedures to ensure that the school can account for the whereabouts of pupils in its care.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	57
	Sixth form	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	2	13	32	9	1	0	0
Percentage	4	23	56	15	2	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	1	26	25	2	0	0	0
Percentage	2	48	46	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 7 - 11 and the sixth form as each lesson represents less than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,209	293
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22	nil

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	164	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	125	116	241

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	97	102	105
	Girls	105	96	101
	Total	202	198	206
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (84)	83 (88)	85 (84)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	53 (57)	64 (64)	56 (53)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	95	105	100
	Girls	106	102	104
	Total	202	198	206
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (93)	87 (89)	86 (86)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	46 (63)	68 (62)	63 (53)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	123	127	250

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	79	118	120
	Girls	98	124	125
	Total	177	242	245
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	71 (70)	97 (95)	98 (97)
	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	46.4 (45.7)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	43	76	119
	Average point score per candidate	23.9 (20.4)	22.8 (22.6)	23.2 (21.6)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	39	76	115	5	2	7
	Average point score per candidate	24.8	22.3	23.2	12	18	13.7
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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 pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	11	100
	National		76

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	Nil
Black – other	5
Indian	7
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	2
White	1457
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	2	0
Bangladeshi	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	10	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	76
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.26

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	406

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	81.1%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	-
Key Stage 3	24.4
Key Stage 4	22.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	31

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	nil
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	3,418,040
Total expenditure	3,502,974
Expenditure per pupil	2,346
Balance brought forward from previous year	-220,400
Balance carried forward to next year	-305,334

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,502
Number of questionnaires returned	264

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	57	9	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	33	54	7	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	60	14	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	53	22	7	3
The teaching is good.	23	57	8	2	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	42	33	9	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	42	16	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	44	5	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	15	39	32	10	3
The school is well led and managed.	27	41	13	9	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	54	7	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	41	20	8	13

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Most parents feel that the school provides a good education for their children. They feel that teaching is good, expectations are high and that their children make good progress. A third of those who replied feel that the school does not take sufficient account of parents' interests and their need to know how their child is progressing. Others believe that their child does not have enough homework to do. Whilst the vast majority of parental comments were favourable, there was an unusually high proportion of parental comments which showed some dissatisfaction with the school.

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

- 32 Standards in the sixth form are uniformly high. Most students achieve well relative to their attainment at age 16, and those whose attainment in GCSE was very high sustain their high levels of performance in the sixth form. Both boys and girls make good progress, and whereas in some areas girls gain a higher proportion of the highest grades, the difference between the attainment and progress of boys and girls in the sixth form is not significant overall.
- 33 In the 2001 A and AS level examinations both boys and girls in the school achieved average points scores well above the national average, irrespective of whether they were entered for more or less than two AS or A level examinations. The school's performance in all categories was well above the average for all post-16 establishments and continues the high levels of performance which students at the school have sustained over the past three years. Compared with the national average for maintained schools, students at Ilkley Grammar School achieved standards in sociology and French which were very high, and standards which were well above the national average in general studies, biology, chemistry, mathematics, English literature, design and technology, business, psychology and history.
- 34 In all subjects seen during inspection week the quality of the work produced by the students point to these high standards being maintained. Students have positive attitudes to their studies, ambition and the will to succeed, and develop their skills and knowledge rapidly, building firmly on their success in the main school.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

- 35 This whole area is a strength of the sixth form. Students show a positive attitude to the school in general and to life in the sixth form in particular. They are sufficiently astute, however, to be aware of areas that they believe could be improved. They do not feel inhibited about expressing their views and when they do so, they are mature and responsible, showing a good capacity for critical analysis. Students are friendly and helpful. They greet visitors confidently and very pleasantly, displaying a mature attitude both in and out of lessons. In lessons students listen attentively to their teachers, their response to lessons is good and they enjoy talking about their work, progress and ambitions. The great majority of students are highly motivated and well focused on their tasks both in the classroom and elsewhere around the school. They are ambitious to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills at a good rate. They display a conscientious approach to learning, both independently and in groups. As a result of this approach and the high percentage of good and very good teaching, students learn well and make very good progress.
- 36 Behaviour in the sixth form is very good. There were no exclusions of sixth-form students in the academic year 2000/2001. Students get on well with one another and with their teachers. In their free time many sixth-formers help in classes lower down the school. As well as contributing to the education of others this significantly enhances their own personal development. These personal values of students are also reflected in the willingness with which they involve themselves in a range of fundraising and community support activities, many of which they instigate themselves. The sixth-form social committee is chaired by one of the students, and sixth form students provide

effective and sympathetic chairmanship of the School Council. Overall, the sixth form students make a good contribution to the life of the school.

- 37 The attendance of students in both year groups is very good, well above the national average. Punctuality at lessons is also good. High levels of attendance contribute significantly to the progress which students make.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 38 In all subjects the teaching observed in the sixth form was at least good, and in most subjects it was very good or outstanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the confidence to plan students' learning to the greatest effect. There is a business-like air in the sixth form which comes from the shared aim to reach high standards and for students to achieve the high expectations which the school has of them. Most lessons have pace and challenge, and involve the students in the active pursuit of learning. In a few cases the teaching failed to provide sufficient opportunities for students to reflect and form their own opinions. Ongoing assessment of students' work and progress, and feedback to students on how they were progressing are strengths in some subject areas and contribute well to the standards achieved.
- 39 The relationships between teachers in the sixth form and their students are mature and positive, and contribute well to the way in which students learn. Discussion and debate in many lessons are lively and productive in terms of the development of students' thinking and ability to understand complex issues.
- 40 In some areas teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities or encouragement for students to study independently, and as a consequence some students do not read widely enough around their subjects. The availability and reliability of the school's ICT facilities are a drawback to the range of teaching and learning experiences available in some subjects and unsatisfactory as a facility for research and independent study.

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

- 41 The school offers a good range of academic subjects in the sixth form, most of which are very popular with students. Many subjects have quite large numbers in each year group, in particular the sciences, sociology, mathematics, geography and English literature. Take-up for modern foreign languages and music are small, but the courses are allowed to run in order to retain the range and breadth of the sixth form curriculum which the school provides. The subjects available for study in the sixth form respond to the success which pupils have in the GCSE examinations, and provide a logical progression for the majority of students, although some, notably in art, business, sociology and psychology, have not necessarily taken an examination in the subject at age 16.
- 42 The sixth form curriculum is open to all pupils who achieve suitable standards at age 16. There is a sliding scale of entry requirements which gives access to a range of course combinations. However, the school does not provide a suitable range of post-16 vocational options which would extend study opportunities to a wider spectrum of students. This is because of the logistical problems of space and resources which the school is seeking to address over the coming period. The sixth form curriculum does not comply with statutory requirements in that it does not provide sufficient time for religious education to be taught to all students.

- 43 There are opportunities for independent study during and outside the school day and help is provided for students who feel they are falling behind. Although the main input for key skills is through subject courses, there was a good response from students wishing to follow the newly-instituted key skills course in Year 12. The lack of adequate ICT provision to support learning in subject areas is a weakness in curriculum provision.
- 44 The curriculum is enhanced through good links with local industry and commerce in design and technology, although in business, economics, physics and art links with the community and outside agencies are areas for improvement. Students studying modern foreign languages have the opportunity to develop their linguistic skills through work experience placements abroad. There are some sporting opportunities for sixth form students outside school hours, and the student committee organises social events from time to time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

- 45 Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of students' work and progress are very good and students have positive views about the advice offered to them. The recently appointed head of sixth form introduced a new system of formal monitoring which came into effect for current Year 12 students from September 2001. Personal tutors play a key role in co-ordinating the process of setting target grades, collating information from subject teachers and reviewing progress with individual students. All Year 12 students have target grades entered into their personal planners and this information has also been communicated to parents by letter. Each Year 12 student has participated in at least two consultations with personal tutors since the inception of the scheme.
- 46 In most subjects students have clear targets for improvement and are kept well informed of the progress they are making towards them. Students in English and science, for example, are very well aware of their level of performance. Teachers' good marking and constructive verbal and written comments gives a good indication of what they need to do to improve. Business studies students felt that assessment information they receive gives them a good indication of their level of performance but would appreciate more time with subject tutors to discuss it. Students in history and design were less sure of their target grades and of the procedures for using assessment information to track their progress. Differences between subject areas reflect the developing situation and the good systems now in place need to be consolidated as teachers become more familiar with their application. The school intends to refine the system further by using more sophisticated data from A level performance systems (ALPS) in future. Whilst present Year 13 students do not have formally set target grades their work is regularly assessed within subjects and effectively monitored by personal tutors.

Advice, support and guidance

- 47 Induction procedures for students entering the sixth form have been evaluated by the school and modifications are proposed for the forthcoming year. All Year 11 pupils and their parents receive information through careers lessons, assemblies and an information evening. Students are interviewed about their plans and subject teachers are consulted about their suitability for A level work. This is supplemented by an induction day at the start of Year 12 and by advice at departmental level on course requirements and study skills. In conversation with Inspectors, students were critical of the advice and guidance they received at this stage and felt that they were not sufficiently prepared for the demands expected of them. Year 12 students have volunteered to be part of the induction process for prospective students in order to offer advice on what to expect. Advice for those students intending to continue into further

and higher education is extensive and includes a careers convention, higher education day and visiting speakers. Students are able to relate to the experiences of former students who are invited to speak.

- 48 Because of a recent emphasis on informing students about entry requirements for Oxford and Cambridge there has been an increased interest in making applications to these universities. Currently some 15 to 20 students are considering such applications and are being supported by information and advice from visiting speakers, visits to Oxbridge colleges and a careers convention specifically devoted to these institutions. All students not intending to go on to university, and all those intending to take a 'gap year,' have been identified and given appropriate advice. Careers is taught as part of the general studies programme and general careers advice is considered by students to be effective for those who choose to seek it out. Some students felt that demands on staff prevented them from devoting sufficient time to this aspect of guidance.
- 49 The tutorial programme is detailed and well prepared. It provides opportunities for tutors to consult students individually and provide advice and guidance on a range of academic and personal development issues. These consultations are informed by rigorous and searching self-evaluation sheets which students complete in advance. The thoroughness and honesty with which they do so reflects the degree of involvement in their own learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS?

- 50 A smaller proportion of parents and carers with students in the sixth form than those with pupils in the main school responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Those who did expressed general satisfaction with the provision made for their children. They were particularly pleased with their academic progress and the fact that students are expected to work hard. Despite concerns about high levels of staff absence in some subjects, parents consider that teaching in the sixth form is of a higher standard than elsewhere in the school and most of those who responded feel better informed about their child's progress than do the parents of younger pupils, especially those in Years 7 to 9. The main concern expressed by parents is the small number and range of activities for sixth-form students to take part in outside their academic subjects.
- 51 Although the school chose not to use the students' inspection questionnaire, interviews with many sixth formers show that this relative lack of worthwhile activities and enrichment courses is also one of their concerns. They are mature and well-motivated young adults who would make good use of extra opportunities, as is demonstrated by the unexpectedly high number of Year 12 students who volunteered for the pilot Key Skills course. Students in both year groups are generally positive about their sixth form experience and would recommend this school to their friends. Year 12 students in particular would have liked more information about what to expect from sixth form life and those in both years feel that the school should listen and respond more positively to their views. The students particularly appreciate the accessibility, advice and academic support provided by their teachers and like the good quality, relaxed relationships that pervade the sixth form.
- 52 Some students felt that they were not given enough advice or encouragement to extend their studies through background reading, and all felt that access to the Internet for research was unsatisfactory on the one hand because of the poor availability and unreliability of the school's computer network, and on the other because of the built-in restrictions to access to many important sites which has only very recently been lifted.

- 53 Year 12 students have targets which they are expected to achieve, and most felt that they would soon be told if they were failing to keep up in pursuit of the targets set. Assessment of work completed and the way teachers keep students aware of how they are doing was considered to be very good. Careers guidance was not felt by some students to be a strength: they considered that it should be more systematic and consistent.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 54 The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The head of sixth form is a recent appointment and is beginning to bring about beneficial changes. Clear and realistic priorities for development have already been established and are being pursued with energy and commitment. Teachers are committed to ensuring that all students achieve well. Teaching is of a very high standard in the majority of subjects; the high standards established at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and in many cases improved. The school's aims and the values that underpin the work of the sixth form are relevant to the needs of the students and are embedded well in all aspects of the school's work. The whole-school development plan includes areas specific and relevant to the sixth form.
- 55 The governors have a good understanding of the work of the sixth form and an awareness of how it can improve and develop in the future. However, the governing body does not fulfil its statutory duties in ensuring the entitlement of all students in religious education in Years 12 and 13.
- 56 A major contributory factor in the continuing success of post-16 provision at Ilkley Grammar School is the quality of subject leadership, which ensures that standards are maintained through astute selection of appropriate courses, high levels of teacher knowledge and expertise, and through clear shared aims. The systems and schemes of work that are in place provide a good framework for teaching in the sixth form, and are geared accurately to enabling students to achieve high levels of performance.
- 57 Students' learning in most sixth form courses is restricted by the lack of constant and easily-available access to ICT and Internet resources. In business and economics in particular the lack of constant access to computers is a major drawback to students' progress. In some subjects, sixth-form accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- 58 The school applies the principles of best value well in respect of its sixth form and compares its performance with that of similar schools. Most courses are well-subscribed and the few subjects where take-up tends to be low such as modern foreign languages and music can be easily assimilated into the overall cost equation. Standards are high in all courses offered, students achieve well and make good progress. Results in public examinations are well above the national average. The sixth form is very cost effective.

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

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

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

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	32	91	87	59	43	6.7	5.8
Chemistry	45	100	90	62	43	7.9	5.9
Biology	33	97	88	42	34	6.3	5.3
Physics	28	93	88	29	40	5.7	5.7
Design and technology	15	100	91	60	30	7.2	5.4
Business	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13.7	10.5
Economics	13	100	89	38	36	6.5	5.52
Art	8	100	96	25	46	5.5	6.8
Music	2	100	93	50	35	7.0	5.7
Geography	40	95	92	30	38	5.8	5.7
History	6	83	88	50	35	7.00	5.45
Sociology	21	100	86	90	35	9.1	5.3
Psychology	34	88	87	47	34	6.1	5.3
English literature	18	89	95	72	37	7.4	5.9
French	5	100	89	80	38	9.2	5.6
German	1	100	91	100	40	10.0	5.8
Spanish	4	75	89	75	39	6.5	5.7

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focused on mathematics and the three sciences. Mathematics, biology and chemistry are some of the highest attaining subjects in the school.

MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision in mathematics is very good.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good or very good.
- Students are well motivated and work hard.
- The standard of work which the students produce is well above average.
- The department is well managed.

Areas for development

- The AS level results could be higher.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning.

Standards and achievement

59. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 were well above average. Almost all the students entered achieved a grade and two-thirds achieved a grade A or B. Boys' performance was better than predicted and better than that of the girls. In further mathematics in 2001 all students entered achieved a grade and half achieved a grade A or B.
60. In the AS level examination in 2001 over three-quarters of the students entered achieved a grade and a third achieved a grade A or B. Results in one of the modular examinations lowered the grades that students achieved but the students are able to resit this examination and will benefit from the progress they have made this year. All the students attending the GCSE resit group achieved a grade C in the November examination.
61. The standards of work seen in the sixth form are well above average. Students are making good progress because of effective and challenging teaching.

Quality of education

62. Teaching is good or very good and students learn well as a result. Lessons are well planned. The pace at which the work is undertaken is well matched to the needs of the students. Questioning is skilful, and students answer questions confidently with a good level of understanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and a great deal of experience. They give clear explanations and relevant examples where appropriate. In a further mathematics lesson in Year 12 the teacher was revising with the students and showed very good flexibility and subject knowledge. She was quickly able to find suitable questions on differential equations to deepen the students' understanding of the topic. In a Year 12 pure mathematics lesson the teacher was skilfully bringing together work done on exponential growth and decay with the work done on logarithms. The very good example used enabled the students to look at all aspects of this link, which enhanced their understanding and helped them to make good progress. Students' problems from a previous mechanics lesson had prompted the teacher to prepare and

deliver further work using well thought-out examples to enrich the students' understanding of this topic.

63. Much of the written work demanded of students takes the form of questions which test the students' understanding. Homework is set regularly together with tests and examination questions. Some of this work is marked in a detailed way to help students made progress in their understanding. Graphical calculators are used confidently and competently by the students, but there was no other use of ICT to support students' learning.
64. Students find the work interesting and challenging. They are aware of their progress and predicted grades and recognise and appreciate the help and support given by the teachers. Relationships between students and teachers are very good.

Leadership and management

65. Work is very well managed in the sixth form. Staff co-operate in the planning and work well together under the very good leadership given by the head of department. Teachers know individual students' strengths and weaknesses well. The curriculum for sixth form mathematics is appropriate and meets the needs of the students. The alternative mechanics and statistics courses allow good flexibility.

BIOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision for biology is very good.

Strengths

- Standards are rising and students make good progress.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding provides challenging work. Assessment is used to monitor students' progress very effectively and good support is given.
- The subject is very well led and managed and a collection of very good learning resources is being built up.

Areas for development

- Students' independent learning skills are limited.
- ICT is not sufficiently used to support students' learning.

Standards and achievement

66. In the 2001 A level GCE examinations, the proportions of students achieving grades A to B and A to E were well above the national average. The average point score was well above average for all schools and has risen faster than the national trend since the last report. Students make good progress in biology. The school is able to show that most pupils did better than expected in relation to their GCSE results. In the 2001 AS examinations students did very well; they all passed and over two thirds gained grades A-B. Numbers of students have significantly increased over the past three years. More girls than boys choose to study biology, but on average, there is no significant difference in attainment.
67. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average. In Year 13, modular examination results indicate that students are achieving standards above those predicted from their GCSE performance. Most show an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the syllabus topics. In physiology, for instance, they discuss the

complex nature of the functioning of the nervous system with ease, using appropriate terminology, and in biochemistry, apply their knowledge of enzymes to new situations. They write coherently and can give clear explanations. They put their numeracy skills to good use when, for example, they use statistical tests to evaluate the results of ecological investigations. Students in year 12 have almost completed their AS course and have successfully taken their scientific knowledge and understanding to greater depths. In their study of biochemistry, for example, they competently describe the detailed structure of proteins, and in cytology, understand the complex nature of the cell membrane. Although the implementation of new national requirements has, to some extent, restricted the scope of practical work, investigative skills amongst sixth form students are well developed. However, students in both years 12 and 13 would benefit from further development of their independent learning skills. The very good attitudes of students towards their work have a positive impact on their progress.

Quality of education

68. Teaching is very good overall and as a result students learn very well. Teachers show very good subject knowledge, especially when they use questions to probe students' understanding. Their explanations are detailed and clear and lessons are planned very well to make good use of the time available. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and there is a mutual respect that effectively supports the learning process. Scrutiny of students' work shows that it is challenging and that expectations are high. Much day- to-day assessment is used to check and consolidate students' knowledge and understanding, and has a positive impact on their progress. Examination preparation is very rigorous and extensive in-house resources support revision. In all the lessons seen, collections of data, exercises and past exam questions were being used skilfully and effectively to practice analysis and application, as well as to review previous work. Good interaction in lessons encourages students to show initiative, but research and independent learning by students is not as wide-ranging as it might be. Whilst ICT is used efficiently to analyse the results of fieldwork and coursework, it is not sufficiently used to support learning elsewhere. Useful homework is set regularly and marking is helpful. The technical support in biology is of a high standard and much valued by the teachers.

Leadership and management

69. Work in the subject is very well led and very well managed. Deployment of staff is good and makes very effective use of teachers' expertise. The head of department has a clear vision for raising standards and together with the teaching team, strives to provide the best opportunities for students, whose progress is well monitored and assessed. They have a good understanding of how well they are doing relative to their expected grades. Their individual needs are well supported. Scientific resources, whilst rather dated, are just adequate, but there is serious shortage of computers and data-logging equipment that limits the information and communication technology content of teaching and learning.
70. Since the last inspection, standards in examinations have risen, and more students are achieving the higher A-B grades at A level. A new programme of study and scheme of work has been introduced recently, and students have been provided with textbooks that match and support their studies. A very good range of learning resources, for student use and exam preparation, is constantly being up-dated.

CHEMISTRY

Overall the provision for chemistry is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good.
- The work is well planned.
- Relationships are very good throughout.

Areas for development

- Greater use of ICT to enhance students' learning.

Standards and achievement

71 The results of the Advanced level examinations in 2001 were well above the national average. There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Results have been consistently well above the national average over the last few years. Students enter the sixth form with results in science well above the national average and they continue to make very good progress in the sixth form. Students with special educational needs also make very good progress.

72 The standard of work observed in lessons and in students' files is well above average. For example, students in Year 13 understand the concept of a reaction in a steady state and how the solubility product influences solubility with particular reference to shells dissolving on the ocean bed. Other students calculate the overall energy of a reaction by adding the energy changes in a reaction broken down into stages. Students studying AS level also show high levels of attainment. They use their knowledge to explain the physical properties of an organic compound made in the laboratory. Another group are able to explain how CFC compounds eliminate ozone from the upper reaches of the atmosphere. There is a large proportion of practical work undertaken successfully and understanding is frequently consolidated through written activities. The skills of numeracy and literacy are developed but ICT skills are limited by the lack of computers and rely on the students' own facilities at home.

Quality of education

73 The standard of teaching is very good. All the lessons observed were judged to be very good. The teachers have a thorough knowledge of and enthusiasm for their subject and they communicate this effectively to their students. Each lesson was carefully structured to involve everyone and the concepts were developed in well thought-out stages. For example, students' prior knowledge of electronic structure, bonds and ion formation was revised before analysing the reaction between chlorine ions and ozone. Teachers have high expectations of their students and present the work in an interesting and effective manner. Complex chemical concepts are explained and understanding reinforced by reading the textbook, making notes and doing problems using the knowledge gained.

74 Chemistry is a popular subject. There are approximately eighty students in year 12 with nearly everyone opting to continue with the subject to advanced level. Students' attitudes are very positive: they find the course interesting and have a high regard for their teachers. They produce good quality notebooks and attempt homework readily and work well in class. The teachers are very familiar with the course and have developed it very effectively.

Leadership and management

75 The department is very well managed and the teaching staff work effectively as a team. Accommodation is satisfactory but one laboratory is small and there are occasions

when a classroom has to be used. Lack of computers prevents the department from using ICT to enhance learning, improve teaching, develop student's skills and use data logging techniques. Otherwise resources are good.

PHYSICS

The provision which the school makes for physics is good.

Strengths

- The attainment of most students following the AS level and A2 level physics courses is above the national average.
- Students' knowledge and application of principles to a range of real life situations is developing well in the A level course.
- Most students are developing good advanced practical skills and investigative techniques. In the A level course some students are achieving excellence in this area.
- Students' motivation is good and they expect to be successful.
- Physics is well taught and well managed, and students are well-supported.

Areas for development

- Diagnostic assessment is not sufficiently used to inform students of their strengths and weaknesses and to assist the process of target setting and forecasting.
- Links with external agencies where physics in action can be experienced are too few in range and number.
- Some lessons do not contain a high enough level of challenge to stretch the highest attaining students.
- The present use of ICT does not provide students with the full range of experience which is expected in the course.

Standards and achievement

76 The standard of attainment of most pupils on the A level course is above national expectations, and for a few students it is excellent. About one-third of them are achieving a standard consistent with the top grades at AS and A levels. In relation to their prior attainment at GCSE students make good progress, characterised by good gains in knowledge and practical skills, a growing confidence as independent learners, sustained intellectual effort when wrestling with difficult concepts and an increasing effectiveness in weighing evidence and testing hypotheses.

77 The attitudes to learning of most students on the AS and A level courses are good and some students, particularly on the AS course, are highly motivated. These commitments are sustained in a mature group ethos and by good relationships with the teachers and technician. The quality of support and guidance is also good, particular account being taken of students' needs for extra individual help outside the normal lesson time. The department is experienced in helping students who have specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and provides support with care and sensitivity. Other aspects of equality of access are carefully maintained and this is reflected in the take-up of physics by both boys and girls and by their readiness to ask for and expect additional help.

Quality of education

78 The quality of teaching was at least good in all of the lessons seen in the inspection and very good in some. There are very good levels of teacher knowledge and a relaxed, mature style. In one Year 12 lesson, the teacher broadened students' appreciation of

large force systems by pushing them to make estimates in real life applications where they had no prior knowledge. In the example of a tethered hot air balloon, this stimulated a good level of interest and discussion.

- 79 There is an essential bond of trust between students and their teachers. Expectations of what students can achieve is in the main appropriate, but in some cases the expectations of higher attaining students are not high enough. The questioning of students in some lessons is very challenging and contributes well to the progress they make, but occasionally the higher attainers are not sufficiently targeted with demanding work, and this places some limitations on their progress. There is regular assessment and monitoring of students' attainment against what the course demands and students are kept well informed of their progress. However, assessment is not sufficiently diagnostic to help students to understand fully their capabilities and potential.
- 80 Some opportunities are given for reflection and evaluation which contribute to a more assured style of writing in some of the substantial investigations.
- 81 The sixth form course is practically based at each level. It is planned to give good progression from courses in Years 10 and 11 and offers a range of contexts (industry, environmental and space) through which students can develop a broad perspective. The department supplements this by running a programme of visits to key establishments where physics in action can be experienced.

Leadership and management

- 82 Leadership of the subject is good. Both courses suffer from limited access to ICT facilities and, in particular, to specialist facilities in the laboratories. There is a general weakness here which limits students' progress towards their full development as independent learners.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

The focus of this inspection was the AS and A Level courses offered by the school in product design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision for design and technology is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching has led to examination results which are well above average.
- Contact with business, industry and the local community has enabled students to relate well-chosen design projects to real needs and given them an insight into industrial manufacturing techniques.
- Good course organisation has ensured a smooth transition into the new examination structure.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of provision for computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing prevents students from gaining first-hand experience in these areas.
- Poor access to computers during lesson times causes loss of valuable time and makes it difficult for teachers to monitor the progress of students' work.

Standards and attainment

- 83 Examination results are well above average and have shown a rising trend for the last three years. In 2001, students' average points score in design and technology was well above the national average and above the school average for all subjects. The course is popular and attracts large numbers of students. The number of girls opting for the course is increasing and their performance is improving. In 2001 more girls were represented in the top grades than previously.
- 84 Standards in work and lessons seen are above average. Students are able to conduct detailed and in-depth research into well-chosen design situations. These often arise from contact with organisations and groups outside the school and give students a good opportunity to explore the moral, social and cultural dimensions of design decisions. For example, a minor product evaluation project involving a re-design of a bag for cosmetic products had involved one student in an examination of the environmentally friendly use of materials and the social and moral effects on consumers of pressure from advertisers.
- 85 Students analyse research material and formulate design ideas with good understanding of the design and make processes involved. Presentation skills are good and students are able to use good and sometimes very good illustrations to record and develop their ideas. ICT skills are used mainly to word-process text and represent data in the form of charts or graphs, but other applications of ICT are limited by poor access to computers. Opportunities for students to experience computer aided design and manufacturing processes at first hand are limited by lack of facilities.
- 86 Many design folders represent a high level of commitment to the requirements of the course but in some instances the extensive research and development they contain is not matched by manufacturing processes of comparable quality. Students realise their projects using a variety of materials and skills. The use of textiles, for example, allows some students to develop interesting and imaginative design solutions. Design ideas are well-supported by modelling techniques and the school has encouraged some students to 'contract out' the manufacture of the final product to interested local companies using the students' own drawings and models. This has given them a unique insight into the problems associated with designing for commercial production.

Quality of education

- 87 Teaching is good, and there is a positive working atmosphere in lessons. This enables teachers to work effectively as consultants and facilitators and students to develop independent working habits. Students receive regular and constructive verbal feedback on the quality and progress of their work.
- 88 All students in Year 12 are given attainment targets based on past performance and these are compared with departmental assessments to identify underachievement. Some students seemed unsure of these target grades and of procedures for assessing their work. Most students have made a smooth transition from GCSE to the more independent work needed for A level. Almost all intend to go on to higher education and a significant number intend to pursue a design related course. Students and teachers benefit from good technician support.

Leadership and management

- 89 The course is well managed and good planning has ensured a successful start to the new examination structure. The temporary arrangements necessitated by the long-term absence of the head of department are effective in ensuring the successful administration of the course, but long term developments are not being implemented as quickly as advisable, for example, the introduction of full risk assessment procedures,

the introduction of computer-aided design and manufacture equipment and the development of better computer facilities.

BUSINESS

Economics and business were inspected in this area. Both subjects produce results which are above the national average.

BUSINESS

Overall the quality of provision for business education is good.

Strengths

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they plan lessons effectively.
- Students have a positive attitude to their learning and work well together.
- The AVCE results are well above the national average.
- There are very good relationships between students and staff.

Areas for improvement

- Access to computers is unsatisfactory.
- There are not enough links with local businesses.
- The departmental handbook and schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed.

Standards and achievement

90 Standards in the 2001 Advanced GNVQ examination were well above average. The average points score was 13.71 against the national average of 10.45, with three of the seven students achieving a distinction. There have been consistently good results over the past three years with girls achieving slightly higher grades than boys. Over a three-year period business students have achieved Higher examination grades than their entry level would suggest. Recruitment has remained fairly constant, with more boys than girls. Since the introduction of the AVCE course, more students, especially girls, have studied business education.

91 The standards of written work and the levels of understanding observed are high and consistent with the very good results achieved in recent years. Students make good progress throughout the two years. In Year 12 students are confident in working together to plan a conference and are able to identify the main administrative issues that need to be solved. They are also able to argue their points of view effectively and with confidence during a group presentation. All listen critically to each presentation and to effectively analyse the significant features of the work. Year 13 students are able to analyse balance sheets and profit and loss accounts, to work well under pressure and to work effectively in pairs and groups. They can use ratio analysis to interpret company performance. The students work with considerable focus and their concentration is impressive. Teamwork is particularly effective.

Quality of education

92 Teaching is good overall and some is very good. The best lessons have pace and challenge, and students learn well as a result. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and sound business experience. Planning is effective and teachers' expectations of the students are high. The students are required to identify, research and solve business issues and the initiative for learning rests with them, which they

welcome. The teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and share this readily with the students. As a result effective learning takes place and the students make good progress. This positive learning environment produces a high level of enthusiasm amongst the students. Relationships with the teachers are very good. There is a high level of mutual respect.

- 93 Students have a mature approach to their studies and from Year 12 they develop good independent learning skills. The majority of the modules are based on company case studies that are selected by the students. Their individual research is thorough and comprehensive and underpins the good results achieved. Students are confident with their ICT skills and use them to enhance both the presentation and content of their work. However, the availability of computers is unsatisfactory. The students commented on the many difficulties they often face in finding a working computer to process their coursework. Access to the Internet for company research was also restricted until recently and had an adverse impact on students' ability to research projects. Currently there are no computers in the department. The monitoring and assessment of student work are thorough and students are aware of what they have to do to strengthen their portfolios. However, support for student progress through each module timetable is not as consistent as it might be.. Student interest and commitment in business education are high and many of the students continue their study of business at university.

Leadership and management

- 94 The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The new courses have been successfully introduced and members of the department have undergone the necessary training. Teaching has been monitored and support and advice given. There are regular staff meetings. The departmental handbook lacks detail at present and the schemes of work are insufficiently detailed to include both resources and learning methodologies. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is also currently little evidence of a modern business environment in the specialist rooms and not enough organised visits to local industry.

ECONOMICS

Overall, the quality of provision in economics is good.

Strengths

- Students achieve well, obtaining results which are above the national average.
- Teaching is good, using an appropriate variety of approaches.
- Attitudes of students following economics courses are very good.
- There is good use of textbooks and resources to support students' learning.

Areas for development

- There is not enough availability and use of ICT to support learning.
- Business links and fieldwork in the department are not used enough to extend learning opportunities.

Standards and achievement

- 95 In 2001 A-level results were above the national average. The percentage of students obtaining grades A to E was considerably higher than in most schools whilst the percentage obtaining A or B grades was in line with the national average. There has been a rising trend in A level results over the past three years.
- 96 Standards in work seen in Year 13 during the inspection were above average and match those in recent examination results. Most students have a good knowledge and understanding of topics such as development economics, transport economics, the UK economy and economics in a European context. They are able to use complex economics terminology and can apply what they have learned to case studies. In a lesson on developing economies, Year 13 students demonstrated a good understanding of the nature of economic development. They were able to explain the difference between economic growth and economic development and give appropriate examples. They were also able to analyse the problems of measuring development.
- 97 The achievement of students is good. Students make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of economics concepts and applying what they have learnt to the real world. This was demonstrated in a Year 12 lesson where students were gaining a greater understanding of how markets fail. They showed their increasing ability to work in group situations in order to analyse why market failure occurs and how problems such as unemployment and monopolies were created.
- 98 The department offers AS and A level courses in economics and most students stay on to complete the A level course.

Quality of education

- 99 The quality of teaching in the department is good. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives that are shared with students so they know what they are going to learn. Teaching shows a good knowledge of economics combined with an appropriate variety of teaching approaches, including the use of group work. This ensures that learning is good. Students work hard in lessons and maintain good levels of interest and concentration. Their attitudes to the subject are very good. They work very well together, demonstrating high levels of co-operation, especially in group situations. Very good relationships were observed in lessons with students respecting others' views and arguments. Students are prepared to work independently and carry out research using

a range of sources. Their views of the subject are very positive and they appreciate the way in which the study of economics is applied to real life situations.

Leadership and management

- 100 The leadership and management of the economics department are good. Provision is well co-ordinated by the head of economics who ensures that appropriate documentation is available and that good use is made of textbooks and up to date support materials. Although there have been some links with business and students make some use of ICT in economics, both of these are areas for further development.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design and music were inspected in this area. Both subjects are well provided for, and although numbers of students are low in music, both achieve good standards in external examinations.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good; it is well planned, with good integration of theory and practical work.
- Students achieve good standards of work.
- Students' attitudes to work and relationships with teachers are good.
- Students receive very good support and guidance.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for and use of ICT in lessons is unsatisfactory.
- Visits to galleries, museums and sites are not used enough to support learning.
- The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is not consistent enough.

Standards and achievement

- 101 Whilst few of the students achieved higher grades at A level in 2001, results have shown some improvement over the past three years. Although there have been variations in the results achieved since the last inspection, standards have remained overall in line with the national average.
- 102 The quality of work in students' portfolios confirms that standards are good, although presentation is inconsistent. Students develop appropriate vocational and technical skills and can talk about their work with knowledge and enthusiasm. They display ability and understanding in engaging with the work of contemporary and classical artists, which reflects in their day-to-day work. Some students show exceptional flair, for example in excellent sketchbook work recording holidays in Italy and France. Some work is based on conceptual rather than observational starting points, as in the unit on Light and Dark, although there is occasionally an over-reliance on secondary source material.
- 103 Portfolios of art and design work show that students have carried out thoughtful investigation and creative exploration of ideas, as in the case of one student researching and developing self-image and portrait work. The quality of students' personal studies is excellent, with a very good range of topics covered. Particularly

good examples were How does a painting create a mood? and The development of African art: a social perspective.

- 104 Achievement is good overall when account is taken of the broad range of attainment indicated by students' GCSE results. Two students did not study art and design in Key Stage 4 are making very good progress and have caught up very well. Progress is well promoted by the demands of the work and the guidance offered. The number of students choosing art and design is not large, but it is increasing, and a high proportion of the students who take the course continue their studies in higher education.

Quality of education

- 105 The quality of teaching is good. In lessons students are set work of considerable challenge, to which they respond with enthusiasm. Teachers integrate theory and practical work effectively; for example, in Year 13, group work was used effectively to write annotations for lines of enquiry and self-evaluation. Teachers are particularly good at drawing on cultural diversity to stimulate creative ideas. Aboriginal, African and modern European artworks are used as a reference and to initiate developments. Project briefs are well designed: they have clear aims and objectives, staged tasks, well-defined assessment criteria and deadlines for progress. Consequently, students understand well what is required of them and work at a very good pace, making good progress. The use of a range of resources maintains students interest and helps them to learn although access to ICT in the classroom for both staff and students is unsatisfactory. In some cases students and parents have to provide and supplement materials in order for the work to be completed. Teachers prepare students well for group work and encourage independent learning where appropriate. They are very effective in developing students' capacity for making and taking constructive criticism. In one example a student working on The Human Condition made very good use of recent newspaper accounts of conflicts in the Middle East and was comparing and contrasting this with the Holocaust. Students work well on their own and in small groups and learn well from each other.

- 106 Teachers monitor students' work thoroughly, making good use of feedback sheets. Work is assessed accurately and objectively and recorded appropriately. Students receive regular support and feedback on their progress and are aware of how well they are doing and what to do to improve. All students speak highly of the support provided by teachers, including advice on preparation and presentation for foundation interviews.

Leadership and management

- 107 The quality of leadership and management is good. Communications between staff are effective. There is a regular programme of meetings. Students benefit from the efforts of enthusiastic and highly committed teachers who work well together. The courses are well managed and resources are adequate although the department in general is under-funded. The range of resources and materials which is available to students to enable them to carry out the required experimental approaches specified by the examination requirements is not as wide as it should be. The two year course does not include sufficiently frequent visits to both local and national galleries or involvement by professionals such as artists in residence. At sixth-form level these are gaps in provision which would make a significant contribution to the quality and effectiveness of the learning.

MUSIC

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

Strengths:

- Standards achieved by students at AS and A2 level are high.
- Teaching is very good, knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- Students have very good attitudes and commitment to their studies.
- There is an excellent range and good use of ICT to support learning.

Areas for improvement

- The allocated amount of curriculum time for music is unsatisfactory.
- The marking and assessment of students' written work is not rigorous enough.
- Students are not sufficiently encouraged to work independently.

Standards and achievement

108 Despite small numbers entered for the subject there is a good record of examination results. Both male and female students achieve equally well. In 2001 almost all students achieved A or B grades at AS level. Those who achieved A grades have continued to A level and are making good progress. The observation of lessons and other work during the inspection is consistent with continuing high standards. Students build effectively on their GCSE results. They have a good understanding of their set texts and are very capable users of the ICT facilities available. A Year 12 student discussed clearly the differences he had found after attending a live performance of Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture compared with previously heard recordings. Students use musical language regularly and their performances reflect high standards of instrumental ability. They can discuss their own compositions, identifying weaknesses and how they plan to improve their work.

Quality of education

109 Students learn very well because teaching is very good. The teacher shows very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Other strengths of the teaching are its pace and challenge. Students are encouraged to study and experience a variety of musical styles. This ensures that their individual musical strengths are developed and they can develop a personal style. A student in Year 13 having sung in church choirs for several years discussed his knowledge and understanding of choral music. This enabled him to produce a composition reflecting two contrasting composers styles in a setting of words from the Latin. Students discuss their written work regularly. However, the marking of students' work is not sufficiently rigorous or helpful. Comments are too general and the targets set are not detailed enough. The result is that students are not sufficiently clear exactly how to improve their work.

110 Students perform regularly in school ensembles, in the locality and with county music groups. They display very good attitudes to their studies. At present less curriculum time is allocated to music than to other subjects. This means that students have to make use of the department facilities before school, during lunchtime and free periods. They are familiar with examination requirements and confident about the nature of their work. There is a good balance of activities, allowing students freedom of expression but offering them appropriate support. Students concentrate on their work and co-operate well in small groups.

Leadership and management

111 The head of department has developed post-16 music successfully since the previous inspection. Other areas are managed well despite the limitations of a split site. Good practice is shared with other music staff. They support students very well during their examination performances. There is a new suite of keyboards linked to computers that provides an excellent environment in which students can create music. Equipment is of

professional standard. However, students do not have sound-proofed facilities to use which makes listening to and recording their work difficult. The present arrangements do not do justice to the quality of students' performances.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on geography, history, psychology and sociology. These are some of the most popular subjects in the sixth form, and attainment is uniformly high, geography having achieved considerable improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

The quality of provision for geography is good.

Strengths

- Standards in Year 12 and Year 13 are above the national average.
- Teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good, leading to improved standards.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of students attaining the highest grades is below average.
- The use of ICT for research, editing work and producing graphs and charts is unsatisfactory.

Standards and achievement

- 112 Results in the 2001 A level examinations were broadly in line with the national average for all schools. The number of students gaining higher grades was below average. Results are broadly in line with those for similar schools. At the time of the previous inspection, A level results were below average and there has clearly been a steady rise since that time in spite of some difficulties in the subject. There are no significant differences in results between male and female students or for the small number of students whose first language is not English. Based on predicted grades from GCSE results, students achieve satisfactorily.
- 113 There has been a level of instability with staffing in geography that has affected progress and attainment. Nevertheless, inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average both in Year 12 and Year 13. This is an indication of improvements in teaching since the previous inspection and how standards have risen since that time. There has been an encouraging rise in the numbers of students studying the subject.
- 114 Students show good knowledge and understanding of the wide range of topics covered in physical, human and economic geography. They work confidently to collect information from a range of sources, such as photographs and maps, and to form sound judgements based on this evidence. These skills are used well in their written and fieldwork assignments that are of a high standard. Students in Year 13, for example, use a range of information to study river management in Wharfedale and the effects of footpath erosion in national parks. Students make use of computers to produce maps and pictures and to edit and refine their work. However, the use of ICT in school is limited by lack of resources and difficulty of access to those computers that are available.

Quality of education

- 115 The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes are good. The previous inspection report drew attention to a large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, mostly in the sixth form. Work in Year 12 was said to show no greater depth than that in Year 11, and the department lacked academic depth and focus for work in the sixth form. There has been a substantial improvement since that time. There are now considerable strengths in teachers' subject knowledge and in planning and teaching methods. This is evident in the level of knowledge that goes into the careful preparation, and use of case studies such as those on re-industrialisation and the power of multinational footloose companies. Students' work is carefully marked and corrected and teachers give very useful hints and advice to help them improve the quality of their work. There is a stress in lessons on students' using their knowledge to develop independent learning and research skills. As a result they are skilled at these very important areas of learning.
- 116 Students show very good attitudes to work and concentrate well in lessons. Behaviour is excellent. There are very good relationships in classes which leads to a relaxed but very businesslike working atmosphere. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers have genuine enthusiasm for geography that is transmitted to students so that they too appreciate the wonders of nature and the powerful forces associated with it. There is a strong social element in working together and in going out on field courses. These also improve the in-built cultural element of the subject.

Leadership and management

- 117 The subject curriculum is good. Courses are well suited to students' needs and students who are appropriately qualified have equality of access. Following the death of the Head of Geography, the acting Head of Department and the members of the senior management team of the school have worked very well to hold the department together and continue the progress being made towards addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection. Taking into account these difficulties, and the substantial improvements in teaching and standards the subject has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Very good teacher knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject.
- Good departmental leadership and management.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students.
- A level results consistently good, recently very good.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching strategies are not sufficiently varied.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunity to learn independently.
- Assessment procedures are not linked closely enough to what the examination requires.

Standards and achievement

- 118 Standards in recent AS and A level examinations have been very good and well above the national average. In 2001 almost half of the students who sat the AS examination

achieved A or B grades. Ten of these students continued onto the A2 course. Six students sat the A level examination and half achieved A grades. Examination results have improved steadily over the last four years. Until the new AS course, numbers of students had remained relatively steady, but recruitment to Year 12 has doubled in the last year. Girls have achieved higher grades than boys in recent years.

- 119 The standards of written work and levels of understanding achieved by students are very high. The quality of work is well above the national average and consistent with the very good results achieved in recent years. Given that the students begin the history course with a high level of prior qualification, they make at least satisfactory progress in the subject. Students with specific learning difficulties are well supported and make good progress. Year 12 students show maturity and insight in analysing a range of source material relating to Nineteenth century Chartism and they are able to work effectively in small groups discussing the relevance and importance of both primary and secondary sources.
- 120 Year 13 students demonstrate considerable confidence and depth in their analysis of the impact of Parnell on both British and Irish politics. Their arguments indicate that they have a good knowledge and understanding of historical causation and that they are able to evaluate effectively the historical issues. There is evidence of good development in the acquisition of historical skills from Year 12 to Year 13.

Quality of education

- 121 Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and are able to stimulate a high level of reflection and evaluation amongst many of the students. Very good examples of highly effective question and answer sessions were observed, relying very much on excellent teacher knowledge. However, at times there is a tendency to over-teach and provide students with too much directed input, with the result that lessons are not challenging enough and some students are rather passive. In a discussion on enlightened despotism and the importance of Joseph II, some Year 13 students were happier to receive the analysis from the teacher rather than to contribute their own thoughts and ideas. These particular students are not given enough opportunity to develop their own research and learning, through, for example, structured reading lists. Assessment is thorough with supportive and analytical comments that encourage and assist the students to make progress. However, there are inconsistencies within the department and the examination marking scheme is not followed. Currently only a few students word-process their essays, a practice which would allow greater opportunities for further review and refinement of the arguments.

Leadership and management

- 122 Departmental leadership and management are good. The departmental handbook is thorough and comprehensive and the schemes of work are clear and well-planned. The new courses have been carefully planned and successfully introduced. Staffing changes have been well managed. The teachers work closely and effectively together. There is effective teamwork with the learning support assistant. The range of sixth form resources available, including books and videos, is adequate but not extensive. The two specialist teaching rooms are not ideal for sixth form study and discussion.
- 123 The chosen syllabuses enable students to develop a good understanding of both eighteenth century European and nineteenth century British history. The choice of topics offers a wide range of period, theme and considerable challenge for study. During the lessons observed and in conversation with the students it was evident that involvement and enjoyment in the course was very high. History attracts a wide range of student interest and several of those in Year 13 indicated that they were going to read history at university.

PSYCHOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision in psychology is very good.

Strengths

- Results are consistently above the national average.
- Students are able to apply their knowledge well and use their psychological knowledge to improve their own learning.
- Teaching is very good.
- Teachers and students have high expectations.
- The subject is well led; the three teachers work effectively as a team.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory for the large teaching groups.
- Access to ICT for independent study and research, in particular internet access, is too limited.

Standards and achievement

124 In psychology, examination results have been above the national average over the last four years. In 2001, about one third of students gained the grades A and B. Girls do slightly better than boys, although more girls than boys study the subject. Results in psychology exceed predictions in many cases, given students' prior attainment in GCSE examinations. Psychology is a popular subject in the school and the proportion of students studying it and completing the course is high.

125 The standards of work of the current students are above average and they are achieving well. Students who are now in Year 13 have made very good progress. The high standards achieved reflect some very good teaching. Teachers demand much of the students, particularly in relation to independent thinking and research and in how they are expected to apply their knowledge and theories to real investigations, and to their own learning and revision. In the lessons seen, students were particularly sensitive to ethical and cultural issues in psychological research. For example, they understood how cultural bias affects topics selected for research and its results and they understood the potential impact of such research upon its subjects. Students are able to offer critiques of different theories. These skills are reflected in lessons, in file notes and in their investigations.

126 Students in Year 12 have been studying the subject for two terms, and have made rapid progress, demonstrating a mature understanding of psychology. They show good knowledge of psychological methods. They demonstrate critical thinking and can offer clear explanations using their knowledge in the subject. Students have a good understanding of memory and recall. In one lesson they applied this effectively to their own revision of attachment. Students draw on key knowledge and terms very readily. They are able to check and challenge ideas and theories very effectively.

Quality of education

127 Teaching is very good overall and students learn very well as a result. Objectives for lessons are clear, planning is very thorough and teachers use a good range of approaches and materials. These ensure effective learning and good study habits amongst students. Teachers have a very good knowledge of psychology and of the examination specifications. During lessons there was limited evidence of extended

discussions by students, but requests for explanations from teachers generated some highly enthusiastic and insightful responses. Teachers challenge students to think hard and they respond confidently and articulately. All teachers are very effective in securing students' understanding of psychological terms and concepts. Marking is very thorough and gives feedback to students closely linked to the examination requirements. Students are given clear guidance as to how their work can be improved.

- 128 Students learn very well. They have gained skills, knowledge and understanding at a good pace. In lessons they are attentive and show high levels of interest. Teachers expect much of their students and as a result they are motivated to study independently in both Years 12 and 13. Students organise and maintain their work files well. Investigation reports are well presented. Students work well independently, in pairs and in discussion with the teacher. They know how to summarise and evaluate their learning and use this to plan their revision effectively.
- 129 Students are gaining a range of skills and communicate effectively in writing and in speaking. They read and take notes well. They use annotated diagrams, notes and mind-maps effectively in revision lessons. There is evidence of good use of ICT in investigative reports and in students' own notes, but this is frequently based on access to ICT at home. Restricted opportunities to use ICT in school are having a limiting effect on students' learning and research in psychology. Students' investigations show good application of numeracy skills. Study skills are developed particularly well, but problem solving and working with others are also evident to a good standard.

Leadership and management

- 130 Work in psychology is well led and managed. Schemes of work in line with the examination specifications are developed well, and allocation of different aspects amongst the team of teachers uses their expertise and specialist interests to good effect. As a result there is good coverage of the subject requirements. Resources to support students' learning are adequate. Teachers keep their subject knowledge up-to-date. Target setting and assessment systems are being developed to meet students' needs in the subject and by making good use of the expertise of a student in ICT. However general access to ICT to support study and research is restricted. Accommodation is cramped, given the large size of some teaching groups.

SOCIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Standards in examinations are consistently well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good; a good range of teaching methods stimulates very effective learning.
- Students apply themselves very well to the theoretical perspectives of their work.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment is not used to good effect to help lower attaining students make better progress.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support learning.

Standards and achievement

131 A level results were well above average in 2001. A very high proportion of students gained A or B grades. Since 1998 results have remained well above the national average. More girls than boys choose the subject at AS and A level. Students achieve very well overall when their attainment at age 16 and the open entry into the course are taken into consideration. Students do better in sociology than they do in most other subjects. The work observed in Years 12 and 13 was well above average.

132 Year 12 can identify important moral concepts concerning health. For example, they understand the influence of power and the conflict between the relative positions of professional practitioners and recipients of care and/or treatment. Students have developed good critical skills, and they have sufficient knowledge and understanding to enable them to explore the reasons for class and influence in society. They apply this thinking to link previous learning to present day issues across aspects of sociology. They are aware of the effects of socialisation and how this may influence prospects in terms of care. Students make good progress because of the challenging teaching and the stimulating materials used.

133 Year 13 students have a good understanding of theorists and different perspectives and apply these to a variety of topics, making well-informed hypotheses for discussion. They are able to describe different perspectives, using their knowledge of underlying principles of studies. Students understand how to interpret statistics, analyse graphs, collect data and confirm hypotheses. They are competent at organising essays and understand the value of planning and research. High attaining students answer questions very well and use appropriate material linked with the requirements of the question. In essays they readily link theorists, perspectives and aspects of society, and reach perceptive evaluations and conclusions. Lower attaining students do not always make the same compelling links or address the key words in questions with the same thoroughness. Achievement, overall, is very good.

Quality of education

134 The teaching of sociology is very good. Teachers set a rapid pace so that much is achieved in one lesson. They have an excellent understanding of the subject and this enables them to use a variety of teaching methods that rigorously challenge students. For example, in a Year 13 revision lesson the teacher brought alive the social, moral

and cultural implications of the economic forces exerted on third world countries by prosperous industrialised nations so that students had an understanding of the pressures of globalisation. This was linked with alternative and primitive societies for full understanding. Marking is closely aligned to AS and A-level grading and teacher comments assist understanding and indicate areas for improvement for lower-attaining students. Teachers take care to involve all members of the group and ensure that all students irrespective of their attainment level have the opportunity to answer questions. The meanings and definitions of specialist vocabulary are emphasised. Teaching extends students' thinking well through good challenging questioning and discussion. This results in good interchange of ideas and clear, confident dialogue. Students are keen to extend their knowledge independently. They use supplementary information from books and periodicals, and research topics from their files and books. There is a good selection of complementary research books in the library and further books and information may be obtained from the department's own library.

- 135 Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They appreciate the way teachers create an atmosphere where teaching and learning is a joint enterprise. For example, in a Year 13 lesson gifted and talented students challenged each other and the teacher in lively debate on appropriate research methods and their application in confirming hypotheses. Students feel that they have a good understanding of how society functions; they enjoy analysis of the impact of different interest groups on society and appreciate the relevance of the subject to present day youth culture. Several students will follow a university course in the subject. Overall, students make very good progress and are aware of their achievements.

Leadership and management

- 136 The head of department provides good leadership. His links with the examining board keep the department up-to-date and fully acquainted with examination requirements. Good systems of monitoring students' progress enable teachers to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This guides teaching, enables teachers to prepare tasks that closely reflect students' individual needs and keeps students informed. The popularity and success of the sociology course, and consequently the large numbers of students wishing to follow it, puts strain on the accommodation and resources available and on teachers' time, a situation which is exacerbated by financial limitations.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus in English was on English literature, but two lessons of English combined with English literature were sampled. In one of these lessons students effectively learned to identify the way in which language changes in literature by using the work of Bill Bryson and Samuel Johnson. In the other lesson students articulately discussed qualities in their own work by using a critical response to the works of Wilfred Owen. All three modern foreign languages were inspected.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Overall the quality of provision in English literature is very good.

Strengths

- The management of the course is excellent. Clear leadership is provided through detailed planning.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge that effectively helps students to build up their own knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching is very good and provides a range of expertise and a variety of teaching and learning styles.
- Assessment is excellent. Students are aware of their own learning and form equal partners in the assessment process.

Areas for Improvement

- Development of resources, especially the use of ICT to support learning.
- Development of the students' independent work in order to extend the range of reading around the prescribed texts.
- Monitoring of teachers' work to ensure a shared experience for all students.

Standards and achievement

- 137 Standards at AS and A level for English literature are high. They have been well above the national average for the last three years. The proportion of students achieving grades A and B in 2001 was double the national average. Students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE. Inspection evidence shows standards in lessons to be consistent with the examination results. Retention rates are well above average and attendance is good. Achievement by the end of Year 13 is good.
- 138 Students' understanding of the ways in which authors make changes in form, structure and language in order to shape meanings is developing well, particularly at AS level. Students' folders show a slow initial transition from GCSE to AS level work, but they then make rapid progress. Higher attaining students have a secure understanding of their texts and are able to analyse how language and structure are manipulated to shape the meanings of a text. Good examples of this were seen in the work on Othello where a secure understanding of critical perspectives led to thoughtful personal responses. Lower attaining students have a general awareness of writers' techniques and are able to see the impact of these on meaning; however, some are unable to take their ideas further.
- 139 Students' development of critical responses is good. There is good exploration of text by all students, who become skilled at the analysis of character and plot. They generally use terminology well but in some groups they are weaker on personal opinions and show only a little reflection about the text. Most students have a range of literary perspectives to bring to their reading. Higher attaining students are producing excellent work on Wuthering Heights and formulate well structured and coherent arguments. These essays demonstrate a maturity of style with well sequenced thoughts and precise expressions all supported by textual evidence.
- 140 Students in the second year of the course are able to articulate informed, independent opinions and judgements and share an understanding of different interpretations of literary texts. Contributions to oral work are good and written work is often of a very high calibre. A good example of lively oral responses was observed in a Year 13 group which

explored *The Crucible* and an extract from *The Scarlet Letter* where students learned to explore themes of guilt and persecution.

141 Most students share an understanding of different interpretations of literary texts. A very good example was in a lesson on *The Crucible* where students worked in groups to produce seminar style presentations and were working at undergraduate standard. Students in another group produced high quality responses to the text of the Rime of the Ancient Mariner. This lesson was a culmination of consistently very good teaching, which had empowered the students with a range of literary perspectives.

142 Students work well together and with their teachers, and strong purposeful relationships are a feature of all lessons.

Quality of education

143 Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent, with some strikingly good features. All teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject; they read around their subject and the prescribed texts, and are able to offer their students a huge range of additional references. They all have high expectations of their students. Planning is of high quality and teachers use their understanding of students' needs to prepare lessons and pass on expertise and the mastery of literary skills. The planning carefully incorporates the criteria upon which the students are to be assessed. The students are quick to recognise these and use them expertly in their own essay plans. The whole is therefore a truly shared experience – teachers and students working in tandem and producing a standard worthy of a graduate seminar. Assessment of students' work is detailed and helpful.

Leadership and Management

144 The leadership of the subject is excellent. The head of department is enthusiastic about the exploration of literature in its richest sense. There is a strong team commitment to improve standards, demonstrated by an effective tracking of students' progress. Further monitoring of the work of the team will ensure that the excellent practice is shared across the department and ensure a cohesive experience for all students.

145 Since the last inspection the development of both spiritual and cultural dimensions has been planned into the schemes of work. Strategies to improve the recruitment, retention and attainment of male students have begun. The use of ICT as a resource is still underdeveloped. The head of department is aware of the issues and is working hard to address them.

FRENCH

Overall the quality of provision is very good.

Strengths

- Students achieve high standards especially at A level.
- The teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Teachers' planning is very good.
- Teachers have high expectations of students.
- Relationships are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT is not sufficiently well developed.

- Markedly fewer boys than girls opt to continue their study of French.

Standards and achievement

- 146 A-level results in 2001 were high compared with the national average. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades, A and B, was also high. Boys and girls did equally well although there were considerably fewer boys entered for the examination. In relation to their attainment in GCSE examinations students achieve well. AS level results were also high. There was a comparatively low entry in 2001, but numbers in the present Year 12 and Year 13 show an encouraging increase.
- 147 Evidence seen in lessons and in students' files suggests that standards both in Year 12 and in Year 13 are well above those expected for the course. Students achieve well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. Boys and girls and the small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds do equally well. Students are competent and confident speakers. Those in Year 13, for example, can discuss at length the implications of the results in the French presidential elections. They are able to understand the detail of French from authentic sources such as magazines, newspapers and French television news broadcasts. Students in Year 13 are competent readers of their set books and plays. Students in both years write accurately and well. In Year 12, for example, students write at length about the role of parents and about French religious and civil festivals. Those in Year 13 write extended pieces about world economic conferences, the European Bank and about the main features of set books.

Quality of education

- 148 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge particularly of the technicalities of grammar required for examination success at this level. Students are given plenty of useful hints to aid their preparation. Teachers' spoken language is very good and they are very capable of providing the lead in any discussions. As a result students learn their French well, can speak at length and use very little English in lessons. Students' work is regularly marked and corrected and the use of assessment to demonstrate how to improve is good. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly to provide a range of challenging activities. These often include news broadcasts on video and downloaded information from websites. However, the use of ICT for research and for students to edit, refine and produce their work is limited.
- 149 There is a happy, relaxed but businesslike atmosphere in all lessons and very good relationships between students and with their teachers are a strong feature of the subject. Students are keen to take part in discussions and can sustain and develop their ideas well both in oral and written work. They develop good individual study and research skills. Students work very hard and show sensible and mature attitudes to the subject.
- 150 Curriculum provision is good. French makes a good contribution to students' spiritual and moral development by providing opportunities to reflect on the lives of other people and through discussion of a number of moral and political issues. Provision for social and cultural development is very good. Students have a range of opportunities outside the taught curriculum, including exchanges and trips to France and for work experience abroad.

Leadership and management

- 151 The leadership of the subject is good. Standards have improved since the previous report and French is taught by a committed team of teachers. The subject is also well managed and there are good procedures in place for assessing students' progress and

for providing extra work and guidance where necessary. French has made good progress since the previous report.

GERMAN

The overall provision for German is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Students achieve good results in examinations.
- Teaching is good.
- There are very good relationships between students and with their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Students' speaking skills, especially in year 12, are not as good as reading and writing skills.
- The use of ICT to enhance and improve written work and for research is inconsistent.
- The number of students who opt for German is still low.

Standards and achievement

152 There has been a history of instability in staffing in German and this has disrupted learning and affected attainment both in the main school and in the sixth form. The head of German is still away from school and this has adversely affected the numbers of students opting for the subject. The number of students who opt for German is too small to make statistical comparisons against national averages. In the 2001 examinations there were only two entries at AS level and one at A level all of whom passed at higher grades.

153 Although numbers are still low, there has been a slight increase in numbers opting for German at AS level. Students achieve satisfactorily in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results, and there are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. In work seen during the inspection students' listening and speaking skills in Year 12 are below that expected for the course. Although they are able to understand, and speak about such topics as the position of immigrants in Germany, the teacher often feels it necessary to speak at less than normal pace. Students' responses are sometimes hesitant and they make basic errors with word endings and with plurals. Students in Year 13 are more competent and fluent speakers and can discuss a range of topics with confidence, such as the political situation in Germany. Students in both Year 12 and Year 13 read authentic texts well and respond to questions with accurate written responses.

Quality of education

154 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' planning both for individual lessons and over the longer term is very good, with the result that there is a progressive and consistent course for students. Teachers have very good subject knowledge particularly of the technicalities of grammar required for examination success at this level. Students are given plenty of helpful hints to aid their preparation. Teachers' spoken language is good. This is clearly evident in their work with the smaller groups in German, which means that teachers often find it necessary to speak at greater length themselves to sustain discussions. Occasionally, the teacher does not encourage sufficient spoken participation from the students. The use of ICT for research and for editing and refining written work is limited. As with other languages in the sixth form, students show very good attitudes to work and there are very good relationships

between students and with their teachers. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced by trips to Germany and by an exchange arrangement with a school in Germany.

Leadership and management

- 155 The school's leadership and management of the subject have been satisfactory during a period of instability and the subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous report.

SPANISH

Provision for Spanish is good.

Strengths

- Teaching is good: it is well-organised and clearly focused.
- Students make good progress.
- Students' application to their work is very good.

What could be improved

- Insufficient use is made of the resources available on computer and through the Internet.
- Numbers opting for the subject are variable, and too few boys choose to study Spanish.

Standards and achievement

- 156 Results in the 2001 A-level examination were good, with three of the four candidates entered gaining passes at the highest level. The overall average points score was almost a grade above the national average. Relative to their performance at age 16, students make rapid progress through their first year in the sixth form; all are attaining standards which are at least appropriate, and some are attaining high standards in writing and in speaking. There is a range of attainment levels in each year group, ranging from well above average performance to just below it. Most are able to give extended responses on contemporary topics and can speak and write with few serious errors. Students in Year 13 show high levels of understanding and are able to speak well and at length on a range of social issues.
- 157 Without exception, students have a positive attitude towards their work, which has a positive impact on the progress which they make. They take their work seriously and concentrate well, whether in speaking activities in groups or with the teacher, or in writing, where they take care over the construction and the presentation of their work. All students irrespective of attainment level have a mature approach to their work in Spanish.

Quality of education

- 158 The teaching of Spanish is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and presents a good linguistic model for the students. The work set presents appropriate challenge and stimulus to which students respond well and which encourages them to try hard. The teacher gives good support to those students who find the work more difficult. Good features of the teaching are the techniques employed to encourage students to undertake more extended speaking and the high expectations which the teacher has of every member of the group. Great attention is paid to detail and to ensuring that grammatical and lexical points are explained and understood. Lessons take place almost entirely in Spanish.
- 159 The course followed requires students to read, speak and write on a range of social themes which are at times very demanding, yet the students take on the work with interest and relish and achieve standards which are often high relative to their prior attainment. The course contributes well to students' personal development, social education and to their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- 160 Written work is carefully assessed and students are given helpful advice on how to improve. The assessment process both in written work and during lessons is directly geared to the requirements of the examination, and clear advice is given on how to approach examination questions and responses. A Spanish national is employed on a sessional basis to develop speaking skills. Students have the possibility to extend their experience and knowledge of the language by undertaking work experience in Spain. Two students in the current Year 13 have clearly benefited from the time they spent in Segovia, and are becoming confident and fluent speakers of Spanish.

Leadership and management

- 161 Provision for Spanish post-16 is well-managed and well-planned. It is carefully geared to what students need to know and to be able to do in the AS and A level examinations. The teaching materials used, whether from previous examination papers or from other sources, are almost always highly authentic and representative of what is read and heard in the media in Spanish speaking countries. Use of computers or of the Internet is not planned into the course, although there is frequent use of Spanish materials recorded from the media which present further authentic sources of the language.