

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PARKSIDE SCHOOL**

Bradford

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 132217

Headteacher: Dr Tony Rickwood

Lead inspector: David Bate

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 259407

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 18 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1040
School address:	Parkside Terrace Cullingworth Bradford
Postcode:	BD13 5AD
Telephone number:	01535 272752
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jonathan Smith
Date of previous inspection:	The school has not been inspected before.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Parkside is a new secondary school created as part of the Bradford local education authority's re-organisation of schools. It opened in September 2000 with Years 7, 8 and 9. It has grown by a year group in each subsequent year and will be a full 11-18 school by 2004. 2003 is the first year students have sat GCSE examinations and in September 2003 the first Year 12 students began their Post 16 courses.

Students are drawn from both rural and urban areas of Bradford and Keighley, but mainly from four local primary schools. The school is very popular and has been oversubscribed since it opened. Attainment on entry is in line with the national average at the end of Year 6. Students are from predominantly white United Kingdom backgrounds with only a very small number of students for whom English is an additional language. Only a small proportion of students is entitled to free school meals. The school has a higher-than-average proportion of students with special educational needs and a higher-than-average number of students with statements of special educational need. There are particularly high numbers of students with dyslexia and autism.

The school has been awarded Investors in People status. It has gained the Artsmark Gold award in recognition of its commitment to the performing arts. It is actively involved in the European Comenius project, with links to schools in Germany, Italy, Romania, Poland and Spain.

The school currently has a large deficit budget following the local education authority re-organisation. There is a financial recovery plan in place which has been agreed by the local education authority Finance Strategy Group.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1545	David Bate	<i>Lead inspector</i>	
9189	John Horwood	<i>Lay Inspector</i>	
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27226	Richard Cribb	<i>Team inspector</i>	Citizenship, Religious Education
8873	Charlotte Evers	<i>Team inspector</i>	History
3704	Kirby Haye	<i>Team inspector</i>	Business Studies
22906	Barry Hodgson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology, Physical Education
27416	Tom Howard	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics
3755	Trevor Hulbert	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography
23246	John Mitchell	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science
8360	Frederick Peacock	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music, Performing Arts, special educational needs
31129	Jeff Pickering	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art, Design and technology
14790	Robin Schlich	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern languages

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Parkside is a good school which has many very good and some outstanding features. This is an ambitious school with high aspirations that has made a very good start to its life and has a very considerable capacity for further improvement. It provides its students with a good quality education in a safe and caring environment, where their achievement, progress and personal development are at the heart of school. Despite the large deficit budget, the school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding roles played by the governing body and headteacher in shaping the vision, purpose, direction and aspirations of the school have ensured that it has made the best possible start.
- The high standards attained by students in English, mathematics and science in the end of Year 9 tests resulting in good achievement by students.
- Very good support for the professional development of staff, which has resulted in teaching and learning of consistently good quality.
- The school caters very well for all students, and the provision for special educational needs is very good, as is the overall care for students' well-being.
- Students' attitudes to learning and respect for others are good.
- There are strong links with parents, who are partners in their child's education.
  
- Inconsistent application of the current processes and procedures for assessment leads to students having insufficient knowledge of their achievement and of how to improve.
- Owing to the current faculty structure there is inconsistent involvement by some middle managers in the monitoring and review of the work of the school and in their contribution to school improvement.
- The provision for the learning resource centre and for information and communications technology (ICT) across the school is unsatisfactory.
- Students' punctuality to many lessons is unsatisfactory.

The school has not been inspected previously.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	n/a	A	B	B
Mathematics	n/a	B	B	A
Science	n/a	A	B	A
Overall	n/a	A	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those whose students have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

Standards attained by students in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 since the school opened have been good. Results for 2003 show significant improvement from last year. Achievement compared to students' attainment on entry is good. Boys and girls achieve similar results. Students' achievement in lessons and in work seen in Years 7 – 9 is good.

As 2003 was the first year in which students were entered for general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) there is no validated comparative data available at this time. Students' achievement in lessons and in work seen in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

Students have **positive attitudes** to their learning and there is **good behaviour** as a result of the school's good procedures and high expectations. **Attendance is satisfactory** but **punctuality to many lessons is unsatisfactory**. **Spiritual, social and cultural development are good**, in a school where the **moral development is very good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** The quality of teaching is good overall with many instances of very good and some outstanding teaching. and this leads to good quality learning and progress by students. Assessment processes to support students' further progress are inconsistently applied.

The quality of provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) is very good and the learning support assistants make an important contribution. As a result, these students achieve well and make good progress. Students are very well supported and looked after, so they learn in a caring and safe environment. The inadequacies of the learning resource centre and the limited availability of ICT resources hinder the work of students and teachers. There are strong links with parents, who are clearly partners in their children's education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The overall leadership provided by the headteacher and governing body is very good. Other key staff provide good quality leadership and management at various levels, although some heads of department are not fully involved in school self-review or school improvement.

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

The students feel happy and secure in the school and do all they can to contribute to its success. Whilst they admit that there is some poor behaviour and bullying they are very clear that the school deals very well with any problems when they arise. Parents are very pleased with the school and the start it has made. A significant number of parents raised concerns about homework and the inspection team confirmed that the school is addressing the issue as a matter of priority.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things this good school should do to improve even further are:**

- To refine the current processes and procedures for assessment and ensure that they are applied consistently by all departments and teachers, in order that all students are fully aware of what they have achieved, what they are aiming for and how to get there.
- To review and refine the roles of middle managers within the faculty system, especially heads of department, to ensure that they are all fully and actively involved in the monitoring and review of the work in their areas and that they fully contribute to school improvement.
- To review arrangements for dealing with the increasing demand for classroom space and improve the learning resource centre and ICT provision across the school.
- To review timetabling arrangements to ensure that students are punctual to lessons.

## POST 16 PROVISION

The Post 16 centre at Parkside School is new, with the first 85 students joining Year 12 in September 2003. There are no Year 13 students. A range of A Level, AS and Vocational courses is available.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

Whilst the Post 16 centre has yet to become established, it **has made a good start, but at this early stage the cost effectiveness cannot be evaluated.**

**The main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- The very good preparation and high aspirations of the director of Post 16 studies.
- The commitment to providing opportunities for all students equally.
- There are unsatisfactory resources within the learning resource centre, and access to this and to computer facilities is too restricted.

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

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the Post 16 centre are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects were inspected. Because the centre had only been in existence for a very short time, judgements on standards are given only where sufficient evidence is available.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in <b>English literature</b> is <b>good</b> . Teaching is good. The two classes have adjusted quickly to the new demands of the AS Level course. Oral work is good and students use research skills effectively. One lesson was observed in <b>French</b> , where teaching and learning were good.
Mathematics	Provision in <b>mathematics</b> is <b>satisfactory</b> . Teaching is very good, providing a wide range of learning experiences. However, students lack confidence in their own ability.
Science	Provision in <b>chemistry</b> is <b>satisfactory</b> . Standards and achievement are both in line with expectations at this early stage. Students are enthusiastic and enjoy the course. Teaching is good. One lesson in physics and one in biology were observed where teaching was good.
Information and communication technology	Provision in <b>ICT</b> is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in the two courses available to students and there is good take up of the Advanced Vocational certificate of education (AVCE) course.
Humanities	Provision in <b>history</b> is <b>good</b> . Standards of achievement are a little below average. Teaching is good and students make good progress and achieve well
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in <b>drama</b> is good. Teaching and learning are good in a well-managed department.
Business	Provision in <b>business education</b> is <b>good</b> . The school offers one- and two-year Vocational courses, and AS Level for students who wish to follow an academic course. The department is well led, teaching is good and students make at least satisfactory progress.
Health and social care	One lesson was seen in health and social care where teaching was good
General education	One lesson of general studies was seen where teaching and learning were both good.

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

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*weak*.

## **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The student care and support are very good. Students are receiving very good advice and guidance on how to adapt to the challenges of Post 16 education, and advice is available about careers and further education as they progress through the Post 16 phase.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE POST 16 CENTRE**

The **leadership** is **very good** in Post 16 and **management is good**. The Post 16 centre has made a good start as a result of the very good preparation by the director of Post 16 studies and her careful selection of tutors, together with the faculty support.

## **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE POST 16 CENTRE**

Students have had very limited experience of Post 16 provision but have clear views on it. They all prefer the centre to the main school and have seen clear changes in teaching styles and **a much improved relationship with staff**. Most students are pleased to have stayed on in the school but many are disappointed that many procedures and restrictions are similar to those of the main school. Whilst they accept that many concerns rely on them becoming more independent and responsible, they all identify **the absence of a common room as their main disappointment**.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

1. *As 2003 is the first year in which students were entered for GCSE examinations, there is no historical or current validated data with which to make comparisons at the end of Year 11. Judgements about standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are therefore based on the analysis of students work and work seen during the inspection.*
2. Students entered the Post 16 centre for the first time in September 2003; there is therefore no current or historical data on which to make comparisons or judgements.
3. Students' standards of achievement and attainment by the end of Year 9 in all core subjects are above average. Boys and girls attain above the national average. Students do particularly well in English in all years. Students with SEN achieve well. Attainment and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are in line with expectations, with boys and girls achieving equally well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- High standards attained in English, mathematics, science and drama at the end of Year 9.
- Good achievement and progress by students with SEN.
- Work in Year 9 art is below expectations.

#### Commentary

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	n/a	A	B	B
Mathematics	n/a	B	B	A
Science	n/a	A	B	A

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

Similar schools are those whose students have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

4. In English, mathematics and science, results for students attaining Level 5+ in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the national average for all schools. The proportion of students reaching Level 6+ was also above the national average in English mathematics and science. The school's results were above those of similar schools. Results in 2002, as judged by average points score, showed an improvement from 2001. Boys and girls both exceeded the national average for their age groups in all core subjects. Students' attainment compared to their attainment on entry is well above that expected nationally and clearly indicates the school is adding good value to students' achievement in these key areas.
5. Provisional results for 2003 indicated very significant improvements in English and science, and further improvement in mathematics.
6. Overall, students' literacy and numeracy skills are above average by the age of 14.
7. The statutory teacher assessments in 2002 indicated that students were attaining above the nationally expected standards by the age of 14 years in drama. Their attainment in art was below average. In all other subjects students were attaining in line with national expectations.
8. Students' achievement was at least satisfactory in almost all of the lessons seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9, and in two thirds it was very good. Students made significant advances in learning in all subject areas.

9. Standards of students' work seen in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards seen in all other subjects are in line with national expectations except in art, where they below average, this represents good achievement and progress by students in English, mathematics and science, and satisfactory achievement and progress in all other subjects, compared with their standards on entry to the school.
10. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2003 indicate that over half of the students attained five A\* - C grades and almost all gained five A\* - G grades. All students gained at least one GCSE pass grade.
11. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above those expected nationally in English. Standards seen in all other subjects were in line with national expectations.
12. Students make sound progress by the age of 16 years. In Years 10 and 11, achievement and progress was never less than satisfactory in nine out of every ten lessons seen during the inspection. Students made good or very good progress in half of lessons seen across all subject areas.
13. In all year groups, students with SEN and disabilities achieve well and make good progress towards their personal targets. All students with SEN leave school with recognised qualifications. The school has identified those students who are gifted and talented. These students generally make good progress overall.
14. At age 16 years, standards of literacy and ICT are good, and numeracy standards are satisfactory.
15. The school's GCSE targets for 2004/2005 are very challenging and indicate a significant increase in five A\* - C grades, as well as improvements in five A\* - G grades. The school is making good progress towards achieving these targets.

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

16. Students' personal development and their relationships with each other and with staff are very good. Behaviour and attitudes are good throughout the school. Attendance is satisfactory. But although students arrive at school on time they are too often late for lessons. The level of exclusions is high compared to that of other schools. Moral development is very good, whilst spiritual, social and cultural development are all good.

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

- The very good moral development of students resulting in very good relationships throughout the school.
- The very good procedures to promote and monitor attendance.
- Good behaviour resulting from the school's very high expectations of students' conduct and the procedures to eliminate all forms of harassment.
  
- The length of time available for learning in lessons is often reduced by poor punctuality at the start.
- There is not a daily act of collective worship.

## Commentary

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.7	School data	1.1
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

17. Students like school and arrive punctually unless there are problems with the buses. Those who walk to school often arrive early and assemble in orderly groups. The attendance figures are similar to the national averages. The unauthorised absence rates are not significantly different from the national average. The start of lessons is often delayed by up to ten minutes as students, and sometimes the teacher, arrive late. This is mainly due to their last lesson being remote from the next one. Whilst the limited accommodation restricts timetabling options, a further review should be carried out, now that class sizes are known, to ensure that unnecessary movement is eliminated and to ensure that time is allowed where movement is unavoidable.

18. The students participate well in lessons, and teaching styles ensure that all students can contribute. The uniform application of the behaviour policy and the rewards systems result in a good learning environment within the classroom. During the inspection there were no lessons when behaviour issues affected the learning of others. Whilst the number of exclusions is relatively high, this reflects the school's determination to enforce its high expectations of students' conduct. A small number of the exclusions in 2002-3 were for racial or sexual harassment, but these concerned mainly a group of Year 11 students who have now left the school.

### Exclusions

#### *Ethnic background of students*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani

#### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
924	186	5
2		
1		
8	1	0

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

19. Students with learning difficulties are happy in school and generally attend well. They show positive attitudes towards others and usually behave well in lessons. The learning support team sets high standards and this helps to cultivate students' personal development and self-esteem.

20. The students' personal development is a strength of the school. Students are taught to respect the rights of others and to understand the reasons why some actions are acceptable and others are not. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Nevertheless, the weekly assemblies and religious education make a strong contribution to spiritual development. Areas of personal development are being well supported through departmental activities such as the involvement in the Comenius Project.

## **Post 16**

21. Students are becoming more independent as a result of good initial guidance and are rapidly developing a willingness to be enterprising and take on responsibility. There is great interest in developing the student council to help improve facilities available to them, as well as taking on roles to support students in the lower part of the school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

22. The overall quality of teaching across all subjects is good, with a significant proportion that is very good. There are instances where teaching is outstanding. Only a very small proportion was less than satisfactory. The great majority of students are eager to learn and there are few that are disaffected.

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

- Consistently good quality teaching and learning across the school.
- High expectations and good relationships.
- Learning support assistants of high quality
- Well planned programmes which support students with SEN and enable them to achieve well.
  
- Inconsistent application of the current processes and procedures for assessment.

### **Commentary**

23. The quality of teaching throughout the school is at least good in three quarters of lessons. In Years 7, 8 and 9, a quarter of lessons are very good or better, a higher proportion than in Years 10 and 11. In very few lessons is teaching unsatisfactory. Teaching in drama is almost always very good or excellent.

24. The uniformly strong picture across all curriculum areas is better than that found nationally. Since the present school was founded it has given a priority to ensuring that the teaching is of the highest quality. Staff training has made a considerable contribution to raising standards. The adoption of major elements of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy has led to improvement in lesson planning and other aspects of classroom practice. A significant number of staff are involved with training to extend the range and quality of teaching methods. Much effort and energy have gone into developing literacy and mathematics across the curriculum. This has benefited teaching in most subjects, and students achievement overall.

25. Teachers in all departments have good command of their subjects and plan their lessons well, and this enables them to skilfully pitch work at the appropriate levels for all students. Expectations of students' behaviour are uniformly high and relationships in the classroom are positive and trusting, which ensures that the great majority of students are eager to learn.

26. In many lessons students are actively engaged in group work and discussion, which sustains their personal involvement and interest. There is limited access to the computer room, and inadequate book stocks in the learning resource centre, and the result is that teachers are not able to extend learning opportunities sufficiently. The use of homework is satisfactory and extends students' learning, although the school is currently investigating ways of improving this overall.

27. As a result of the good quality teaching most students make good progress and achieve well across the school. Well planned teaching programmes in Years 10 and 11 ensure that students are prepared thoroughly in examination techniques.

28. Well planned teaching programmes, which are taught with great skill and sensitivity, enable students with SEN to learn well and make good progress. Where there is classroom support, this is well used in co-operation with the teacher for the benefit of all students. Assessment, planning and target-setting in individual education plans (IEPs) help to raise the achievement of these students even further in the skills of reading, spelling and number work.

29. Teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory. A formidable bank of information about students' achievement is available. Long- term targets and estimated grades in tests and examinations are clear, but students are not always certain about how to improve their work in detail. The marking of work is sometimes inconsistent and is not diagnostic enough to identify specific errors. Consequently, students are not given detailed guidance on how to improve. The school's marking policy, which is managed within faculties, is not consistently followed. The school has very good information about students but, at the final stage within the classroom, the process fails to help students to know exactly how to improve their everyday tasks.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 163 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7 (4.3%)	40 (24.5%)	75 (46%)	35 (21.5%)	5 (3.1%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0 %)

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

**The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is good overall and is very good in some aspects.

**Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- The school has very clear ideas of the way a curriculum can be made to serve the needs of students, and is using this understanding to extend the range of courses and activities.
- Support for lower attaining students is very effective in ensuring that the curriculum is open to all.
- Relationships with partner institutions are very good.
- Students receive particularly good information and advice on careers education, particularly those wanting work-based and business education.
- The learning resource centre is not fully effective in supporting students or teachers.

**Commentary**

30. The breadth and quality of the curriculum is good, and students are given many opportunities for enrichment and enhancement. Good relationships with other institutions, such as Keighley College and Braithwaite special school, have added to the breadth of opportunities available to students. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except in respect of a daily act of worship. All students have equal access to the curriculum, and in Years 10 and 11 students are encouraged to construct study courses that reflect their needs and aspirations. There is an effective careers education programme.

31. There is very good provision for students with SEN. The very good work of the SEN team, together with the specialist support for dyslexic learners, support the progress and growing self-esteem of students, who really appreciate the efforts of the school. Students with a statement of need are given good support to improve their learning and personal development. The school funds

a highly regarded dyslexia unit where specialist help gives students strategies to enable them to access the curriculum with increasing success. A number of teaching assistants have first-hand

experience of looking after children with autism. Those students who display challenging behaviour have support in anger management from the school's learning mentor, and this is increasingly successful in enabling them to cope with emotional and behavioural difficulties, both inside and outside school.

32. The principle of 'enrichment' informs curriculum decisions and can be seen in the very positive support which governors and staff give to the growing range of activities within and beyond classrooms, including subject-related clubs. The school is justly proud of its music and drama productions, such as the recent performance of 'Dracula', and its local and national sporting successes, especially by girls. Staff and students are encouraged to go on trips and visits, including residential experiences both in the UK and abroad. There are good opportunities for work-related learning experiences.

33. The new school building provides very good accommodation and resources for design technology, and for the performing arts. However, in spite of its newness, the school is already experiencing problems with inadequate classroom space, its outside sports facilities, and the difficulty of providing sufficient access to computers in some subjects. As the school roll expands, there will be increased pressure on the present classroom accommodation. The learning resource centre is particularly affected by the pressures on accommodation and ICT facilities, and is not sufficiently effective in supporting students or teachers. The school recognises this, and the Parents' Association proposes to raise funds to help to buy more books. The present opening hours restrict student access, especially at the end of the school day. Good professional development programmes for staff have contributed to the good match between teachers, classroom assistants and the subjects taught.

34. The curriculum is kept under constant review. The links between the governors' curriculum sub-committee, the board of studies and the curriculum working groups are strong.

35. A flexible learning programme, run in conjunction with the local college and voluntary agencies, provides good opportunities for older students to develop skills and experience in areas such as construction and motor vehicle technology. Those students described as gifted and talented are identified and well catered for with many enrichment opportunities.

## **Post 16**

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

- A good start has been made in developing relationships with partner institutions, and this has improved the range of ways in which students' Post 16 needs are met.
- The learning resource centre does not provide sufficient support for students' extended reading and private study.

### **Commentary**

36. The school has a policy of open access to the Sixth Form and tries to meet the differing needs of students. The majority, however, study four subjects together with general studies. Good links with Keighley College have enabled the school to extend the range of Post 16 courses available to students whilst still giving them full access to other A Level subject options in school.

37. Key skills will be addressed through re-sit examinations, the ASDAN system, enrichment activities, and the tutor support system.

38. As the Post 16 numbers expand, there will be increased pressure on the present classroom accommodation. The learning resource centre does not have sufficient resources to support independent Post 16 learning. The school recognises this. There is a good match between well-qualified teachers and the subjects taught.

39. The school has put plans in place to monitor the Post 16 curriculum for quality and appropriateness.

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

40. The school takes very good care of its students throughout the school. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory in the main school; no judgement is possible for the Post 16 section. In the main school there are good systems in place for student involvement, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views; Post 16 systems are developing and were judged satisfactory at the time of the inspection.

### **Strengths and weaknesses:**

- Child protection and health and safety procedures are fully in place.
- The pastoral system ensures that students are very well cared for. Students are well known to staff and all know whom to contact if they have a problem.
- There are very good support systems through the student support centre, the learning mentor, the dyslexia support unit and the special needs department.
- There is good support and guidance, but weaknesses in the assessment systems prevent this from always being based on formal monitoring data.

### **Commentary**

41. The school is a safe place, with all areas of health and safety underpinned by comprehensive procedures which have been reviewed as needed. Responsibilities are clearly defined and records are kept as required. Child protection procedures and responsibilities are well known to all staff. First aid procedures are clear and an adequate number of trained staff is always available. The school has good procedures to monitor attendance, and contacts parents as soon as possible on the first day of the pupil's absence, to ensure this or her well being.

42. There is a strong pastoral system within the school, with caring and dedicated staff ensuring very good care, support and guidance. The main school pastoral structure has just been revised and the introduction of key stage co-ordinators enhances an already effective system. All the staff are supportive of the revised arrangements. There are two new pastoral support assistants who are already making an impact, both in improving links between students and the pastoral leadership and in taking on some of the administrative duties of the year heads.

43. The student support centre, the dyslexia centre, the learning mentor and the SEN department provide very good support, which is clearly a strength of the school. These facilities are all very well managed, and records demonstrate their effectiveness. The detailed records kept for students in these areas enable well-informed guidance and support to be very effectively focussed on students' individual needs. Teachers and teaching assistants know individual students very well and are fully aware of their needs. Achievement is recorded and includes National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grades, so that there is a clear record of how well students are progressing and what they need to do to improve. This is particularly useful when IEPs are analysed and statements are reviewed to assess students' progress. There are opportunities each lunchtime for the more vulnerable students to meet together, relax, and develop their social and communication skills under the supervision of support staff.

44. The newness of the school means that systems for involving students are at an early stage. A school council has recently been set up and has made a good start but is still at an early stage of development. The 'twice a year' student reviews enable students to talk to tutors regularly on an individual basis to express their views, and the close relationships within school present many

opportunities for informal communications. Peer mentoring is becoming established, enabling students to become more fully involved in the work of the school. Whilst responsibilities are given to students there are no formal roles such as that of prefect, where students can contribute significantly to the running of the school.

## **Post 16**

45. The support and guidance for students is very good at this early stage. They are receiving good guidance on how to adapt to the different teaching methods on Post 16 work. Students are being closely monitored at this stage, so that those who are struggling can be identified quickly and their course choice reviewed if necessary. During the very short time they have been in Year 12 they have not had formal guidance on further education, but they are already considering their future and most are aware of what qualifications they need. It is not possible at this early point to judge how good is the formal advice and impartial guidance on careers.

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

46. The school has very good links with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are good for the main school, and at this very early stage are satisfactory for Post 16 studies.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- A very good partnership with parents.
- Very good information provided for parents.
- Links with partner institutions and the community are good.

## **Commentary**

47. Parents are very supportive of the school, and the majority are very pleased with how it has progressed in a short time. A significant number of parents were concerned about the homework arrangements and the school is aware of the problems and is currently reviewing the policy. Parents' satisfaction is clearly demonstrated by the reputation of the school in attracting an increase in the numbers of students.

48. The information on progress comprises a very good report annually, supported by two student/tutor progress reviews each year. Parents also receive a high quality prospectus for the main school or the Post 16 courses, together with informative, well-produced magazines and newsletters; the school also has a regularly updated web site. Parents have good opportunities to monitor and support their child's education through the good quality and useful 'planner' provided for each student. They are also able to make an appointment at any time during the year to see a member of staff. There is an active parents' association which raises significant funds and organises events.

49. Links with the community are growing as the school becomes established. The school facilities are used by the community, especially for sports, and many members of the local community enjoy the high quality drama productions. Students themselves go out into the community for enrichment and sporting activities and there is a range of visiting speakers coming into the school. Residential and day trips allow students to benefit from the local and distant communities. Due to the large numbers of students eating at lunchtime in a limited area, students are now allowed, with parental consent, to go into the village at lunchtime. Observation during the inspection indicated that the behaviour of the students is not giving rise for any concerns by the local community.

50. The school has already developed good links with the primary feeder schools and is taking an active role in developing its links with other schools and colleges. There have been visits by groups of students to several colleges/universities, and this is practice will clearly expand with the new Post 16 education. The work experience programme has developed good links with local employers and educational establishments where students have been placed. The school is strongly involved in the federation of local schools, colleges and work providers, within which it is promoting the Critical Skills Programme of training. The Post 16 students in particular will benefit from this scheme.

51. The special educational need co-ordinator (SENCO) has close contact with parents to keep them informed of all the support programmes that are available. Many parents appreciate the care and attention their children receive from the school. Statements are reviewed annually and the majority of parents (or carers) and students attend the review.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

52. The overall leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership is good overall, and the leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. Management is good overall, and very good in some of its elements. The governance of the school is very good overall.

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

- The outstanding roles played by the governing body and headteacher in shaping the vision, purpose, direction and aspirations of the school.
- The shared corporate vision and direction of the school, aimed at raising students' achievement, is good.
- Very good support for the professional development of staff.
- The leadership of the SENCO is outstanding.
- Good financial planning.
  
- Inconsistent involvement by some middle managers in the monitoring and review of the work of the school and in their contribution to school improvement.

### **Commentary**

53. The governing body has been instrumental in creating, along with the headteacher, the vision and direction of the new school. It had a very active role in planning and developing the new physical environment. Governors make a major contribution to the leadership of the school and the Post 16 centre, and take an active part in developing and improving the quality of provision. Through very effective sub-committee structures and links with departments/aspects, they are fully involved in the monitoring of provision and in strategic and development planning for school improvement. The governors are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and hold the management to account at all stages and levels. They actively seek to minimise the effects of the deficit budget brought about by local education authority (LEA) reorganisation, and clearly make difficult but robust decisions about spending and budgetary control. With the exception of not providing a daily act of worship, the governing body ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements. Performance management procedures are very effective and are closely monitored by the governing body. The governors are excellent advocates for the school in their dealings with the LEA, the community and other external agencies.

54. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. He has worked tirelessly over the short life of the school thus far, well supported by the governors, senior managers and the staff, to mould and shape the vision and direction of the school. Parents express very high levels of support and confidence in the headteacher's views and vision. Leadership at all other levels of the school are good overall, with some examples where it is very good, including aspects of the senior management team and heads of faculties and departments. All leaders in the school share the same vision of high standards of achievement for all students, and there is a very clear corporate

ethos and desire to succeed, which includes all staff. The school is very ambitious and is constantly seeking to improve its provision, staff expertise and competences and to establish areas of best practice, as well as learn from sources outside the school. Because many of the staff had previously taught wholly or largely in middle schools, the leadership put in place an extensive professional development programme designed to ensure that all staff were confident and competent to take on GCSE and A Level courses. As a result, standards of teaching are good and sometimes very good. The success of the programme has resulted in the school gaining the Investors in People award.

55. The leadership of the SENCO is outstanding, and she has worked hard to shape a school-wide approach to meeting the needs of students who have difficulty in accessing the curriculum. The headteacher and governors strongly support this view and there is good co-operation and understanding from the teaching staff.

56. The management of the school is good overall and has been very successful in establishing a very productive climate which enables staff to work hard to realise the vision and teach well. It is a climate which helps students to achieve well and make good progress in both their academic and personal development. There are good management systems and tools in place which fully support teachers and students. The quality assurance processes are thorough and rigorous but currently, due to the faculty system, they do not involve all middle managers sufficiently. The school gathers and analyses a wide range of performance and assessment data which in most cases directly influences teachers, teaching methods and students' performance. However, there are inconsistencies in the use and application of this information in classrooms and in planning for individual targets, so that students know precisely what they have achieved, what they need to achieve in the future and what they need to do to get to their goals. The management of most faculties and departments is good, supporting teachers and helping students to achieve well. The school performance management systems are rigorous and the outcomes have beneficial effects on classroom practice and students' learning.

57. Despite the large deficit budget, very good fiscal controls and systems are in place. Procedures for dealing with financial planning are well established. Pay policy is up to date. Financial planning is rigorous, and linked directly to the school improvement plan. The finance officer has an excellent day-to-day grasp of the school's finances and budgetary control. Specific grants are used effectively, and for their designated purpose. The school has a well-developed recovery plan to resolve the deficit budget, which has been agreed with the LEA, and there are clear plans for recovery by 2006-7. The school monitors its performance effectively in accordance with the principles of best value, and gives good value for money.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,835,820.00
Total expenditure	3,176,905.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,380.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	- 458,615.00
Balance carried forward to the next	- 799,700.00

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

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

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

##### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are outstanding.
- GCSE results in English literature in 2003, especially those of girls, are very good.
- Students' attitudes are positive and behaviour is good.

##### **Commentary**

58. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, the percentage of students achieving Levels 5 and 6 and above was higher than the national average. When compared with that in similar schools, performance based on prior attainment was above average. Boys did marginally better than girls when compared with their respective averages. In 2003 there was a dramatic improvement, and results were significantly better than in 2002. An outstandingly high percentage of students achieved Level 5 and above.

59. Results for English language in the GCSE in 2003 were in line with expectations. Girls did much better than boys. Performance in English literature was better than in English language, and girls achieved a very high percentage of A\* - C grades.

60. The general standard of speaking and listening at the age of 14 is above that found nationally. Students listen attentively and work productively in pairs and small groups. Most high and average attaining students speak fluently and answer questions articulately. A few lower attaining students do not speak clearly or think out what they want to say before answering. The majority of students read aloud audibly and make meanings clear. The standard of oral work of students in Years 10 and 11 is above average.

61. The standard of reading comprehension throughout the school is above that found nationally. A significant number of students join the school with reading ages below their chronological age. These students receive intensive specialised support and make rapid progress. The great majority of students enjoy reading a wide range of literature. By the age of 14 they identify accurately such aspects as plot, themes and character in plays and novels. They study the work of different poets and analyse successfully details of structure and metaphorical language.

62. Attainment in writing is above average in Years 7, 8 and 9. Almost all students write legibly and present their work carefully. They write successfully for a range of purposes and audiences. By the end of Year 9, high attaining students write regularly at National Curriculum Level 6 and above. Their best work is carefully planned, secure in structure, paragraphing and sentence building, and accurate in detail. The quality of writing in Years 10 and 11 is above that found nationally. Lower attaining students write willingly but are inclined not to think out precisely what they want to communicate before putting pen to paper. Throughout the school students draft their work carefully.

63. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teaching in almost half of the lessons was very good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and results in carefully planned and prepared lessons. There are very good relationships created in the classroom. These are a

direct result of the students' respect for their teachers and the lively, stimulating methods used. Students have regular opportunities to work in groups, which are skilfully managed and result in high quality work and involvement on the part of the students. Tasks are clear and expectations are high, which leads to good behaviour and high quality learning. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and sharp targets are set for completion of tasks. Homework is well used and carefully checked. Marking is consistent and conscientious, with much helpful comment. Students with SEN are managed with great sensitivity. Close co-operation with specialist staff is very successful in the teaching of students with dyslexia. Groups of low attaining students, some of whom have behavioural difficulties, respond well to a skilful balance of care and firmness. Teachers employ a lively range of approaches and make good use of technical aids, and this stimulates the students' interest and enables them to achieve very highly.

64. The leadership of the department, which draws together and inspires staff, has great vision, and the management is very efficient and effective. Relationships within the department are very strong and supportive. All teachers have received intensive training in delivering the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and some have also trained in another initiative to improve teaching, with the result that the overall quality of teaching has benefited.

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

65. In other subjects, across the curriculum, the quality of speaking and listening is better than that found nationally. Group-talk and listening skills were featured in a staff training day and knowledge gained has clearly had a positive impact on work in most departments. In mathematics, students with SEN are encouraged to explain their answers fully and to read aloud. Students in science work well in groups and regularly discuss their findings. In drama, fluent and articulate improvised speech is a common element in many lessons. Discussion and argument play an important part in the teaching of citizenship. Most students throughout the school read well enough to understand fully the textbooks and other reading materials. Key words are displayed in many classrooms to help students gain confidence in using the specific technical terms of subjects. In mathematics, vocabulary work is often a main objective for lessons. Students in science keep a literacy diary to record and consolidate knowledge. In history, students read aloud fluently. Support is strong in modern foreign languages for students with special educational needs. Particular care is devoted to dyslexic students, and outstanding effort has gone into drawing up lists of French words most accessible to dyslexic students. Key words are well used in religious education.

66. Written work is, in the main, carefully presented in all subjects. In science the standard of written work is above average, with high attaining students performing very well. Students' sketchbooks in art contain some evaluative writing. In design and technology, students include written planning, research and self-assessment in their folios. Students are expected to produce extended writing in history, and detailed help is given in planning and structuring assignments. Exercise books of students in religious education contain much extended writing.

67. The teacher with responsibility for developing literacy across the curriculum has worked with great energy and commitment. Staff have received effective training and the overall impact across departments has been greater than in many schools. A realistic development plan for the whole school is in place. Many departments have already made commendable progress.

## Modern Foreign Languages

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have a good command of the languages they teach.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Provision for students with SEN is very good.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
  
- Long-term staffing problems were a major factor in the poor GCSE results in summer 2003.
- Teachers use spoken foreign language inconsistently, and insufficiently in some lessons.
- In a small minority of lessons teachers do not manage time successfully, and the quality of learning suffers as a result.

68. GCSE results in 2003 were very disappointing in French and even weaker in Spanish. Students arrived in Year 9 in September 2000 with very varied, and in some cases unsatisfactory, previous experience of French. Their progress was affected over three years by continuing staffing problems and frequent changes of teacher. The percentage of students reaching Level 5 or above has been well below national figures, but there was a significant improvement in 2003. In all results, girls have done markedly better than boys.

69. Currently, the range of standards is similar to that found in many other schools, though the proportions at each level of attainment may vary somewhat. The most able students are producing good work. Students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are in general very good and help to create a good learning environment in almost all lessons. Students are now achieving well in years 7 to 9, and satisfactorily in years 10 and 11, where the effects of some poor teaching in the past are more evident. Teachers are aware of the learning problems of students with special educational needs and give them appropriate help so that they achieve as well as others. The lowest French sets are expertly taught with good support from specialist staff ; two lessons observed were of very high quality.

70. The overall quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in over two thirds of lessons observed. Teachers have good command of the languages they teach. They plan lessons well, in conjunction with suitable homework. They use ICT well to produce attractive and helpful aids to learning for display in classrooms and as resources for learning in lessons. Information and communication technology (ICT) is also used by students in some lessons, but not at present as often as teachers would like. Most lessons move at a good pace, with an interesting range of activities to keep all students actively involved. Teachers' generally high expectations, and students' good motivation, are reflected in teachers' willingness to use innovative and experimental methods. Inconsistent use is made of the target language in some lessons. Present practice varies between teachers, but opportunities are being lost to encourage students to use language more confidently and improve their speaking skills. Where teaching was less successful, and in two cases unsatisfactory, it was because either too much time was spent in covering certain aspects, so that momentum and interest were lost; or too little, so that students were faced with tasks which they were not ready to undertake.

71. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has worked hard with others to establish modern languages in the school and to widen the horizons of its students through visits to European countries and other initiatives. She has managed to maintain departmental organisation, efficiency and morale under exceptionally difficult circumstances over a period of three years, and at the same time to develop further the high quality of her own teaching. The department can look forward to a happier future with greatly improved results.



## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Leadership of the department is good.
- Attainment by the end of Year 9 is above average.
- Achievement in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 is very good.
  
- Achievement in Years 10 and 11, to 2003, was unsatisfactory.
- Assessment procedures are at an early stage and require development.

### **Commentary**

72. Students enter the school with average mathematical ability. By the end of Year 9, in 2002, students attained above average results in national tests. This shows an improving trend, greater than improvement nationally. Results in mathematics were above those in science and English. This represented very high attainment compared with similar schools, and indicated very good achievement by students. There were no differences between the performance of boys and girls. In 2003, results showed continued improvement and exceeded the target set.

73. In 2003, the GCSE examinations were taken for the first time, and the school's analysis shows results to be in line with the average of their examination board. Further analysis indicates that about half of students did not reach the expected level of attainment, based upon their prior assessments. This represents unsatisfactory achievement during Years 10 and 11. The inexperience of teachers, in preparing students for the examination, is a major contributory factor. Girls performed better than boys at the higher grades.

74. Standards seen in Years 7 to 9 are good and students achieve well during lessons. High-attaining students make very good progress and achieve well. Average ability students make good progress, and in some lessons they achieve very well in their understanding of solutions of linear equations. Low-attaining students also show interest and often enthusiasm for their work, and they achieve success in their learning. In Years 10 and 11, students' attainment and achievement in lessons are satisfactory. Students make steady progress through their courses and show understanding. However, the quality of their presentation varies widely, and the lack of mathematical accuracy in their methodology reduces their ability to achieve well. In all years, students with special educational needs, and those from different heritages, are found in all ability groups and achieve in line with students of similar ability.

75. Teaching is good overall, with much that is very good. It is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a stronger awareness of curricular requirements in the early years than they have for the newly developed GCSE courses. The good lessons are well planned and there is pace to the development of new ideas. On the few occasions where students were insufficiently challenged, their progress and achievement were unsatisfactory. Students experience a variety of activities in lessons, all of which provide interesting challenges and enhance their learning. The three-part lessons, of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, are used effectively in all years to develop students' enthusiasm and interest. The marking of students' work provides supportive comments, and students often are given responsibility to mark their own work to check their progress.

76. Leadership of the department is good. Management of the department is satisfactory. Students are provided with a suitable curriculum in an inspiring learning environment. However, assessment procedures are not sufficiently developed to provide detailed analysis of students' short-term attainment and targets for improvement. Learning resources are good, but access to computers is restricted, owing to heavy demand on computer rooms. This has led to students not having sufficient access to produce coursework in the most appropriate format.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

77. The management and organisation for the development of numeracy across the curriculum is very good, and departments are implementing the policy well. There has been whole-school training and the co-ordinator has produced support materials for use by departments. A cross-curriculum working party meets each term to produce materials and ideas for further developing students' skills. A two-way exchange of ideas has been established by which departments integrate numeracy into their teaching and the mathematics department uses examples from different subjects in the teaching of various topics. Numeracy development is successfully integrated into almost all subject areas and is well established in science, design technology, geography and art lessons. In science, students use a wide variety of units and formulae, producing graphs from experimental data. In art lessons, there are many references to patterns, and students develop their skills of measurement when they produce nets of boxes. Geography lessons develop many of the data analysis skills of students, and they use ratios successfully when studying map work. In design technology lessons, students develop their measuring skills, use proportions, and handle metric units in a variety of contexts. Teachers of English and modern languages have not yet developed many opportunities for exploiting students' numeracy skills.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students reach above average standards by the age of 14 and achieve very well in all aspects of science.
- Teaching and learning in lessons are good, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Students with SEN and those identified as gifted and talented receive good support.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of learning opportunities.
  
- Standards reached by the age of 16 are below expectations and achievement in GCSE examinations is unsatisfactory.
- Marking does not give students enough guidance to help them raise achievement.
- Analysis of attainment is not sufficiently sharply focused to inform teaching and curriculum development.
- Students do not have sufficient access to ICT.

### Commentary

78. By the end of Year 9, students reach standards above expectations for their age. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, results for all students were above the national average and well above results for similar schools. Boys and girls performed equally well. Results were even higher in 2003, but no national comparisons are available.

79. Work seen in the course of the inspection reflects the standards reached in tests and shows a wide range of attainment from well above expectations to well below. The majority of students show a grasp of scientific literacy to support their work in science. Students with SEN and those identified as gifted and talented also reach standards above expectations for these groups.

80. Students achieve very well by the age of 14. When their results in national tests are compared with their performance at the age of 11, students are very successful in their acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of science. This stems from good teaching, a sound focus on the development of experimental and investigative skills, and the progressive improvement of students' ability to understand and use scientific language in their speaking and writing. Students' own interest and enthusiasm also contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

81. The achievement of those students who took GCSE science in 2003 is unsatisfactory. The examination results are significantly lower than would be expected from their performance at the age of 14. Some of this underachievement can be ascribed to the school's lack of experience in preparing students for these examinations and to the fact that some teachers had no experience, or no recent experience, of teaching at this level.

82. In lessons and work seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection, standards ranged from above expectations to well below, with an average closer to national expectations than shown by the GCSE results.

83. Teaching is good, overall. Most lessons were good, with a few very good and some satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The well qualified science staff has a range of experience and their teaching shows some strong features, such as uniformly high expectations generally matched to students' attainment, good planning and a variety of methods. Good relations with students, in an attractive environment well decorated with students' work, create a positive learning environment in lessons.

84. Students learn most effectively when several of these features of teaching come together in a single lesson. For example, students made rapid gains in learning on a broad front when working in teams in which they were given a good deal of responsibility for their own learning in planning and carrying out a task. They learned how to work together and how to plan experiments. These, when successfully executed, gave them increased understanding of the ideas behind the lesson, such as the reactivity of metals and the need for a balanced diet in terms of the chemical content of foods.

85. Marking is done regularly but is variable in quality. Not all teachers give students much advice on how to improve and, although most teachers mark in accordance with departmental policy, little evidence was seen in which guidance is given as to the standard of the work in relation to national expectations.

86. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a well-established system for monitoring teaching. Opportunities for professional development are effectively linked to departmental planning. The curriculum is usefully enriched by an interesting range of activities out of school time, including annual participation in a biotechnology project and a planned visit to the European Nuclear research Centre in Geneva.

87. Students are assessed regularly at the end of units of work, and good records kept. However, procedures for checking the progress of students on a regular basis and ensuring that they are well-informed about the standard of their work are not as effective as they could be. Analysis of performance in tests and examinations is not thorough enough to be able to identify how teaching or aspects of the curriculum might be developed to raise achievement, most crucially in Years 10 and 11.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

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

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

- Teaching is good, and students make good progress in lessons and achieve well.
- Teachers have very good relationships with students.
- Students are interested in the subject and they behave well in lessons.
- There is very good leadership and management of the department.
- Insufficient use is made of National Curriculum Levels in the assessment of students' work, making it difficult for them to set targets.
- Insufficient time for the subject in Years 7 and 8 to complete full programmes of study.

## **Commentary**

88. The results of teacher assessments of students aged 14 in 2003 indicate that they were well above expected levels for the students' age. All students aged 16 took GNVQ courses in ICT, and of these over half gained results equivalent to two GCSE passes at grade C or better. On the evidence of the work seen, standards are broadly in line with national averages. There is good achievement. Students make good progress in lessons as they increase their skills, knowledge and understanding in the use of a variety of software applications. In Years 10 and 11, students taking the GCSE course are making particularly good progress, whilst those taking the compulsory course are also make good progress and achieve well.

89. Teaching is good overall, with over one third of lessons very good or better. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge, as well as their knowledge of examinations, to give clear explanations which help students to learn and show what they need to do to get best results in their examinations. There are good relationships between students and teachers, and students' positive response in lessons contributes to their learning. Lessons are well planned and tasks selected are appropriate to students' attainment levels. Teachers have high expectations of students being able to work independently and to complete the tasks they are set. Data projectors and interactive white boards are effectively used to demonstrate the use of software to students. Assessment of students' work in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good, but not enough use is made of National Curriculum Levels to help students set targets for themselves. Assessment and record keeping are particularly good in Years 10 and 11.

90. There is very good leadership and management of the department, with a clear commitment to improve standards. The curriculum for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 has been improved, although there is inadequate time to complete all aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth in Years 7 and 8, where time is shared with technology. All students in Years 10 and 11 take an ICT course, and in addition students can opt for a full GCSE course.

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

91. Standards of students' competencies in ICT across the curriculum are good. Teachers have undertaken ICT training specific to their own subjects, and this has been well supported by the school, with the provision of lap top computers for all staff. Subjects have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. In mathematics, good use is made of ICT as a teaching tool. In English in Year, 8 students make good slide show presentations, whilst in history, students use computers and the Internet for independent research. In design and technology, good use is made of computers with CAD-CAM, and business studies now have their own computer room, although timetabling restrictions mean that the modern foreign languages department is not always able to access its own computers. As the school population has grown considerably, the demands on the existing computer rooms have increased significantly just to meet the needs of the ICT department. This has had a major impact on access to computer rooms by other subjects, and increasingly prevents them from making use of the technology and the students' ICT skills.

## HUMANITIES

### GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- There is good support for lower-attaining students and those with SEN.
- Good departmental management supports the non-specialist teachers and makes good use of resources.
- Student attitudes are good in all years and behaviour in lessons is very good.
- Monitoring of the work of the department by the head of department is not good enough.
- Lack of systematic assessments in Years 7 to 9 hinders students in knowing how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
- Higher-attaining students in Years 7 and 9 are not appropriately challenged.

#### Commentary

92. Students enter the school with geographical skills and knowledge that are about average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate improving standards year on year. In 2003, a high proportion of students achieved or exceeded the national target of Level 5, indicating good progress and achievement.

93. The GCSE course was first completed in 2003. A very high proportion of the students attained A\* - G grades and a quarter attained A\* - C grades. Standards are improving and the coursework of current Year 11 students confirms that a much higher proportion are now working towards A\* - C grades, which is close to national expectations.

94. Teaching is good overall and is consistently very good in Years 10 to 11, where the excellent knowledge of teachers supports students' progress in well-planned and interesting lessons. Students are attentive and hardworking and respond well to the different activities in lessons. Very good teaching was also seen in Year 8 lower sets, where the outstanding teamwork of the teacher and support assistants stimulated and guided students through challenging work on population changes. There is a high proportion of boys in these groups and they make good progress. Higher-attaining students are not sufficiently challenged in Years 7 to 8 because teachers do not start them on the higher-level work early enough in lessons. Students are well motivated. They respect their teachers and each other and extend their learning by confidently asking questions and sharing ideas.

95. Only one specialist room is fully equipped with the latest teaching aids, which are well used to create particularly effective lessons. Although the school has plenty of computers these are not always available when geographers need them. One result is that GCSE coursework, which relies heavily on the use of computers, cannot be completed in Year 10.

96. The leadership of the department is good. The head of department has created a sense of common direction within a large team of specialist and less specialist geographers. The departmental development plan accurately identifies key issues for the further development of teaching, learning and assessment. There are limits to the effectiveness of management because the present whole-school system of monitoring does not sufficiently involve the head of department. In consequence, his good understanding of effective teaching approaches is not sufficiently widely spread. Existing resources and specialist rooms are well managed but budget problems have prevented purchase of the best materials for use with students in Years 7 and 8. Student

assessments undertaken directly by the head of department are good but are not sufficiently widely shared. As a result, students in Years 7 to 9 are not receiving specific learning targets and have little idea of how to make better progress. Management is satisfactory but the head of department does not have sufficient opportunities to monitor and develop teaching styles.

## **HISTORY**

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

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

- Teaching is consistently good, and occasionally very good.
- Students' attitudes to work are very good; they make good progress and achieve well.
- Leadership is very good.
- The learning resource centre provision, especially for students taking GCSE, is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

97. By the end of Year 9 students' attainment overall is broadly in line with that expected nationally. Most students begin Year 7 with a level of attainment that is below average. In the past three years teachers have assessed their students' work at the end of Year 9 as being in line with the national expectation. The proportion gaining the highest levels has risen significantly over the past three years. These standards were reflected in those seen during the inspection.

98. In the GCSE examination in 2003 only a very small proportion gained an A or A\* grade. These results were in part due to a loss of revision time and to a reduction in timetabled lessons during their Year 11. The standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly in line with that expected nationally, and a significant proportion of students show the potential to gain the highest grades in future.

99. Students in Years 7 to 11 make good progress, both in lessons and over time, and they achieve well. This is because students work hard, persevere, and show interest in their work and a desire to do well. Students with SEN in Years 7 to 9 often achieve very well. The good, and sometimes very good, teaching also contributes to the good achievement.

100. Most students have good knowledge and understanding of the past. They recall well the work done in previous lessons, which means that the teachers can quickly move on to new work. Students explain well the reasons for events in the past. They see and explain changes over time. High-attaining students evaluate and use sources well to describe and explain the past. Many students produce extended writing of a high quality. Some projects from the highest attaining students in Year 9, for example, showed very good research and communication skills. Students in Years 10 and 11 have good knowledge and understanding of the topics they study. They use historical sources successfully to reach judgements which they back up with valid evidence.

101. A major reason for the good achievement is the consistently good teaching. It is characterised by very thorough planning of lessons, which takes into account the students' capabilities. The department's view that history is fun is evident in lessons. Teachers use methods which interest and motivate students very effectively. An insistence on good behaviour and respect for others allows all students to work effectively. Teachers set tasks which are accessible to all students, but at the same time they offer good challenge to the highest-attaining students.

102. The leadership of the department is very good, and the management is good. The head of department's vision for the development of the department permeates its work. He leads by example. The subject is one of the most popular options for GCSE. The department makes good

use of ICT, both by teachers and also by students in their research and the production of their work. The monitoring of the work of the department is sound, but it is restricted in its scope because the head of department is also responsible for monitoring several other subjects through the faculty system. The provision in the learning resource centre is unsatisfactory as it does not have sufficient good quality books for use by students taking GCSE courses.

## Religious Education

Overall provision for religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) students achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
  
- Marking does not always inform students of how to improve their work.

### Commentary

103. Just under half of candidates gained grades A\* - C in their 2003 GCSE results. A quarter of candidates gained the top A\* grade. All students starting the course gained a pass grade. Standards of work seen in the present years 7, 8 and 9 are in line with expectation for their age. Standards of both GCSE and the core work of Year 10 and 11 students are in line with expectation. Students enter the school with very different levels of knowledge, skill and understanding of religion and religious practices. By the age of 14 students make good progress and achieve well. Students with special educational needs are well supported in class. Their needs are well known and they achieve well. Nearly all students have a good idea of their progress and can explain what their assessment grades mean.

104. Those taking the core religious and ethical philosophy course achieve well. General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) students achieve very well given their level of knowledge, skill and understanding on entry to the course. During the course they gain significantly in their ability to interpret religious beliefs, and select quotations to support their work. They tackle difficult issues sensitively and maturely, as was seen in work dealing with abortion and the sanctity of life.

105. Teaching and learning are good. When the teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good, their teaching is generally very good. Non-specialists have sound knowledge of the subject and are well supported by the team. Lessons are very well planned. The learning is of very good quality where the lessons are delivered at good pace and the challenge is appropriate to the students' prior knowledge and understanding. The teachers know their students very well and have high expectations of them. When teachers show students how they can improve their grades, the progress is good and often very good. However, marking needs to be more consistent and regularly monitored. This will help the small number of students in every year who underachieve because they are not told clearly enough how to improve their work.

106. The leadership and management of religious and ethical philosophy are good. There is a clear vision of how to develop the department further. With so many non-specialist teachers, the organisation and planning load is very heavy. The quality of teaching and learning are good because of the strong commitment and hard work of the specialist team. There is a need for a subject specialist to monitor students' learning regularly and judge how successful the teaching is in raising their standards.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students achieve well and make good progress.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, resulting in well planned lessons which stimulate and challenge students.
- The leadership of the faculty head, her planning, and her high aspirations result in a uniform approach to teaching and learning and to rising standards of attainment.
- The use of assessment to monitor the work of the faculty and students' achievement is good.
  
- The students' use of sophisticated computer software is not always well directed.
- There is a need to review the small proportion of lessons where the teaching and lesson content lead to unsatisfactory learning.
- Measures to ensure that students are placed on suitable courses are not always effective.

#### Commentary

107. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that students are attaining in line with expectations nationally. The 2003 GCSE results were close to expectations. A tenth of GCSE candidates gained the highest A\* and A grades, very close to national expectations. The textiles results were particularly good.

108. The work in school meets expectations. The folio work in Year 9 is organised and well presented in a variety of ways, including the use of ICT. Students' drawing skills are below average, but the research of those working with food is particularly well organised. Students in all years learn well and achieve well. Students who have special educational needs make good progress in technology. More able students also make good progress.

109. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. The teachers' subject knowledge and their management of their students are strengths of the faculty and have resulted in very good relationships between students and teachers. The planning of lessons and projects are excellent, and teachers share a common view of teaching technology. They ensure that students progressively increase their knowledge as they move from discipline to discipline. Teachers make clear their high expectations when they explain lesson activities, often accompanied by engaging demonstrations which enable students to achieve above average results. Teachers throughout the faculty spend time raising students' self-esteem, especially those who have behavioural problems or lack confidence in their ability. Teacher's interventions are timely and appropriate and raise students' expectations, consequently students have a good understanding of how well they are doing and how they might improve. Teachers have successfully introduced a subject-specific dictionary which assists students very well in their work. Where teaching was less than satisfactory the teacher failed to manage the inappropriate behaviour and students were not sufficiently challenging.

110. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of faculty has a clear vision and ambition for her students' achievement and staff development. The teachers' continuing professional development is improving the quality of education as well as building confidence in those who have limited experience of teaching GCSE. There is very strong teamwork and a sense of identity amongst the teachers, whose work is monitored regularly. Strategic planning is particularly good and has the raising of attainment at its heart. The assessment system is very thorough, standardised across the subject areas and explained to students in everyday language.

Targets designed to raise attainment are transferred across the faculty from area to area. Reference materials to support students' learning are in short supply in the learning resource centre. The accommodation enhances students' achievement, and display in and around the teaching areas raises yet further the status of the subject.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Students achieve well.
- The teachers have the capacity and desire to improve.
- Relationships within the department are good.
- Planning is excellent.
  
- Work in Year 9 is below expectations.
- The use of ICT is limited by access to computers and specialist software.
- The teaching of drawing needs a more important place in the curriculum.
- Resources for learning, especially reference materials, do not support older students' work.

### **Commentary**

111. The results of teacher assessments for students at the end of Year 9 were below national expectations. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were very disappointing and partly reflect the teacher's lack of experience of teaching GCSE. Every student gained a pass between A\* and G grades, and approximately a tenth were awarded the highest GCSE grades A\* and A.

112. The work in school indicates that standards are rising steadily.

113. Students enter school with well below average skills but quickly begin to develop their knowledge and understanding of art. Although their attainment by the end of Year 9 is below expectations, they have made good progress and their achievements are good. Students' compositional skills are good but their understanding of drawing is weak. This inability to draw for different purposes prevents them from knowing how well they are doing and how they might improve. This good achievement is continued in years 10 and 11. The work in Year 11 is close to expectations. Those who have SEN achieve well. The more able students make satisfactory progress.

114. Teaching and learning in art are good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations, and plan their lessons very well. This results in stimulating lessons which encourage very good relationships between students and teachers, and students are keen to do well. Teachers motivate them highly and highlight ways to improve their work. Assessment is used to identify strengths in students' work and to point up areas for development. The use of ICT in art is unsatisfactory.

115. The leadership and management of the department are good. Continuing staff development is good, Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Schemes of work and development planning, particularly in Key Stage 3, are excellent. The curriculum in art allows good opportunities for students to work in two- and three-dimensions in a variety of media, although the difficulty in

obtaining access to computers and specialist software prevents students from exploring all aspects of the National Curriculum. The learning resource centre does not have enough reference material to support the students in their work. Students visit the Tate Gallery in Liverpool and the Cartwright Hall in Bradford.

## **DRAMA**

Provision for drama is **very good**.

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

- Teaching overall is very good, and often excellent.
- Students' attitudes are positive and behaviour is very good.
- The subject makes a strong contribution to the school's cultural life.

### **Commentary**

116. GCSE results in 2003 met expectations for this group of students. The standard of attainment of students at the age of 14 is above that found nationally. Students receive a very positive introduction to drama in their first weeks in school. In a short time they are taught how to work effectively in groups and begin to work at some specific skills, such as creating tableaux and carrying out 'thought tracking'. Students listen attentively and know the rules of correct behaviour in the studio. They work energetically and with obvious enjoyment, but always within the discipline of the subject. Students in Year 8 are confident with oral work and skilled in the appropriate use of body language, gesture and facial expression. They present their work effectively and others listen courteously and offer thoughtful evaluation. Students in Year 10 dealt sensitively with the theme of racism and its implication within society. Their presentations were intense and emotionally committed. Most students in the group are already performing at the level of good GCSE grades. Students with SEN achieve well and make good progress.

117. Teaching is very good and often excellent. Relationships in the studio are disciplined and trusting. Students respect the expertise of their teachers and enjoy the security of their groups. Teaching is creative and energetic and motivates students highly. The sequence of activities always fits the lesson plan closely within the scheme of work. Students are always clear about tasks and have a positive sense of direction. Teachers are totally committed and their love for the subject inspires the students. The high quality of teaching has direct impact upon students' behaviour and performance, and results in good standards of work and high achievement.

118. Drama makes a very strong contribution to the cultural life of the school, with successful productions and a wide range of activities. The subject is very efficiently managed and leadership is inspirational.

## Music

The overall provision for **music** is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The teachers' very good subject knowledge and planning of lessons fully supports students' learning and achievement.
- Students work well because of the good relationships that exist with teachers.
- Assessment processes do not sufficiently tell students in Years 7 to 9 what they have achieved and how to improve.
- There is not sufficient access to ICT to support students' learning.

### Commentary

119. The teacher assessments in 2003 for students aged 14, and the GCSE examination results for students aged 16, are in line with targets for these groups of students. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

120. Overall standards are in line with expectations for students aged 14. This represents good achievement because, whilst some students join the school with good musical ability, the skills of many others are underdeveloped. Standards for students aged 16 are also in line with expectations. Because more students are interested in learning instruments from Year 10 onwards, they achieve well compared with their prior attainment. The good teaching is a key factor in improving the quality of learning. Students with special educational needs participate fully in lessons: they enjoy music and make good progress. Some have gained GCSE grades.

121. The overall quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good with some very good features in respect of teachers' subject knowledge and planning. In a Year 7 lesson, very good teaching encouraged good vocal work and solo responses as a prelude to developing group improvisations. The higher-attaining students helped their less confident colleagues. Homework, when set, generally supports the work done in lessons. Folders contain examples of melodies produced on the computer. Verbal appraisal and self-assessment takes place, but National Curriculum levels of assessment are rarely used in class, consequently students are unaware of how well they are doing against national benchmarks and what they need to do to improve.

122. Good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to a positive commitment from students, and this enables good learning to take place and develops students' knowledge of musical conventions. Lessons are well planned and often encourage students to make experimental compositions using computer software. GCSE students are aware of what they have achieved, their predicted grades and what they need to do to reach them.

123. Good leadership encourages students to try hard to succeed. Management is effective, as is evident from the examination results, the interest in music in the school, and the productions and concerts. The monitoring of teaching has taken place and performance management strategies are delivering results, particularly in the large number of students now choosing music. There is good accommodation in the first floor music suite but the ground floor teaching room is small. Because of increasing numbers of students taking music, easy access to computers is becoming restricted. There is a limited stock of classroom instruments for group work.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall the provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Relationships between teachers and students are good.
- Students' interest and their attitude to physical education are positive.
- Good opportunities for girls in extra-curricular activities.
  
- Limited curriculum opportunities in Years 7 to 9.
- Low standards in GCSE.
- Assessment is weak.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

124. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, four tenths of the students achieved A\* - C grade, which was disappointing. Teachers' assessments of students' attainment in physical education aged 14 in 2003 indicate that a very high proportion were working at and beyond national expectations for their age group.

125. Standards of work seen during the inspection are satisfactory, although in some lessons lower levels of performance were observed in some activities. Standards of students' work in GCSE theory are below the level expected for their age, although in some practical lessons students are achieving well by reaching expected levels in a short period of time. Lower-attaining students are not making sufficient progress, especially in the theory aspects of the course.

126. In most lessons, students of all attainment levels make progress as they learn new skills and improve and refine existing ones. Achievement is satisfactory, particularly in Year 7, where students learn new skills and improve existing ones. There is satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 in games, but less so in other activities, such as outdoor and adventurous activities and gymnastics, where the programmes of study are too short.

127. Teaching is satisfactory overall; some lessons are good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations and demonstrations to students, helping them learn new skills and improve existing ones. The planning of lessons is satisfactory and lessons contain a variety of skill practices, although sometimes work lacks challenge for all students. In some GCSE lessons the range of teaching styles, which include paired, class and individual practical activities, engages students well and contributes to good quality learning. There is inconsistent marking in the GCSE work files of some students, and this fails to help them to understand how to improve their work. Classes are always very well managed and students behave well, and this engenders good relationships. Students are enthusiastic about the subject and work hard at the tasks they are tasks set, which contributes to their learning. Assessment is weak and students have little knowledge of how well they are working in relationship to National Curriculum Levels, nor what they need to do to improve these.

128. Leadership and management by the head of department are unsatisfactory. The development plan lacks a vision for the whole department. Curriculum planning for students in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, providing insufficient time for gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities to complete the programmes of study. Assessment of students' work is weak and is not related to national levels. The organisation of girls' physical education is good, and shows a commitment to providing good opportunities and improving standards.

129. School clubs and teams provide good opportunities for students, and a pathway to higher levels of competition. Boys and girls have represented Yorkshire in rugby and netball in previous years, and the school has been successful in boys' and girls' sports hall athletics, winning the area championships. There is good provision for girls' extra-curricular activities, with strengths in netball, rounders, and cross country, where standards are high. There are fewer opportunities for boys' extra-curricular activities, due to inadequate grassed pitches.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

The quality of provision in Business Studies in years 10 and 11 is **satisfactory**.

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

- Energetic and dedicated teachers relate very well to the students.
- The teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that lessons meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers are sensibly self-critical of their work.
- Shortage of resources currently limit students' opportunities.

### **Commentary**

130. Only one student was entered for GCSE in 2003. Standards achieved in lessons are satisfactory.

131. Students now have the opportunity to study either the standard GCSE course or the new Vocational GCSE. This meets the needs of nearly all students.

132. The overall quality of teaching is sound. Teaching is regularly enlivened by many up-to-date references to business companies, products and practices to which the students can relate, and this has the potential to develop their critical faculties as well as their understanding of business. Teachers always challenge students to achieve their best.

133. The leadership of the department is good. More needs to be done to develop the vocational element of the new GCSE and to provide the necessary learning materials. Teachers are appropriately self-critical and seek to improve the quality of their work. Resources, especially on the GCSE courses, have been a problem and this still remains to be fully addressed. Plans are in hand to develop extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum, and this will further help students see the relevance of their studies.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **CITIZENSHIP**

Overall provision for citizenship education is **good**.

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

- Achievement overall is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership is very good.
- The development of the subject in Years 10 and 11 needs to be planned.

## Commentary

134. The standard of work seen, and the knowledge, skills and understanding shown by students at age 14, are in line with expectation for their age. Standards at the end of Year 11 are also in line with expectation for the students' age.

135. Overall achievement is good. The majority of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 develop good skills of enquiry and communication. They are particularly competent for their age in discussing issues that are political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural. Their tolerance towards others is particularly strong. This shows that achievement is generally good.

136. In Years 10 and 11, students continue to achieve well. They express their opinions confidently and justify them, and deal well with sensitive issues. They handle data well and make sound choices, and they respond well to the very good guidance on how to handle everyday situations that may affect them or their friends.

137. Teaching and learning are good. Very good planning of lessons by the team leader helps the teachers to deliver a good quality programme which challenges and develops students' understanding of the society in which they live. Opportunities provided to assess their own progress are a good way of further developing their confidence. This was particularly well handled in a lesson on aggressive, passive and assertive responses to other peoples' actions. Where teachers are less secure in their knowledge of the subject, lessons are at least satisfactory and generally good. The teachers and teacher assistants know their students very well and this helps them to create a very secure learning environment in which students are willing to take risks and share their concerns. As a result, they are very supportive of one another and learn a great deal through exchanging knowledge and ideas with their classmates.

138. The leadership of citizenship education is very good. The scheme of work developed by the curriculum leader is very good. The majority of students are provided with a good quality programme that meets their needs very well. A few classes are disadvantaged because their non-specialist teachers are working in rooms that are not suitable for the subject. There is also a need for senior managers to look carefully at the future provision of the Year 10 and 11 courses.

139. The programme of citizenship education for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is very good. The work undertaken by students in this subject contributes strongly to the overall programme of education across many subjects. They have very good opportunities to learn about human rights and responsibilities within a multi-cultural society.

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE POST 16 CENTRE**

140. *At the time of the inspection the Post 16 provision was two weeks old, with only Year12 students present. There are, therefore, no current or historical examination data available. At this very early stage it was not always possible to make reliable judgements on some aspects, particularly about leadership.*

141. In the inspection, seven 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 at this very early stage.

### **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

142. The main focus subject in this area was English. One French lesson was observed in which students were given good opportunities for independent learning and collaborative work, and this was being tackled with interest and enthusiasm.

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good, with the result that students are well motivated.

#### **Commentary**

143. Students have adjusted well very early in their AS/A Level course to the more challenging nature of assignments. The students used a wide range of resources for their research and produced effective presentations which showed their findings. Students make useful notes. Teaching is good and motivates students highly. Relationships are very positive and students appreciate the academic expertise of staff. Teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject communicates clearly to their students, who express confidence in their course of study.

144. Leadership and management of the Post 16 provision are very good. This has led to a well thought out and relevant course.

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

145. Students are articulate and confident in classroom discussion. They express opinions clearly. Students are competent researchers, and they use a range of resources effectively. Oral presentations of their work are good. Students make effective notes and portfolios of their work, and show commendable effort.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching is very good and develops students' understanding well.
- There are good relationships, which aid students' learning.
- Induction to the course is well managed and fully supportive of students.
  
- There is a need to support students in the organisation of their work.
- Students lack confidence in their own ability at this stage of the course.

### **Commentary**

146. There is open access to the course. However, most students come with high GCSE grades. Standards seen in lessons were those expected of students at this stage of their course. Very good relationships, within the group, provide a mature co-operative environment for learning. However, some students are reluctant to admit that they do not understand fundamental principles and to seek the appropriate help from teachers. They work hard during lessons to master topics and techniques required. Achievement is good overall. However, where students lack confidence in their algebraic ability, they are slower in developing the advanced skills required and achievement is only satisfactory. Students have positive attitudes to mathematics and feel they were well informed and supported in choosing this subject. They appreciated the frankness of teachers who described the course to them, and found the transition workbook useful in preparation for their course. Students' files are at an early stage of development and some show lack of organisation, which may hinder revision at a later date.

147. Teaching is very good and develops students' understanding well. Students learn well as teachers ensure that new topics are based on what they already know. Lessons are very well planned and contain a rich variety of learning experiences. Teachers use electronic links to the Internet to bring relevant examples into the classroom, providing good opportunities to experience examination-style questions along with tutorials. Students are encouraged to use these links to support their independent learning. Students have good opportunities to investigate fundamental properties of angles and report their finding to the group. In this way they develop better insights and confidence in their own understanding.

148. Leadership of the subject is good. Clear vision of how to develop the advanced courses has provided an appropriate programme of study and strategies for future developments within the courses. Management is good and the day-to-day needs for the course, in terms of resources and teachers, have been provided. Provision of appropriate training of teachers is good. Teachers are aware of the continuing need to develop their understanding of the newly adopted Advanced courses.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

149. There is insufficient evidence at this very early stage to make a judgement about students' competences in mathematics across the Post 16 curriculum.

## SCIENCE

150. The focus of the inspection was **chemistry**, but one lesson of biology and one lesson of physics were also seen. In both these lessons, the teaching was good and, as far as could be judged, students were showing satisfactory achievement. Numbers are higher in both physics and biology than in chemistry.

Overall, the provision for chemistry is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good, with the result that students are well-motivated and enthusiastic.

### Commentary

151. The attainment of students on entry to the course is average for the subject, and the standards of work seen at this very early stage are in line with expectations. They are enthusiastic about the course and work well together and with their teachers, and they have already begun to show some capacity for independent learning.

152. Teaching is good. Teachers are well qualified and have prior experience of teaching at this level. The lessons provide a good range of learning opportunities and the teachers are coming to terms with the challenge of coping with the needs of a very small group of students. The progression from GCSE has been well thought out in developing a range of work which will allow students to build up sufficient confidence to tackle the more challenging work which lies ahead.

153. Students feel they are well supported in their work. A range of resource material, including a textbook closely linked to the course, gives good support. The students feel that their transition from GCSE has been well managed, and they are enjoying the course so far.

154. The course leader is an experienced teacher of Advanced Level chemistry and is working effectively with the other teacher on the planning and development of the course material. Resources external to the department, such as reference material, give little additional support to students and need extending.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have very good relationships with students.
- Students are interested in the subject and they behave well in lessons.
- There is very good leadership and management of the department.
- There is no Post 16 computer area for independent study and research.

### Commentary

155. Standards in both Advance Supplementary (AS) computing and AVCE ICT are lower than might be expected because students lack some of the basic knowledge in the subject. This because of the patchy experience they have had in earlier years in the school. Nevertheless, they are

competent users of computers, and make use of word processing, word art and desktop publishing software.

156. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and give good explanations which lead to students increasing their knowledge and understanding. Students are interested in the subject, and respond well in question and answer time. They also show the ability to work independently and complete tasks they have been set.

157. There is very good leadership and management of the department, with good planning for the introduction of Advanced courses. Two new courses have been made available for students, with a good uptake of both courses. The opportunity for students' independent study is restricted by the lack of appropriate computer rooms in the school.

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

158. Students are beginning to use ICT well to support their learning and the presentation of their work in their areas of study.

### **HUMANITIES**

159. The focus subject was history, but one geography AS Level lesson was seen where teaching and learning were both good and students were making good initial progress. Sociology was not inspected.

### **HISTORY**

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

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

- Teaching is consistently good, resulting in very good attitudes to work on the part of the students.
- Leadership is very good.
- The learning resource centre provision is unsatisfactory and does not provide sufficient opportunities for independent and extended learning.

### **Commentary**

160. The standard of work by students currently beginning their AS course is a little below that expected nationally. At the time of the inspection students were still assimilating the different requirements of AS work, and building on the skills they learned at GCSE. There is, however, a significant minority who already show the potential to attain high grades at the end of Year 12.

161. In the short time since they began the course, students have made good progress, although this is occasionally slowed because they do not have a good enough general historical or political background knowledge or understanding to underpin the new work. Teachers therefore have to spend time developing this, with the result that overall progress in lessons is slower than it might otherwise have been.

162. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers are confident with their subject. They understand well the students' prior attainment, and provide appropriate support where it is needed. They use day-to-day assessment effectively to show students how to improve their work. Teachers'

comments on marked work are helpful to students. Students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods, including much which involves them actively in the lessons.

163. The head of department is a very good leader, and has formed an effective team of teachers for the AS Level groups. The subject is a one of the most popular in the school. A weakness is the unsatisfactory provision in the learning resource centre, which does not have sufficient good quality books for use by students taking AS Level, who need to have a range of texts available.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

No subjects are taught in this area currently.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

164. The focus for inspection in this area was **performing arts**. Two Post 16 art and design lessons were observed. Progress, standards, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The students made good use of a wide range of resources and responded well to the set work.

165. Overall, the provision in performing arts is **good**.

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

- The quality of teaching is very good and students learn well because they are exposed to a varied diet in the arts, and one that is carefully matched to their needs and interests.
- Students have positive attitudes and are committed to the course.

### **Commentary**

166. With the school's first entry of Year 12 students, performing arts has been introduced and includes both music and drama, with the addition of dance at a later date. These subjects are being taught as separate A Level courses. The majority of students have already gained A or B grades in GCSE music or drama.

167. At this early stage the standard of practical work is average, but it shows good achievement overall because of the commitment of students and the very good teaching. Very little has been written on which it is possible to make a judgement, and there is no significant difference in the practical work of male and female students at this stage. In discussions, students indicate that they enjoy the variety of work and would recommend performing arts to others. Some have already said that they would like to continue in arts-related education or work.

168. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and students learn well because they are exposed to a varied diet in the arts, and one that is carefully matched to their needs and interests. A series of visits to theatres and concerts is planned to enrich students' cultural background and appreciation of the arts.

169. This good introduction to performing arts is the result of both subjects being well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. All documentation is in place, assessment is satisfactory, and teachers have attended in-service training courses.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

170. No lessons were observed in this area.

## **BUSINESS**

The quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

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

- The energetic and dedicated teachers relate very well to the students.
- Very good subject knowledge.
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning.
  
- Further development is needed on the vocational courses.

### **Commentary**

171. The school provides a very good range of both vocational and academic courses that meets the needs of all Post 16 students. Leadership of the subject is good. Teaching is always challenging and is enlivened by many references to companies, products and issues to which young people relate well. Students achieve well – especially on the AS economics course, where they already have a good grasp of supply and demand theory and can apply the principles very widely. There is a need to develop further the vocational courses and to provide materials and experiences to help students on these courses to extend their skills and understanding. Good use is made of computers to promote individual research and to keep up to date with business developments. Plans to provide extra-curricular activities are well in hand and will further help to extend students' skills and business awareness.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

172. One lesson was observed, where teaching and learning were good.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

173. One lesson was observed, where the teacher demonstrated the capacity for very good teaching and learning.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Post 16 grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the Post 16 and the school</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	N/A	N/A
Cost effectiveness of the Post 16 / value for money provided by the school	0	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	4	4
<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>3</b>
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	4	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	5	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	0	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). 0 indicates insufficient evidence to make judgements at this stage in Post 16.*