

INSPECTION REPORT

PRINCE HENRY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Otley, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108093

Head teacher: Mr J Steel

Lead inspector: Mr C T Hemsley

Dates of inspection: 27th September to 1st October 2004

Inspection number: 268870

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of students:	11 to 18 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1419
School address:	Farnley Lane Otley West Yorkshire
Postcode:	LS21 2BB
Telephone number:	01943 463524
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Bearpark
Date of previous inspection:	21 st September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Prince Henry's Grammar School is a fully comprehensive secondary school educating 1419 boys and girls aged 11 to 19. It is larger than average and has increased in size in recent years, usually being oversubscribed and with a lower number of students than average leaving the school during their career. It is well established as a specialist language college and has many international connections. The sixth form of 286 students is larger than average, expanding, and an integral part of the school's life, with most students being drawn from the main school. The school was founded in 1607 and now draws its students mainly from the town of Otley, but with a significant minority from other districts of Leeds and surrounding rural areas. The area served by the school is relatively advantaged in most parts. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals (5.3 per cent) is below average and in the sixth form is only 0.8 per cent. Most students are white British with small minorities from Indian and other Asian, Caribbean, African, Chinese, or mixed cultural heritages. There are no refugees, asylum seekers or travellers. No student is at an early stage of learning English. Standards on entry to the main school are above average. Standards of students joining the sixth form are above average and in recent years have broadened. There is a below average percentage of students (10.9 per cent) with special educational needs and a broadly average percentage of students (2.8 per cent) with a statement of special educational need. Most students in the sixth form follow GCE A-level courses and a small proportion follow vocational courses. Most sixth form students go on to higher education. The school is supported through the national Excellence in Cities initiative. It is part of a networked learning community. It holds awards for its work, including the Inclusion Charter Mark, the Global Schools Award and a School Curriculum Award. It contributes substantially to the work of other schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1609	Mr C T Hemsley	Lead inspector	
11358	Mrs V Lamb	Lay inspector	
1622	Mrs L Aers	Team inspector	English
31550	Mrs S Fall	Team inspector	Mathematics
22985	Mrs J Sparks	Team inspector	Science Chemistry
1608	Mr R B Higgs	Team inspector	History
33109	Mr J Collings	Team inspector	Geography
32087	Mr J Mitcheson	Team inspector	Physical education
17868	Dr E P Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art
1547	Mr G L Clarke	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
8751	Mr J Chidgey	Team inspector	Design and technology
17765	Mr J McElwee	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages French
16890	Mrs M Potter	Team inspector	Religious education
8009	Mr J Forsyth	Team inspector	Music
16359	Mr J Farrow	Team inspector	Citizenship, special educational needs
28101	Mr A Lagden	Team inspector	Business education Economics
20825	Mr B Ogden	Team inspector	Leisure and tourism

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	11
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	17
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	24
WORK-RELATED LEARNING AT KEY STAGE 4	
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	65

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness** of the school is **very good**. Many aspects of the school are very good or excellent. High quality teaching is resulting in good, and often very good, achievement. Excellent leadership by the head teacher, supported by an excellent governing body, is taking the school forward rapidly. The school is continuing to improve and has the capacity to do so. The school provides **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Excellent leadership by the head teacher, complemented by an excellent governing body and very good leadership and management from key personnel, is ensuring very good educational provision.
- There is a clear focus on achievement for all groups; the school is very highly inclusive.
- Excellent enrichment opportunities are supported through the school's specialist status.
- Students are exceptionally ready to learn, showing excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal development; they receive excellent support from the school's actions on moral, social and cultural development.
- There is a good proportion of outstanding teaching within the overall very good quality teaching and learning.
- Links with the community, other educational establishments, and the wider world are exceptionally good.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory or poor in several areas despite the very good efforts by staff at all levels and puts some constraints on the ability of the school to raise standards further.
- Statutory requirements are not met, in respect of collective worship and some information for parents, and in the sixth form of the teaching of religious education.

Since the last inspection in September 1998 the **improvement** in the quality of education and effectiveness has been **very good**. The school has gained specialist status. Achievement has risen considerably. Key issues have been effectively dealt with. Boys' achievement is now good, policies are taken forward effectively, assessment is now good, the curriculum has widened, expectations are now high, and spiritual development is now very good. Requirements on collective worship and religious education are still not met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	C
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	A	A	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Achievement is **good**. It is frequently very good. Students start school with above average standards. By the end of Year 9 results in the 2003 national tests were well above average in English, mathematics and science and showing very high achievement in comparison with results in similar schools. Standards by Year 9 have risen faster than the national rate of increase. Achievement by Year 9 is currently very good and standards are well above average. By Year 11 standards in 2003 national examinations were well above average, having risen faster than the national rate of increase. Current standards by Year 11 are above average overall and well above average in English and science. Standards in mathematics are above average. Achievement by Year 11 is now good, often very good, and better than the 2003 GCSE data above indicates. Standards on entry to the sixth form are above average; by Year 13 they are well above average in national

examinations, and have shown a general increase over a period of years. Current standards are above average in individual subjects and sometimes well above average. Achievement for sixth form students is good and often very good; it is excellent in art and design.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are being **excellently developed overall**, despite opportunities to support spiritual development being missed because collective worship requirements are not met. Attitudes and behaviour are **excellent** and reflect the school's positive approaches. Attendance is **well above average**. Students are exceptionally well prepared to learn.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good** and is being very well developed through the school's programme of professional development. Excellent subject knowledge, meticulous planning and challenging work, together with good assessment practices, are very effectively ensuring very good learning. The curriculum is very good and meets the needs of students, with innovative developments and excellent enrichment opportunities. Religious education requirements are not met in the sixth form. Unsatisfactory and poor accommodation is negatively affecting how well standards can rise in several subject areas. Health and safety are good; advice, guidance and support are very good. Students appreciate the very good pastoral care and the excellent relationships with staff. Partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and educational institutions both locally and globally are exceptionally good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Excellent leadership by the head teacher sets very high expectations and a clear direction. The excellent work of the governing body challenges and supports the school. Leadership and management by other key staff, including that of the sixth form, are very good.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Students and parents together are very pleased with the standards achieved and the quality of discipline and relationships. Almost all parents agree that their child is expected to work hard and that their child is making good progress. Parents have high expectations of the school and feel comfortable about approaching the school. Both parents and students appreciate the school's leadership and the quality of teaching. A minority of parents expressed some concern about communication and the governing body is investigating this following its own survey. Although students' questionnaires suggested some bullying, all students spoken to were very positive about behaviour and how well any issues are tackled, and felt that bullying or racism were rare.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Inspectors noted that the school is very well placed to continue with its programme of improvements and that any weaknesses identified are in the school's priorities. The quality of the accommodation is an aspect of the school that it is unable to solve without considerable financial investment.

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

Continue with its efforts to gain financial support for improved accommodation,

and, to meet statutory requirements :

ensure that students can have access to collective worship and religious education and that information is correctly published in the school brochure and annual governing body report.

THE SIXTH FORM AT PRINCE HENRY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is **very good**. Standards and achievement have risen since the time of the last inspection. Current standards are above average and achievement is good and sometimes very good, because of well-planned and challenging work. Teaching is very good and there is much that is excellent. The sixth form remains an integral part of the school. Cost effectiveness is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in information and communication technology (ICT), history, physical education, French, religious education and economics and it is outstanding in art.
- Leadership and management are very good as a result of the sixth form leadership team working to their strengths.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with a good proportion of lessons that are excellent.
- The broad curriculum caters effectively for the aptitudes and aspirations of the students; inclusion is excellent.
- Students' attitudes, maturity of response and positive involvement in their own learning are major assets in their progress and personal development.
- Support, advice and guidance are very good throughout and especially on entering and leaving the sixth form.
- Links with higher education institutions and other partnerships in the community are extensive and well used to support the students' learning and aspirations.
- The school does not provide for collective worship or for a course in religious education for all students.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good in English . Teaching and learning are consistently good and often very good. Achievement is good. Excellent in French . Teaching and learning are consistently very good. Thorough planning and good subject knowledge help students to achieve very well.
Mathematics	Good in mathematics . Good teaching and learning, linked to good assessment, are leading to good achievement. Students' attitudes are very good.
Science	Very good in chemistry . Very good teaching leads to very good learning with students who are highly motivated. Achievement is good. Sampled biology showed sound learning with expert teaching of subject matter.
Information and communication technology	Good in ICT . Very effective teaching is resulting in current achievement being very good.
Humanities	Satisfactory in geography . Good teaching and learning but a decline in take-up of the subject. Achievement is satisfactory. Very good in history . Consistently high quality teaching results in very good achievement. Very good in religious studies . Consistently very good teaching results in very good achievement from highly motivated students. Good teaching and learning in psychology , which was sampled. Good teaching and learning in government and politics , which was sampled.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Good in design and technology. Mostly good and sometimes very good teaching, especially in product design, supports good achievement. High standards in textiles.
Visual and performing arts and media	Excellent in art and design. The expertise and enthusiasm of teachers result in very good independent learning and excellent achievement in an outstanding department. Sampled music teaching is very good, with good achievement.
Hospitality, sports and leisure	Very good in physical education. Very good teaching and learning lead to very good achievement. Analysis of performance skills is of very high quality. Sampled lessons in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism show good teaching and learning, with very good leadership leading to very good achievement.
Business	Very good in economics. Very good achievement as a result of very good teaching and learning based on very good subject knowledge.
Health and social care	Good in health and social care. Good teaching with very good relationships is leading to good achievement.
Personal development and general programmes	Sampled work in personal, social and health education (PSHE) indicates a well-managed course that is well appreciated by students.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students are provided with very good advice, guidance and support. Induction programmes prepare them well for their studies, and the responsibilities of sixth form life. They are equally well prepared for entry to higher education and the world of work. There is ready access to further careers information and helpful discussion with their form tutors and careers service staff. Students value the mature and professional relationships with their form tutors and other members of the sixth form leadership team with whom they regularly review their progress. Subject teachers provide helpful and constructive comments to encourage high achievement. The students are actively encouraged to represent their views through their sixth form committee. The PSHE programme is a major contributor to the students' personal development. Students regard the advice, guidance and support as a strong feature of their time in post-16 education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership of the sixth form is very good as a result of a member of the senior leadership team, head of sixth form and senior tutors working to their strengths. The head of the team has a clear vision of the place of the sixth form in the school and communicates this well to both students and colleagues. Management of the sixth form is very good and students are very well supported in getting the best out of their studies. Monitoring is carried out very efficiently. The team regularly reviews provision and takes positive action on the outcomes. Heads of department make very good use of assessment data to raise standards and achievement in their subject areas. There is a high commitment to creating an inclusive sixth form in which all students are equally valued.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students have frequent opportunities to comment and their responses are invariably positive. They speak highly of the support they receive in both their academic and personal development. They value the supportive relationships and opportunities to participate in an extensive range of events and activities. They value the good opportunities to voice their opinions and to be involved with their teachers in their learning. Most students value the encouragement the reward system gives them. They consider that their aspirations are well catered for. The students are proud of their school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** overall. It is frequently very good. In national tests and examinations achievement varies between satisfactory and very high. Achievement is continuing to improve. Standards reached in national tests and examinations are **well above average** and rising in the main school and sixth form. Both students and parents indicate that the standards achieved are what they appreciate very strongly about the school. Taking into account the good achievement and well above average and rising standards in national examinations, the overall standards achieved are therefore very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good by the end of Year 9 and at least good for other year groups.
- Standards and achievement are continuing to rise for all age groups.
- Achievement in art and design is excellent in the sixth form.
- Achievement is very good overall in mathematics, history, art and design, physical education and modern foreign languages.
- The school is highly inclusive in ensuring achievement for all groups of students.
- Most students in the sixth form are successful in completing their courses.

Commentary

1. Students start school in Year 7 with standards above average. Standards on entry reached in national primary school tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average. Other tests carried out by the school show that there are few annual variations in standards on entry. The school works very closely with its partner primary schools to ensure a clear understanding of students' standards when they move to this school.
2. Standards reached in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average and over several years have risen faster than the national trend of improvement, although national test results in English have fallen back slightly in the last two years. The school came close to reaching the subject targets it had set. Targets set for 2004 and beyond are appropriately challenging and based upon good knowledge of students. 2004 test results were not available at the time of the inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37.0 (37.4)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	39.3 (37.6)	35.4 (34.7)
science	37.4 (36.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 216 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Work currently done in Year 9 is well above average overall, but varies from average to well above average. Overall, the standards reached by students by the end of Year 9 are well above average in English, mathematics, science, history, and modern foreign languages. Standards in all other subjects at this age are above average, except for religious education and music. In religious education standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In music, although standards are now average, they are rising rapidly under new subject

leadership. Recent assessments by teachers confirm the overall standards reached by Year 9.

4. These standards at the end of Year 9 represent very good achievement. Results in the 2003 national assessments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were in the top five per cent of schools with similar students based on prior attainment. Taking into account current standards reached, achievement is very good in mathematics, science, history, art and design, ICT and modern foreign languages and good elsewhere, except for religious education where it is satisfactory. In religious education, achievement is not as good as in other subjects because some work for higher attaining students is not hard enough.
5. Standards reached by Year 11, in GCSE examinations taken in 2003, were well above average overall and for those students gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C. Standards at GCSE have risen faster than the national rate of improvement in recent years and the standards reached in 2003 were particularly high at the upper level of GCSE grades (A*-C). The school was successful in exceeding its targets for higher attaining students. Standards of students currently studying for national examinations are above average and sometimes well above average. Standards are well above average in English, science, history, art and design, physical education and modern foreign languages. Standards in music and religious education are average.
6. The proportion of students gaining at least one GCSE grade A*-G in 2003 was only average and below the school's own target level. This was because the school has developed an alternative and appropriate curriculum for a small group of lower attaining students and those in that year group did not enter all GCSE examinations as a result. The school has now altered its approach to enable students on this type of course to gain some GCSE awards during Year 10 of their course and some success has already been shown in this system.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	73.0 (65.0)	52.0 (50.0)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93.0 (93.0)	91.0 (91.0)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96.0 (98.0)	96.0 (96.0)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	41.7 (39.7)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 208 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

7. The school has continued to set challenging targets for 2004 and beyond. At the time of the inspection the full results for 2004 were not available.
8. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good overall and often better. The standards reached by Year 11 students in 2003 were in line with those in similar schools when considering the gains made by students during Years 10 and 11. Detailed data indicates that when all results are taken into account rather than the best eight subjects, the standards achieved are much higher than those in similar schools. However, the number of students in 2003 who did not gain at least five GCSE grades A*-G or one GCSE grade A*-G was greater than other similar schools; this was partly because of the alternative curriculum provided. Inspection evidence is that the overall achievement of students is good. The achievement of students is very good in mathematics, science, history, art and design, physical education and modern foreign languages. It is good in all other subjects except for ICT where it is satisfactory, although it is now improving following changes in the provision for and organisation of that subject.

9. The good and improving achievements across the school are a result of the good and very good teaching, supported by overall very good leadership and management of subject departments. Standards and achievement are relatively higher by Year 9 than by Year 11 currently, taking into account age differences. This is because the work of the school in induction and transfer from primary school and the continuing efforts to target achievement have been particularly effective for the younger students. The school's move to enter students following the alternative curriculum provided for some GCSE examinations in Year 10 is now beginning to be successful and is likely to lead to an overall improvement in achievement by the end of Year 11.
10. The school's very good provision for students with special educational needs results in those students achieving as well as other students. Individual students with statements of special educational need indicating severe or complex learning difficulties all make good progress and some achieve well beyond what might be expected of them.
11. Taking into account their overall achievements, the differences between boys and girls are not particularly significant, although there are occasional differences in the standards reached in individual subjects, for example in ICT where more girls than boys reach higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 9.
12. There are no students identified by the school as learning English as an additional language. The minority of students from minority cultural heritages achieve as well as other students in school. The school effectively builds upon the potential richness of family-based languages through its work as a specialist college for languages.
13. The school identifies groups of higher attaining students through a gifted and talented strand of its work. These students make at least as much progress in their work as other students in school and the school's own analysis identifies how the support has been particularly effective. The progress made by these students has been promoted through the school's involvement in the national Excellence in Cities initiative. The number of students assessed by the school as reaching the higher levels (level 6 and higher) in English and mathematics at the end of Year 9 rose markedly in 2004. The school also enables students to enter GCSE examinations when they are ready. Some students gain a GCSE in a modern foreign language one year before other subjects. Another strand of the Excellence in Cities initiative has been the support provided for students through mentoring, another successful approach in raising standards in this school.
14. The development of literacy across the curriculum is very good and as a result students display very good written work, are able to take notes, read independently and speak and listen very effectively. Competency in mathematics across the curriculum is good and allows students to make use of mathematics within individual subjects, although all subjects are not yet contributing as well as they could to the mathematical development of the students.
15. By Years 9 and 11 standards have risen faster than nationally since the last inspection and so are still well above average in national tests and examinations. Achievement is now good and very good while previously it was satisfactory. Boys previously underachieved, but now they achieve as well as girls. Overall the school has made very good progress in raising achievement.

Standards achieved in the sixth form

16. Standards on entry to the sixth form are above average. In recent years they have broadened, with more students of higher attainment and more with lower attainment entering the sixth form. A greater proportion of students from Year 11 is choosing to stay on into this sixth form and there is more recruitment from outside of the school. Most students follow AS and A-level courses but some follow vocational courses. The great majority of students successfully complete the courses they set out on.

17. Standards by Year 13 in 2003 in national examinations were well above average. Students gained their highest grades in art and design, general studies, mathematics and ICT. Standards seen in individual subjects inspected are mainly above average, but well above average in art and design, physical education and French, and average in leisure and travel subjects. The combination of standards in individual subjects leads to students being able to reach well above average standards overall in national examinations.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.1 (95.5)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	35.5 (41.9)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per student	332.0 (294.5)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 111 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

18. The achievement of students is good. The school uses a national system to evaluate how much value is being added in the sixth form. In 2003 this showed achievement as being a little better than average. Inspection findings are that achievement is at least good in most subjects, but excellent in art and design because of high quality teaching and learning and excellent leadership. Achievement is very good in ICT, history, physical education, French, religious studies and economics. Students also achieve very well in leisure and travel subjects, despite students from different year groups following different courses in the same lessons. Achievement is satisfactory in geography, reflecting the quality of leadership in the subject.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are **excellent**. Exclusions are few. Personal development is **excellent** overall. Although the school makes excellent provision for the moral, social and cultural development of all students, it does not take all opportunities to provide for spiritual development, which is very good nonetheless. In both the main school and the sixth form attendance is **very good** and punctuality is excellent. Parents and students are very positive about the effectiveness of the school's work in the above areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students display exemplary attitudes towards school life, staff and each other.
- Students have a high degree of readiness for learning.
- The school's approach to personal discipline is very effective.
- Well above average attendance supports achievement.
- The excellent punctuality to lessons allows full use of learning time.
- Opportunities for spiritual development are missed because collective worship requirements are not met.

Commentary

19. Attendance is much higher than in most secondary schools. There are very well-established procedures to monitor absence and follow up any that are unexplained. Students and parents are actively involved in this process as the school requires students to complete a record of their attendance in their planners and parents and tutors to have sight of the document and sign it each week. Any attendance not formally notified by parents, and lateness to school or lessons, are noted in negative comments that become part of the school's discipline procedures. The school is aware of the students who are most likely to be frequently absent and benefits from the help of an education social worker who is based full-time in school. Parents who take their children on holiday during term time and frequent, short illnesses amongst students account for the bulk of absences from school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	School data	0.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

20. Students manage the five-minute slots between lessons very sensibly so that punctuality to lessons, as it is to school each morning, is excellent. This allows the full use of lesson time so that, although less time than is recommended nationally is spent in lessons, the impact of these arrangements is very positive.
21. The very positive ethos of the school promotes tolerance and respect, supporting excellent relationships between different groups of students. Bullying and racism are rare and students are confident that any issues are dealt with effectively. Very few students are excluded from school. Exclusions that do occur are as a result of risk to the health and safety of others caused by a very small minority of students challenging staff authority or behaving aggressively towards other students.
22. Students are very interested in the wide range of school activities and show that they willing to adapt their responses according to the activity. They are orderly as they move around the school and quietly attentive during assemblies. They wait patiently when necessary and are polite and helpful towards visitors. However, students are confident enough to show animated enjoyment during exciting and challenging activities, for instance on the sports field and during performances, demonstrating well-developed social and personal skills to modify their behaviour when they are expected to be still and quiet.
23. Students' readiness for learning is exhibited in their attitudes and actions. A strong work ethic is evident throughout the school and effectively supported by the excellent relationships and positive discipline programme. Very high standards of behaviour are expected. Students fully understand what is expected of them and appreciate the guidelines that they are set. They are very well behaved and motivated to learn and take full advantage of the opportunities given to them. Students arrive for lessons well prepared and do not waste time. They apply themselves to their work and concentrate well, managing their work independently when appropriate. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and are prepared to make suggestions, to ask questions to clarify their thinking and to offer constructive criticisms during lessons. Students of all ages collaborate well in discussions and many who possess exceptional skills coach groups and individuals, for instance in sport, dance and languages.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1274	25	2
White – Irish	6	0	0
White – any other White background	18	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	19	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded. This table refers to the last school year so the total number of students is different from the current numbers on roll referred to earlier in the report.

24. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students permeates the school and is underpinned by the strong code of conduct and the opportunities given to students to explore and develop moral values. Many subject teachers take opportunities to promote all these elements of personal development through focusing on students' interests, experiences and concerns and nurturing particular gifts and talents. Assemblies are of a very high quality.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent cultural development is promoted through visitors to a Year 8 assembly.

A Year 8 assembly gave students an excellent opportunity to experience first-hand the thrills of dance, acrobatics and illusion that form part of China's Mid-Autumn Festival. The whole year group gave a rousing welcome in their visitors' home language and confidently applauded and cheered to show their amazement and appreciation of the skills displayed yet recognised the need for absolute silence at tense moments. Cultural development was promoted excellently.

25. Staff and students celebrate the values and principles on which school and community life is based and very successfully extend their appreciation of their own place in the world, whether in school or the local or international environment. Partnerships with other schools play a significant part in developing respect for social and cultural differences and similarities. Although the students' spiritual development is very well promoted in many ways, the school does not meet the statutory requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship for all students and as a result opportunities for further spiritual development are missed.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities in the sixth form

26. Attendance in the sixth form is very good and closely monitored. Punctuality is excellent.
27. Students in the sixth form have excellent attitudes to learning. They enjoy high quality relationships with staff and approach their work with confidence and maturity. Sixth form students present excellent role models for younger students and many lead activities, for instance in sport and clubs, which inspire others to strive to improve their own skills and knowledge.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**.

Teaching and learning are very good overall. Assessment is good. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. The students are enthusiastic learners, highly motivated and mutually supportive. The good use of assessment is contributing significantly to the good achievement. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good overall, with some excellent features, notably in art and modern foreign languages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and lessons are stimulating, challenging and informative.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and expertise and plan lessons with meticulous care and clear learning objectives.
- Excellent relationships and commitment to work make a major contribution to the very good learning.
- Assessment is consistently well used and information is regularly shared with students and parents to support progress and improvement.
- The outcomes of assessment are used rigorously to set challenging targets and to review planning.

Commentary

28. The quality of teaching seen in lessons, together with evidence of learning from the scrutiny of work, discussions with students and an examination of teachers' planning, combine to confirm the overall judgement that teaching is very good. In more than four fifths of the lessons seen the teaching was good or better and a sizeable proportion was very good or excellent. Almost all subjects contribute to this high quality, especially in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science, history, art and design, music, physical education, and business studies.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 230 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
23 (10%)	73 (32%)	96 (42%)	37 (16%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	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.

29. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and convey their enthusiasm to their students. They use their command of the subject positively to: effectively develop the use of the target language in lessons in Spanish; give good demonstrations in art; inform high expectations in

- mathematics; enhance learning through clear explanations in science; and widen perceptions in religious education.
30. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Objectives for learning are positively identified and provide a clear focus for students to make progress. In history well-designed activities lead to purposeful learning. In mathematics, methods are effectively modelled and in lessons in technology well-prepared exemplar materials are used effectively to illustrate concepts and enhance understanding. Lesson organisation is excellent and time is used efficiently to maximise learning opportunities.
 31. In the best teaching students are inspired to think for themselves and required to work hard and activities are interesting and motivating. Teachers have high expectations, use incisive questioning and engage the students in a good variety of activities. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively. Excellent relationships and often exemplary behaviour contribute positively to learning. These are particular features of teaching in English, mathematics, history, art and music.
 32. Homework is used constructively to extend and consolidate learning. Planners are used consistently by students and they form an important focus for students and form tutors to review progress. Parents appreciate the use of planners as an opportunity to be involved in their children's learning. Students consistently report on how the planners help them to keep their work organised.
 33. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 overall are good, while elsewhere they are very good. The inspection took place during the first few weeks of a new school year and teachers were still developing their understanding of new Year 7 students and of the regrouping of students which starts to have most effect at this point in Years 8 and 9. For some classes teachers had very little experience of the students before the inspection due to whole-school activities early in the term. Scrutiny of work samples, evidence of planning and previous very high achievement in national tests by the end of Year 9 indicate that learning is likely to continue improving during the year.
 34. A minority of teaching, while still satisfactory, is not as successful. In a few lessons there is more scope for harder work by more able students, or the pace is slow or teaching lacks variety. In a number of lessons in Year 8, such as a physical education lesson, there was too little focus on the development of skills, or tasks are not fully explained. In religious education, ideas are not always fully explored when taught by non-specialist teachers.
 35. Teaching and support for students with special educational needs are very good. Lessons are well planned and provide an appropriate framework within which teachers and support assistants can adapt work to the specific needs of students with learning difficulties.
 36. Well-organised procedures for assessing and reviewing students' work are used consistently in all subjects. Assignments are carefully marked using established grade criteria, and constructive comments add significantly to the students' understanding of how they might improve their work. In most subjects students are aware of their targets and how to achieve them. Peer assessment, where students help each other to judge their progress, is developing as a strong feature. In English, for example, students are encouraged to select the best sentences in their partner's work referring to level criteria. In geography, assessment of each others' work is used positively to develop model answers. Assessment overall is an area of considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection and is meeting the aim of the school to raise standards and achievement.
 37. The extensive professional effectiveness programme has had a major impact on improving the quality of teaching. In the previous inspection teaching was good; it is now very good.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form

38. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. More than nine tenths of the lessons seen were good or better, four tenths very good or better, and one lesson in ten was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Excellent relationships and a strong work ethic underpin very good learning. Assessment and its use are good.
39. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use this positively to provide carefully structured activities to help the students consolidate learning and understand new concepts. This is evident in art where the teacher's vision and enthusiasm for the subject create a quality of excellence; materials and illustrations are thoroughly researched in religious studies; in French, excellent command of the language leads to exemplary teaching and explanations.
40. Teachers plan carefully. In English, for example, tasks are set up well so that students carry out their own research and present their views to others. Teachers use skilful questioning that allows students to reason and to open their own lines of enquiry. In mathematics and religious studies this is the basis of good collaborative work and positive participation that leads to increased confidence with the subject. Homework is used effectively to extend learning and this is consistent across all subjects. Students are prepared well for their courses through excellent planning based on the teachers' very good knowledge of examination requirements.
41. Teachers apply their skills very successfully to support their students, even where there may be difficulties. For instance, in order to help develop vocational courses, leisure and travel courses are run effectively at two different levels with two different year groups all within the same lesson.
42. Assessment is rigorous and students' work is carefully marked in accordance with assessment criteria. Comments give clear guidance to students on areas for improvement. There is regular testing during and at the end of work modules. The use of assessment to track students' performance is very good, often providing a detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Teachers create good situations where students can evaluate their own work. Assessment and its use are strong features of the very good teaching and learning in the sixth form. This is a considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good** overall. Curriculum enrichment is **excellent**. The curriculum in the sixth form meets the needs of students and is suitably widening as the nature of the intake changes. The quality and quantity of the accommodation and resources are overall **unsatisfactory**. Although resources are good, and there are sufficient and very well qualified staff, the accommodation provides a number of barriers to learning which the school has to work very hard to overcome.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum promotes good and very good achievement.
- There is a rich and varied programme of experiences for all students and an excellent range of enrichment activities.
- Increased flexibility of curriculum design is providing wider choices in Years 10 and 11.
- There is a high level of access and opportunities for all students.
- Inadequate accommodation affects learning in some subject areas.
- Religious education is not provided for all students in the sixth form.

Commentary

43. The curriculum is broad and balanced, very well suited to the needs of all students and underpinned by a commitment to equality of access for all.

44. During the first three years of school students are increasingly placed, for some subjects, in classes that suit their individual levels of attainment, allowing teachers to plan work appropriately. ICT is now taught as a discrete subject during these years, an improvement since the previous inspection, and there is a choice of modern foreign languages. The impressive links with partner primary schools include language teaching for pupils in Year 6, a provision by this language college, which provides an excellent curriculum transfer arrangement.
45. The Excellence in Cities funding which is used to identify gifted and talented students in all subjects and year groups is having a significant positive effect on students' achievements. In modern foreign languages some of these students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
46. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum has evolved to provide more flexibility of choice and increase the amount of time allocated to the full range of GCSE subjects available. Arrangements are also in place to support individual students who need to reduce their GCSE workload. Although the school has planned to include more vocational options the take-up has been low, as most students and parents prefer to concentrate on more traditional GCSE routes. There is good flexibility between different curriculum pathways available for students, with the school continuing to look at ways to raise achievement. A vocational leisure and tourism course continues, but with only a small number of students in Year 10.
47. The school is justifiably proud of its alternative curriculum provision. The work-related learning programme has positive benefits for a limited group of students in Years 10 and 11 who have been identified through careful academic monitoring and the school's positive discipline initiative as being at risk of low motivation and disaffection. With a reduction in GCSE courses in Year 10 these students spend an increasing amount of time out of school at a local college and in work experience. They are entered for some GCSE examinations one year early, leading to improved overall achievement for them, an effective innovative approach.
48. The school curriculum is extensively enriched through a variety of experiences beyond the school day, many of which are planned to complement normal lessons or offered in the community, for example the opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese which has been introduced since the school became a specialist language college. This links very well to the Saturday Mandarin Chinese school, for around 50 students in central Leeds, which the school runs as part of its wider community provision.
49. Students' participation and interest in the extra-curriculum programme, including sport and involvement in educational visits, is high. Opportunities for involvement in musical work are being further developed with changes in the leadership of the subject. There are very good external links both within the local community and beyond. Many members of the local and wider community take part in the school's termly enhanced curriculum days. The many international links have a very positive effect on students' cultural knowledge and understanding. The school's PSHE programme is well organised and very effective.
50. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good range of experience. Resources are good, and have improved in ICT since the last inspection, although there are weaknesses in the resources for science, art and design and music.
51. The school has a series of problems with some of the accommodation. Mathematics teaching is spread across the buildings, making it difficult for teachers to move quickly between rooms and to have all the necessary resources available to hand, so affecting their teaching style. This is a poor and inefficient arrangement for the subject. In other subject areas such as science, geography, music, drama and art and design, physical education and design and technology there are distinct problems. In science there are too few laboratories and equipment has to be moved between rooms, an unsatisfactory arrangement which restricts practical work and creates potential safety hazards. In geography the morale of students and teachers is affected by the cramped and shabby nature of the rooms. The food and technology

rooms do not meet health and safety recommendations. Music accommodation is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient practice space for students and there are problems of storage. Although many physical education facilities are good there are continuing problems about flooring quality. In art and design accommodation is unsatisfactory and stretched to the limit, given the current class sizes, and in one room there are distinct problems about the availability of natural light. The drama studio, in effect not much different from a classroom, is too small for students to practise effectively. Teachers work hard in many areas to make the accommodation bright and cheerful despite the accommodation problems. The accommodation is fully used throughout the week and there are few occasions when rooms are not occupied. This in turn causes difficulties of flexibility of the school timetable.

The curriculum in the sixth form

52. The sixth form curriculum contains very good opportunities to suit the aspirations and needs of many students. There is a carefully structured policy for entry to the sixth form and individual courses, with detailed personal advice available for those students who may not meet fully all the school's requirements. Students say that they are very pleased with the induction arrangements for the sixth form, including those for students coming from other schools.
53. The sixth form curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of students, most of whom wish to go on to higher or further education courses; consequently there is a strong emphasis on A-level GCE courses. For those courses taken at GCE A-level there is a clear pathway and progression for learning. GCE A level courses are studied at AS (equates to the first year of study of a traditional A level) and A2 (equates to the second year of a full A level, the harder elements of a traditional A level). Media studies, available at GCSE and AS/A2 levels, is an example of a course that is available to students of all abilities which makes very good links with other subjects, particularly English, art and design, history and ICT.
54. In addition to the extensive range of AS/A2 courses available in the sixth form, the curriculum has been further broadened to include A-level courses in politics, psychology, additional modern foreign languages and vocational studies. Vocational courses include business, leisure and recreation, travel and tourism, and health and social care. One of the advantages of these courses is that they provide opportunities for team teaching and the use of specialists, including outside speakers, to deliver the learning modules, which helps students to manage their work. Many of these students become employed or continue into higher education. Where there is a low take-up in vocational courses, students in Years 12 and 13 are taught together.
55. A curriculum and assessment working group reviews curriculum provision monthly and makes its recommendations to the senior leadership team. The school is developing individual learning plans so that students have good reliable information on which to make choices of courses. PSHE provision is very effective and well organised and provides many opportunities for students' personal development.
56. The match of staff to the curriculum is very good and resources are good overall, with some weaknesses in science and art. The accommodation suffers from the same inadequacies as the main school, although the school has worked well to provide students with communal areas and space for individual study and some lessons are more easily managed with the smaller numbers in the sixth form classes. Consequently the overall provision of accommodation, staffing and resources is satisfactory.
57. There is no provision in the sixth form for a course in religious education for all students. This is a breach of a statutory requirement. There is a GCE A-level course in religious studies but only a few students follow this option.

Care, guidance and support

Care, welfare, health and safety are **good overall**. Support, advice and guidance are **very good**. The school is making very good attempts to seek students' views and act on them. The degree of involvement of students in the life of the school is **very good**. Advice, guidance and support in the sixth form are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extremely high quality relationships are established between staff and students.
- The transition and induction arrangements for students joining the school are excellent.
- Staff work very hard to combat the negative effects of the accommodation on learning and health and safety.

Commentary

58. The excellent relationships throughout the school are a very strong feature of the school's pastoral care as they enable staff to get to know students very well and give students the confidence to share their views and feelings and to seek help if they need it. Staff encourage students to do their best. They provide very clear guidance on what is expected and are ready with praise and rewards when students achieve well. The school's positive discipline system is well appreciated by most students and parents.
59. Students new to the school are very happy that they were helped to get to know the staff and school procedures in good time in order to settle quickly into their new environment. Induction arrangements ensure that students have met key staff and visited the school to become familiar with its layout and procedures well before they transfer into Year 7. The induction arrangements are effective for students coming from a variety of primary schools. As well as providing a sample of lessons for pupils during a special induction day, the school teaches weekly Spanish lessons for pupils during their final year in the main primary partner schools. This enables them to feel confident about the challenges ahead when they begin to learn modern foreign languages in secondary school.
60. The school's procedures for ensuring students' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall and reflect the school's ethos of individual endeavour and mutual respect and support. Students are very well cared for. Child protection procedures are firmly established and the school has three trained child protection officers whose roles are clearly understood by other staff. Very good links are established amongst staff with a pastoral role to ensure appropriate responses to any concern. New teachers receive guidance as part of their induction to the school but training for new support and ancillary staff is not yet comprehensive.
61. The school's procedures for managing health and safety are very well established and risk assessment is used well. The school has taken action to minimise some significant risks and staff work very hard to keep the school running as smoothly as possible despite the constraints imposed by the accommodation. Nevertheless, health and safety problems arise regularly because of the deterioration in the building, such as tripping hazards, and a number of issues were reported to the school during the inspection. The school is fully aware of the difficulties in ensuring continuing education in areas of the school where hazards become significantly dangerous. The sensible and considerate way that students move around school and conduct themselves in lessons is commendable and minimises some hazards, for instance from narrow staircases and corridors and uneven ground. Practical arrangements for fire drills work extremely effectively.
62. The school provides very good access to advice and guidance for students as they move through the school. Assessment procedures are well used so that students know what they need to do to improve. Personal development is very well monitored by form tutors who have access to more senior staff and by colleagues working on behalf of support agencies such as Education Welfare and Connexions should they identify students in need of specific support or guidance. PSHE is an integral part of school life and students appreciate the systems that are provided for them so that they put into practice what they learn. Staff get to know students very well and students are happy that they have someone to turn to for help. Students themselves are often very willing to step in and provide or seek help for their peers when they perceive a need. As well as this very supportive ethos, the school uses a wide range of strategies designed specifically to support students' learning and personal development. These include

showing students how to assess their own work and that of their classmates and encouraging older or more capable students to coach other students in several subjects. Peer assessments and mentoring of this kind make a very good contribution to the academic progress and personal development for all involved.

Care, guidance and support in the sixth form

63. Care, guidance and support in the sixth form are an extension of the concern for the individual that is an intrinsic part of the main school ethos. Induction arrangements are very effective. Relationships amongst students and between students and staff are professional and supportive. Students in the sixth form continue to have regular and easy access to a range of support from teachers and tutors, including careers information and advice to help students prepare for university and work. Regular time is set aside for personal development through focusing on the rewards or negative comments that students receive in lessons. Positive discipline is actively encouraged in the sixth form through the development with students of a framework of 'Standards for Learning'. Students appreciate the guidance they are given through a modified version of the main school procedures that reflects their maturity and status as young adult learners.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good**. Partnerships with other schools and colleges and with the community are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a very wide sense of community and range of community involvement.
- The school works in a highly effective way with numerous partners in education.
- Although links with parents are very good, a minority of parents has highlighted a concern over issues of communication.

Commentary

64. Parents have very high expectations of the school and aspirations for their children that are reflected in the strong work ethic and pastoral care that the school promotes amongst students. Parents hold the school in high regard and are very pleased that high standards of work and behaviour are achieved.
65. The school is committed to working closely with parents to support students' academic progress and personal development and has developed a very good range of procedures to enable parents and staff to develop an effective working relationship. Parents are provided with a very good range of information about the work and life of the school and regular progress reports, more than the statutory requirements, on how well their children are doing.
66. On a day-to-day basis parents have access to teachers' assessments of their child's response to school and homework through the planners that are a well-established feature of school. An excellent feature of home/school links is the postcards that are sent to students' homes to mark outstanding achievements. Day-to-day links between home and school are mostly very effective should students develop problems or have specific needs, and parents appreciate this aspect of the school's work in particular.
67. Many parents noted how they appreciate the ability to contact the school and talk to the relevant member of staff within a short period. A minority of parents has raised some concerns surrounding the practicalities of communications, including timing and style, between home and school. They also felt that the style of the annual student's report was too general in the

comments made about their child. Inspectors noted that school is providing more than the statutory information for parents about their child's progress and involves parents very well in the processes of target setting. The school is aware of the need to ensure a personal approach in reports. Staff and governors are committed to acting on parents' concerns to make improvements where necessary. The governing body has looked at communication in the past and has recently returned to it following its own survey of parents' views. Although the prospectus and the annual report of the governing body give good details on school life and management procedures, including a detailed sixth form prospectus, they do not contain all of the information that is statutorily required. Information on admissions, the religious education provided, and national test and examination data are missing.

68. The school has a highly developed sense of community that extends around the world and has developed a comprehensive programme of activities to respond to local needs. Excellent use is made of global links to support students' academic and personal development, in particular the principles surrounding good citizenship. Excellent opportunities are provided for enrichment through visits to theatres, local places of worship, art galleries and sporting venues. The school welcomes many visitors to share their skills and talents with students and staff. Partnerships within local community sports are particularly well developed as are those stemming from the school's status as a specialist language college. The school's status as a specialist college for languages has supported the development of an extensive programme of community education, mainly on the school site, but also some within central Leeds. This programme is well appreciated by the communities served.
69. The school is a leading partner in the Network Learning Community. Through this, the Excellence in Cities initiative, the Leadership Incentive Grant collaboration and links with the local education authority, the school has provided very effective and highly regarded support to other schools in the area aiming to improve their own educational provision. Many effective working partnerships are established with other schools and colleges that help raise students' achievements and support their personal development before, during and after their time at the school. In particular, links that are established between the school and support agencies to ensure the full inclusion of all students are exemplary. The school has very successfully forged exciting, reciprocal links within the international school community and has regular visits, a wide range of exchanges and curriculum links with schools in Europe and the wider world.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community in the sixth form

70. Links with the parents of sixth form students are very good. In particular the extension of the planner into the sixth form provides parents with an excellent range of information on how well their son or daughter is progressing and responding to the challenges of advanced, independent study. Very effective links with colleges, universities, business and industry enable students to progress to higher education or into work with confidence and enthusiasm.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

School governance is **excellent**. Leadership is **very good** overall. The head teacher gives excellent leadership. Leadership by other key staff is very good. Overall, management is **very good**. A very high consistency of approach leads to a very good and highly inclusive ethos, which aids learning. Funding for the school is average and given the very good standards achieved, the school gives very good value for money. The quality of accommodation is a barrier to raising achievement further.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have an outstanding level of commitment, and work with dedication to support and govern their school to excellent effect. Their commitment to the principles of best value is very good.

- The head teacher, the senior leadership team and other key staff effectively promote the aims and philosophy of the specialist language college, and improvements to learning, by their consistency of approach and very good management.
- Financial management is meticulous.
- Some statutory requirements are not met.

Commentary

71. The head teacher has joined the school since the previous inspection and his leadership is excellent. He has a clear philosophy of learning and a very strong personal commitment that underpins both raising achievement and the promotion of the school's language college status. He very effectively involves staff, governors and students in widely promoting its philosophy and development. An excellent commitment to inclusion and the welfare of every student is built into his approach to the curriculum, teaching and learning. Although standards achieved are very good, he is determined to capitalise on the very positive attitudes of his students to raise them still further by ensuring high quality teaching, a broad range of extra-curricular activities, and extensive opportunities for students to contribute to the many strengths of the school.
72. A very good strategic plan gives a clear overview of the vision of the head teacher and governors for the future of the school. Priorities for improvement are appropriately aligned to raising achievement, and are systematically linked to the improvement plans for each subject department. Progress towards the full implementation of improvement plans is carefully monitored. The school's performance is evaluated rigorously and methodically through curriculum focus reviews with each department. The school also carries out cross-curricular reviews such as for ICT, special educational needs and homework. The head teacher and governors work strategically together to make the best possible use of their findings. Their success has been recognised, for example by the Global Schools' Award, the Inclusion Charter Mark, the School Achievement Award and the School Curriculum Award.
73. Leadership by the senior leadership team and heads of subject departments is very good overall, and sometimes excellent, for example in art and design, ICT and modern foreign languages. All leaders are committed to the continued development of the school and work tirelessly to bring about further improvements. The teams of committed and hard-working administrative and support staff and special educational needs assistants work well to support the school. The members of the recently established large leadership group have clearly defined roles. They help take the school forward on several fronts at once because they discharge their duties very well. The head teacher and leadership team display to students a high level of consistency of approach and unity of purpose, for example in implementing the school's approach to positive discipline, which contributes well to students' very good attitudes to learning and behaviour. They are very good role models and an inspiration to staff and students alike.
74. The school is very well managed. Teachers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the school's priorities for improvement. Procedures are well advanced for using information about students' performance in tests and examinations effectively to support their learning. Very good procedures for monitoring, review and evaluation improve teaching and learning through professional development by sharing and developing the substantial expertise that has accrued. Very good procedures for the induction of new staff to the school ensure newly qualified teachers are very well supported and advised on how to develop their teaching strategies and techniques. The quality of training and support is reflected by the school's Investors in People status.
75. Governance is excellent. Governors are very committed to their school, and bring a high level of professionalism and expertise to its work, for example in curriculum and personnel management, and in supporting the head teacher. They have ensured that the school has dealt very effectively with the issues raised by the last inspection. Governors have undertaken training to help them with their work. Information they gain at first hand about teaching and other provision complements the formal arrangements for receiving and discussing reports on progress with the relevant staff. The very experienced chairperson gives very strong leadership to the governing body. He understands and is developing the strategic role of the governors. For example, governors are strongly supportive of implementing the aims of this specialist

language college whilst being mindful that it provides equally for all its students. Governors work well to raise achievement and enhance the reputation of the school in the community.

76. The school does not meet all statutory requirements. The school brochure is of very good quality but the school omitted some information, which will now appear in the next edition. There is not a collective act of worship for all students each day. Governors have recognised this but indicate that they have tried twice unsuccessfully to recruit someone to take responsibility for this, that there is no requirement that staff should take collective worship and that there is only a small level of positive interest for this from parents or students. No parent raised this issue for the inspection. A worker from the 'Leeds Faith in Schools' organisation runs Christian gatherings for those students who wish to take worship further.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,275,969	Balance from previous year	-73,210
Total expenditure	5,022,219	Balance carried forward to the next	180,540
Expenditure per pupil	3,720		

77. Financial management is meticulous. The member of staff responsible for this aspect of the school's work ensures that the budget is administered assiduously, keeps up-to-date records of income and expenditure, and carefully monitors all accounts. All the recommendations the school's auditors made in their recent report are implemented. The governors' finance sub-committee has worked closely with the school to repay its budget deficit and accumulate an appropriate amount carried forward, which is within the Audit Commission's guidelines. The school's expenditure per student is average and there is little flexibility in the budget to address pressing issues of improving the accommodation and extending facilities in classrooms for students' interactive use of ICT.
78. Principles of best value are very well established. They are very secure in some areas; for example the school spends its money very prudently. Governors, through the auspices of the local education authority, make comparisons with other schools to gauge students' attainment and the use of finances. They consult parents and students to ascertain views and inform their planning. Governors challenge themselves and the head teacher to ensure that decisions are well founded, and assure and improve the quality of work in the school.

Leadership and management in the sixth form

The governors, head teacher, assistant head teacher for student progress 14 to 19, and the head of sixth form provide very good leadership and shape the direction of the sixth form. Management is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the sixth form is very good as a result of the senior leadership team, head of sixth form and senior tutors working to their strengths.
- The head of the sixth form team has a clear vision of the place of the sixth form in the school and communicates it well to his colleagues.
- Management of the sixth form curriculum is very good, and students are very well supported in getting the best out of their studies.
- Monitoring of the work of the sixth form is very good, and heads of subject make very good use of assessment data to raise attainment in their subject areas.

- The school does not fulfil its statutory obligations for a daily act of collective worship, or for the provision of religious education.

Commentary

79. The governors work closely with the head teacher to promote the highest standards of attainment and personal development in the sixth form. They understand and value the outstanding contribution that the sixth form makes to the place of the school in the community, and seek to maintain the commitment of senior staff to an inclusive sixth form in which all students are supported as well as possible in their aspirations.
80. Although the statutory obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship is not met, the spiritual development of students in the sixth form is still very good because of the wide range of opportunities available within the curriculum. The assistant head teacher for student progress 14 to 19 and the head of sixth form work closely with senior and form tutors to promote these students' personal development. Together, they create an excellent sense of purpose, with high aspirations, in students and teachers alike. They successfully promote the highest standards of personal development in the sixth form students.
81. Management of the sixth form is very good. The curriculum is well managed to provide for the needs of most students in the school. Arrangements have been made to increase the provision of vocational courses, but these have not proved as popular as traditional GCE A-level courses. The progress of students is meticulously monitored, and high quality support is readily available for students who need it, whether academically or at a personal level.
82. As in the main school, evaluation through the curriculum focus reviews is very effectively used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form. This is having a significant impact on raising standards and achievement.
83. The school acknowledges that it does not provide religious education for all students in the sixth form. Governors indicate that the main reason that they do not is that they would lose students to further education colleges and local sixth form colleges, which do not have that requirement. Students may follow a course in religious studies if they wish and opportunities for spiritual development occur through the curriculum.
84. Financial management has been effective in ensuring that the sixth form neither contributes to nor draws on funds allocated to the main school. In view of the high academic standards reached by students, and their outstanding personal development, the sixth form gives very good value for money.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING AT KEY STAGE 4

The provision for work-related learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for work-related learning is very effective and flexible to meet the needs of students.
- Students' motivation, attitudes and behaviour are enhanced by the work-related learning course.

Commentary

85. The school has developed a highly effective two-year work-related learning programme that starts in Year 10 for a discrete group of students, which combines academic, vocational and practical skills. Some students who are identified in Year 9 as having low motivation or problems with their schoolwork are given the opportunity to follow a reduced GCSE timetable in Year 10 in English, mathematics, science and a modern foreign language, which they complete in one year. For one day a week they attend Leeds College of Building and follow an accredited course in 'Construction and the built environment'. On another day students can choose to attend a local further education college and study 'Animal Care', 'Public Services

Preparation' or 'Child Care'. The school works hard to overcome the difficulties of providing these arrangements while still allowing them to attend and make progress in sufficient other subjects.

86. Year 11 students have more time available for a course aimed at 'preparing for working life', which includes 'Health and safety', 'Applying for jobs', and 'Economics and financial aspects of life'. These courses are very well organised and resourced by dedicated staff who monitor them rigorously and make regular reports on individual students' progress. They are also given the opportunity through the local community links to work on work-related projects. They are currently working with a local provider to learn to build dry-stone walls. The instructor, who is very well qualified and very experienced, communicates very effectively and has established very good relationships with the students, enabling them to make very good progress in their skills.
87. For students, the experience of working alongside a craftsman in a real-life situation is having a very positive effect on their motivation, attitudes and behaviour. Preparation for work, safe practices, and the correct handling of tools and equipment are given high priority in the instruction. Some students express an interest in the possibility of taking a dry-stone wall examination in the future.
88. The school is rightly looking to ways in which aspects of work-related learning can support the curriculum provision for wider groups of students.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are well above average.
- Opportunities for enrichment are excellent.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, including very good and excellent lessons.
- The department focuses on raising students' achievement.
- Difficulties in access to ICT restrict the range of learning opportunities.

Commentary

89. Students enter the school with standards in English that are above average. By the end of Years 9 and 11, standards are well above average. This represents good achievement, and is the result of good teaching.
90. In national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, results were well above average. There was no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. In current work in Year 9, the highest attaining students are able to use a variety of sentence structures for effect. All students between Years 7 and 9 produce a good range of writing for different audiences and purposes. Lower attaining students in Year 9 were inspired to produce their best writing following a stimulus using World War I poetry and some genuine postcards from the trenches. A small number of middle attaining students in Year 9 are not progressing quite as quickly as other groups, but overall achievement is good.
91. Results in GCSE English and English literature were well above average in 2003. These results are particularly good considering the high number of students that are entered for both examinations at Prince Henry's Grammar School. Boys performed slightly better in literature than girls. In current work in Year 11, higher attaining students show excellent control in their writing, and adapt style to purpose in an accomplished way. All students take care with their coursework, paying attention to paragraphing and sentence structure, especially in re-drafted pieces. Many students can carry out speedy analysis of the effect of language features, and they are confident in contributing to discussion, giving well-structured answers. The current Year 11 are building well upon their well above average results at the end of Year 9, and achievement is good.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good for all year groups, including lessons that are very good or excellent. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is often conveyed to students. In the best lessons, the time is used to the full and students learn quickly through a very well planned mix of active approaches. Drama is used to extend students' thinking, and students respond to texts in visual ways as well as in writing. Questioning in English lessons is well directed to promote a close reading of the text. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, and they collaborate well in discussion.
93. Students are very well prepared for the test and examination procedures. They are trained to think quickly, as in an examination room. They are familiar with the grade criteria. The English department has very good systems for assessment, which include asking students to assess

each other's work using the criteria. Assignments are carefully marked, and targets are set so that students know how to improve.

94. The department provides a very good curriculum. Homework is purposeful and well integrated into the units of work. Opportunities for further enrichment are excellent, providing links with theatres, writers and universities. Within school, however, access to ICT is limited, and learning is sometimes made more difficult in lessons that take place in unsuitable accommodation.
95. Leadership of the department is very good and promotes very good teamwork amongst members of staff. Management is very good. The schemes of work show clearly what needs to be covered. Close monitoring of examination results takes place, which influences the planning of the curriculum. The development plan for the department focuses very well on students' achievement.
96. Progress since the last inspection is good. Standards are now well above average. There is now good curriculum liaison with primary schools, which was mentioned in the last report as needing to be strengthened.
97. Although drama and media studies are not part of the English department's provision, some students follow a GCSE drama course and some take GCSE media studies. In the one drama lesson sampled teaching and learning were outstanding as a result of effective planning, the teacher's excellent knowledge of students' capabilities, extremely high expectations and a very high level of response and commitment from students. The observation of one media studies lesson indicates that students are learning very well because of very good teaching, very good subject knowledge, and well-planned lessons and curriculum.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

98. Students enter the school with good literacy skills. The school pays very good attention to developing these skills, and as a result, a high proportion of students become very good articulate speakers, fluent readers and skilful writers. All subject areas pay attention to key words and the introduction of new terminology. Discussion is encouraged, for example in mathematics, where answers are expected to be clearly expressed as well as mathematically correct. A very good standard of written work is expected, for example in descriptions of findings in science. Teachers in subjects apart from English take care in correcting spellings. Note-taking skills are practised, for example in religious education. In modern foreign languages, students produce a range of writing, using complex sentences and paragraphs.
99. Independent reading is promoted energetically. Specific opportunities are provided for gifted and talented students, including a reading group involving students of all ages and members of staff. Lower attaining students attend a reading club with older students acting as mentors.
100. In Years 7 and 8, an intervention programme, as recommended by the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for literacy, is in place for those students who enter the school with below average standards. They receive well-focused teaching and well-targeted support in small groups. Overall, all students make good progress in language and literacy.

Modern foreign languages

Provision for modern foreign languages is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership and management result in high expectations.
- The excellent subject knowledge of most teachers supports the quality of learning.
- A significant proportion of the teaching is outstanding.

- A significant number of students have weaknesses in pronunciation and intonation.
- There is some excellent use of ICT, but good practice is inconsistent.

- The high and positive profile given to modern foreign languages in the school and the wider community very effectively supports language development and cultural understanding.
- The inclusion of all students in language learning is a strong feature of work in the subject.

Commentary

101. By Year 9, the percentage of students achieving level 6 or above in French and German is well above national expectations. Standards of attainment in Spanish, begun in Year 8, are also high. More able students in Year 9 embark on a fast-track course leading to GCSE in their first foreign language in Year 10.
102. By Year 11, standards of attainment are well above the national average. Almost all students are included in the GCSE course. Boys' attainment at GCSE, though lower than that of girls, is well above the national average, and the performance of boys overall represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. GCSE results in 2003 in Spanish, the second language, were excellent. Nearly all students do two languages until the end of Key Stage 4. Some students also continue to study Chinese until the end of Key Stage 4, having experienced taster courses in the language. Students in the fast-track GCSE groups do well, and the enrichment course in Year 11 prepares them well for A-level courses.
103. Achievement in lessons in both key stages is very good. Termly assessment in all four attainment targets allows students to measure their progress. At the end of Key Stage 3, fast-track groups in all languages have made very good progress. Achievement of students with special educational needs is good, even in the small group with complex learning difficulties, although there the learning is limited because of the specific nature of these students' problems. Achievement in some Year 7 groups is very good, in large measure due to the implementation of the strategies outlined in the Key Stage Framework for teaching modern foreign languages. Achievement overall in Key Stage 3 has improved significantly since the last inspection and its impact is seen in students' progress in Key Stage 4.
104. Teaching and learning are very good in both key stages, particularly in Spanish. In Key Stage 3 nearly all lessons were good or very good, and some were outstanding. In Key Stage 4, over half the lessons were very good or excellent. The best lessons are characterised by their prompt and brisk start. There is a professional relationship and so the expectations of teachers and students are high. The use of the target language by some teachers is exemplary, and in some cases students, too, use the language to engage with their teacher. Students are encouraged to review their work critically and to aim for high standards. In one Year 9 Spanish class, students used Spanish to make judgements about the quality of model paragraphs, suggesting improvements. Some teachers choose those who do not raise their hands and this helps to maintain attention and concentration. In some classes, teachers are able to share quite complex learning objectives in the foreign language being taught. Mini-whiteboards are used in an excellent way to assess students' progress and to respond to misunderstandings.
105. Students in Year 7 can talk about how the language works using the terminology they have learnt in the primary school. Teachers use a wide range of resources and techniques, including ICT. ICT is now integrated into the department's work, and there is a wide range of resources, that are used well to enhance students' learning.

Example of outstanding practice

In a Year 9 Spanish class students become critical readers of their work and assess how it might be improved.

The teacher uses the interactive whiteboard to model a 'perfect paragraph' with the class, getting them to suggest ways of improving it. One student criticises an adjective in correct Spanish, saying that "'excellent' is not a good word because it is boring", whilst another reads her long paragraph in fluent, well-accented Spanish. The students vie with each other to contribute judgements about quality, and thus their expectations are raised. Some students use new constructions, such as the conditional tense, in their writing that they have worked out themselves and checked with the teacher. They understand, and use correct grammatical terminology to analyse their work. The teacher's clear sense of purpose and excellent planning have produced a lesson that combines both excellence and enjoyment.

106. As well as the interactive whiteboards, often very well used, teachers use a range of ICT applications to develop all four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In a Year 11 Spanish class the teacher used the interactive whiteboard in conjunction with a tape recorder to develop students' listening skills.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 10 German lesson with a fast-track GCSE group developed students' ability to speak and write at length about their families, using more complex grammatical notions.

An overhead projector transparency with speech bubbles from 'The Simpsons' cartoon helps the class to find and learn key phrases to describe their families. They begin to explore the reason for changes in the endings of possessive pronouns, and work out for themselves that certain prepositions take the dative case. They use mini-whiteboards to show the teacher that they can distinguish the accusative and dative cases in masculine and feminine words. All are engaged, and show pleasure in being successful. Using the interactive whiteboard, the teacher then introduces the word *weil (because)* and demonstrates its effect on word order. Only one example is needed, so the teacher withdraws support, as students expand two words into full sentences. The whiteboard helps the teacher and the students to use the target language effectively and the class accept a challenging homework to consolidate their learning.

107. Many students have an insecure grasp of the link between the sound of a word and its spelling, and this prevents them from acquiring good pronunciation and intonation. Some teachers, however, are now paying attention to this skill, and their students are becoming more fluent readers as a result. In an excellent lesson with a Year 6 class in a local primary school, the teacher integrated this aspect into her lesson so that pupils were confidently predicting the correct pronunciation of new words
108. The leadership and management of the department are excellent. Teachers plan and evaluate together, ensuring, for the most part, that all classes follow the same programme, whilst at the same time challenging the more able and offering more support to those who need it. The department continues to develop innovative practices, such as the use of video conferencing to talk to students in other schools, or satellite television to bring the latest news and information from the countries of the target languages.
109. Provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. As well as visits to France, Germany and Spain, there are exchanges with schools in France and Germany. All students in Year 8 have a taster course in Chinese, and many continue to study the language after school. The school has links also with schools in Guatemala, Namibia and South Africa. Year 6 pupils in the main partner primary schools have weekly Spanish lessons, which give them a good grounding in the strategies they will need when they start their French or German lessons in Year 7.
110. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The department makes an excellent contribution to the enrichment of students' life across the school. Its role as provider of advice and professional development in Leeds is continually expanding. In response to local demand

the school provides courses in 13 foreign languages. Modern foreign languages now have a high profile in the school and in the wider community.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- The dispersed accommodation, sometimes into non-specialist rooms, is a barrier to continued improvement in mathematics.

Commentary

111. Standards attained in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above those found nationally. Standards attained by students in lessons are above average and sometimes better, with lower attaining students doing much better than expected. All students are challenged and respond well, leading to very good achievement.
112. By the end of Year 11 in 2003, the proportion of students gaining grades A*-C was above average. Students' work seen in lessons suggests that standards are improving to be at least above average. Achievement is very good in response to the high levels of challenge that teachers ask of students.
113. Overall, the achievement of students in mathematics is very good. This is because of the very good quality of teaching which is always at least satisfactory and over half of which is very good or better. Teaching and learning are generally better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teachers have very good, or excellent, knowledge and understanding of mathematics and they set high expectations. Both teachers and students make very good use of technical language and teachers challenge students of all abilities with their questioning. Lessons are planned very effectively and methods are modelled very well. Students engage very well with the highly interactive lessons. They are prepared to demonstrate techniques and to share strategies with the whole class and confidently ask questions to clarify their understanding. The interactive style of lessons means that there are plenty of opportunities for students to refine their thinking and, as a result, the development of students' social skills is good. A key feature of many lessons is the opportunities for students to reflect on their confidence with the topic so far. This self-assessment is then shared with teachers who build it into their subsequent planning of the lesson. High standards of behaviour are expected in lessons and students respond with very positive attitudes to learning. Students in Years 10 and 11 show excellent concentration and productivity. Homework is used to reinforce and extend learning and the system of assessment is good and the tracking of students' progress is very good. Students know their target levels or grades but not necessarily the small steps required to achieve them.
114. The department is very well led by an energetic, passionate and reflective leader who is focused on improvement and raising achievement. Strategic plans reflect the school's aims and goals with appropriate priorities identified, although success criteria are not specific enough. The head of department provides a very good role model for staff and for students. His clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations are outstanding. Management systems are very good and self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to actions for improvement. ICT is used very effectively as a management tool. Although the curriculum provision up to Year 11 is generally good, with a range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, the opportunities for using and applying mathematics up to Year 9 are relatively few and are insufficiently structured

into the scheme of work. Students in Year 7 do not yet have the group work skills to support mathematical enquiry when working in threes and fours.

115. The dispersed accommodation for mathematics is the biggest barrier to continued increases in achievement in mathematics, as it restricts the teaching and learning styles that are possible due to the need to move equipment, often in rooms that are unsuitable for teaching mathematics, such as a technology room. This includes the use of ICT as a teaching tool. The quality of the staff involved means that the impact on learning is minimised.
116. Improvement since the last inspection is good with continued standards of attainment but much improved quality of teaching and learning and use of assessment. All issues from the last inspection have been addressed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

117. Standards of competence in mathematics are above average and support students' progress in other subjects. Students use mathematical skills appropriately in other subjects, such as estimation and approximation in art; extracting numeric data from graphs in geography, and ensuring that answers are of the correct magnitude in science. The development of numeracy is currently not a feature of lessons in subjects other than mathematics. The school has recently appointed a teacher who will be responsible for the development of mathematics across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good, leading to very good achievement.
- National examination results at the end of Years 9 and 11 are continuing to improve.
- Students are very well behaved during lessons and well motivated.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Some resources need replacement or repair.

Commentary

118. Students enter the school with above average standards in science. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. These results were an improvement on those achieved in 2002 and there has been an upward trend in these results since the last inspection.
119. The 2003 GCSE results were also well above average overall, particularly for those students who sat the triple award examination in the separate sciences, and were an improvement on those of 2002.
120. Standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average overall. The achievement of all students is very good including that of students with special educational needs, due to the support that they receive in lessons. Students in Year 9 have a secure knowledge of variation within a species and Year 11 students have a good understanding of the nervous system. The investigative skills of students in all years are well developed and they carry out practical work with care and accuracy. Students display competency in literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to the science curriculum. Behaviour during lessons is very good and students rise to challenging questions.

121. Teaching is very good overall in all years and students learn well because of this. Lessons are well organised and teachers have good subject knowledge, enabling them to give clear explanations to students to enhance their learning. Lessons are well prepared, they contain a variety of activities which maintains students' interest and teachers have high expectations. Relationships in lessons between teachers and students are very good. Number skills are successfully practised in the use of scientific formulae and the drawing of graphs necessary in science. Good attention is paid to literacy, with an emphasis on new terminology. ICT is used in lessons and the recent acquisition of data-loggers means that this is an area that will also be developed. Work is well matched to the needs of the students and is differentiated to match different ability levels. Homework is set on a regular basis and is used to reinforce work covered in lessons.
122. The assessment, monitoring and recording of student progress are rigorous and all students have target sheets indicating their National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades in their planners. Marking is very thorough and according to school policy. Work is regularly annotated with guidance on how to improve and encouraging praise where deserved.
123. The department is well led and managed; the new head of department has a clear sense of direction and is keen to continue improving standards and results. Several new initiatives have recently been introduced to try to improve the examination results. A new scheme of work has recently been started in Year 7 and GCSE work is now started towards the end of Year 9 after the national tests have taken place. There are very good links with feeder primary schools whereby Year 6 pupils take part in a science project.
124. Accommodation is unsatisfactory as it is scattered around the site, therefore making it necessary for equipment to be carried between laboratories. This movement creates safety risks. There are insufficient laboratories so that several lessons need to be taught in classrooms, which sometimes limits the amount of practical work experienced by students. Resources are satisfactory, but are dwindling, and some of the larger equipment is becoming dated and in need of repair. The excellent displays of students' work are informative and help to improve their learning environment. The department receives good technical support from three technicians. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is excellently led and managed, fostering a technological culture within which students' ICT capability is effectively promoted.
- Achievement is very good by Year 9 and in the sixth form.
- Students successfully improve their capability in ICT by developing and applying skills learned in lessons and elsewhere throughout the curriculum.
- Very well organised lessons, with timely individual support, lead to good and better achievement.

Commentary

125. Standards in Year 9 teachers' assessments for 2003 were well above the national average. This represents very good achievement compared to students' average ability when they entered the school. Notably, however, many boys do not attain as well as girls at the higher level 6. Current standards are above average and students are achieving very well.
126. The school entered students for key skills assessments in Year 9 and 11 in 2004, but not for GCSE. In both years, results at the higher levels were marginally below the expected national averages, particularly because many average and lower attaining students could not meet the

stringent demands for portfolio compilation. Their achievement was satisfactory because they did not have the extensive grounding in ICT that is now available. Current standards by Year 11 are above average and students are achieving satisfactorily and better.

127. In lessons and current work seen, students in Years 7 to 11 have a very good grasp of facilities in Microsoft Office applications, and manipulating images, font styles and colour to enhance and give impact to their work. They are adept at searching the Internet and incorporating information into their design and technology products. However, students with average to below average ability lack both the organisational and evaluation skills needed for higher levels of attainment. ICT skills are strongly promoted in discrete ICT lessons, and importantly, students practise and hone them in many other subjects of the curriculum. They are achieving well overall in developing their ICT capability.
128. Teaching quality is good. A high level of expert knowledge and very effective planning realise the purpose of lessons. Care is taken to consolidate learning. Teachers have high expectations, and the best questioning gives students appropriate challenge. Of particular note is the way teaching fosters a culture of technology in the way students are helped to develop and apply their information handling and communication skills. Timely intervention and considerate support sustain students' involvement and make a noticeable contribution to their learning. Almost without exception, students become engaged in activities, and draw upon earlier learning. A less than satisfactory aspect of teaching is in the insufficient directed questioning to involve students. Consequently teachers do not gain as much knowledge as they could about the extent of students' learning. Oversight during practical sessions is sometimes too distant. Occasionally then, students lose concentration and learn less than they should, although no lessons were unsatisfactory overall.
129. Courses for all students throughout Years 7 to 11 are well structured and backed by good guidance and much improved resources. Students' work is rigorously assessed, and arrangements for giving them subject-specific feedback and guidance are now in place.
130. The department is excellently led and managed and is very effectively raising the quality of provision and standards. A perceptive management strategy for raising standards and achievement is backed by comprehensive development planning. Its implementation indicates a very high commitment and endeavour both to support students in developing their ICT capability throughout the curriculum and to strengthen the work of the relatively new teaching team. There has been very good progress in provision since the previous inspection and there is a clear capability to make further improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

131. The increase in resources has allowed greater access to computers in most other subjects, and to computer suites. As a result of excellent leadership, comprehensive advice, guidance and training, ICT is now embedded firmly in the schemes of work in most subjects, and the actual use of ICT is well developed in almost every subject. In modern foreign languages very effective use of interactive whiteboards and good use of a computer suite promote learning. Some software is not appropriately challenging, however. Students make very good use of digital cameras and image manipulation software to extend both their ICT skills and importantly their creativity in art and design. Students have very good opportunities to use computer-aided design software, linked to manufacturing, in design and technology. They enhance their design portfolios through the competent use of desktop publishing software. In subjects such as geography and history good use of Internet research and presentational software enhances students' learning. In English, students make effective use of word processing to redraft and improve their work. Video cameras are used in physical education to extend students' understanding of movement and performance enhancement, with clear plans to develop digital analysis further. Elsewhere, use is made of presentation software to enhance lessons. However, resources for classes of students to use ICT to develop their music skills are too limited at present. Overall, students show good and developing competence in using ICT to

enhance their work. Notably, they are making good progress in developing their ICT capability by practising their skills in many areas of the curriculum. The difficulties in accommodation and rooming arrangements mean that all subjects cannot make as full use of ICT as they would wish.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 9 and Year 11 achievement is good.
- Teachers are now using a greater variety of teaching strategies to improve students' learning.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress.
- Self-evaluation is not sufficiently developed as a tool for further improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The teaching environment has a negative impact on staff and student morale.

Commentary

132. When students arrive in Year 7 their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding are average. By Year 9 standards are above average. In 2003, teachers judged that they were well above average. By Year 11, standards are above average. In the 2003 GCSE examination girls did not reach standards as high as the boys'. Standards seen during inspection were above the national average.
133. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. For example in a Year 9 lesson on economic development, peer assessment was used to deepen students' understanding and contributed to above average achievement. By the end of Year 11 achievement is good. In both key stages boys achieve as well as girls in lessons and students with special educational needs make good progress. Teaching assistants support students with special educational needs well and make a significant contribution to their overall achievement. More able students are appropriately challenged by teachers and this enables them to achieve well also. For example in Year 9, an Internet-based investigation is used to assess exceptional performance.
134. Teaching and learning are good overall. The best teaching is characterised by challenging content delivered imaginatively by teachers with very good subject knowledge and relationships with students. Since the last inspection teachers have begun to enhance schemes of work with a variety of teaching and learning strategies including the use of ICT. Students learn well because teachers challenge them and provide good opportunities for them to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Enquiry work and fieldwork, which are integral to the programmes of study, are used to good effect and enhance learning. Teachers have very good, positive, relationships with their students. Teachers know their students well. Lessons are generally well structured and assessment is good. Students are aware of the level they are working at and of how to improve.
135. The use of mathematics to support learning is satisfactory. For instance, in Year 9, students use numeracy alongside cartographic and graphical skills to develop an index for the quality of life as part of an assignment on South Africa. Other aspects of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy are being explored in the department. New schemes of work, which are being developed, place a much greater emphasis on the use of assessment to improve learning. Students use ICT to research topics, to improve the presentation of coursework and, for example, as a mind-mapping tool. Writing frames and other tools to improve students' literacy skills are being used but these are at an early stage of development. Homework is given regularly which helps students to consolidate and extend their learning.
136. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has created an effective team of teachers that works well together. Leadership is competent and committed and there are clear lines of responsibility in the department. The use of data to monitor

performance has improved since the last inspection although other self-evaluation is more informal. A more systematic and rigorous review of the quality of teaching and learning using appropriate strategies such as lesson observation, the analysis of students' work and data analysis would assist in raising standards further. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, with standards maintained in Years 7 to 11. The quality of teaching has improved with a broader range of strategies now in place. There is a greater variety of teaching materials which are used to improve students' learning, including ICT. The use of data has improved but the quality of the teaching environment remains a concern because of its negative impact on staff and student morale. The geography rooms have difficult access and cause difficulties of overcrowding and movement.

History

The provision for history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good by the ends of Years 9 and 11.
- Both higher and lower attaining students do very well.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Lessons are often very interesting and imaginative.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teachers do not use ICT enough to support learning in lessons.
- Feedback to students in Years 7 to 9 needs to be more frequent and precise.

Commentary

137. Standards by Year 9 are well above average. This reflects teacher assessments that have been well above average in recent years. Greater proportions than nationally reach the highest levels. The achievement of all groups of students is very good and they often make rapid progress in lessons that are interesting and stimulating. Students become good at reading and interpreting historical sources and producing structured writing.
138. Results at GCSE in 2003 were above average. In current Years 10 and 11, standards are well above average. The subject is very popular and many more students than in most schools take the examination. Teachers plan lessons very well, based on a very good understanding of what students need to do to do well in examinations and coursework. Teaching is very good overall, with some that is outstanding. Consequently, students tackle difficult questions with skill and enthusiasm, and achieve very well.
139. Teachers have high expectations for students' learning. Lessons often proceed at a rapid pace and students rise to the challenge to work quickly and accurately. Well-designed activities that have very clear purpose, incisive questioning and good humour, combine to make lessons interesting and productive for all groups of students. A very good variety of teaching methods is used including *PowerPoint* presentations to several classes, and dramatic reconstructions. Whilst the use of ICT to find information and extend learning is encouraged, it is not yet established as a part of the repertoire of teaching for every class. Marking is good, and at its best for GCSE students. However, in Years 7 to 9, students are less clear about the standard at which they are working and what to do to improve, as feedback about progress is less frequent and precise.
140. Leadership and management are very good. Very good teamwork is evident amongst the talented group of teachers who make up the department. The sharp focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning is impressive. The department is prepared to implement new strategies, such as teaching boys and girls in separate groups to achieve improved standards of students and the quality of their education. A good tracking system has

been developed to set targets and monitor progress. The pace of change is rapid and there is a very good grasp of what needs to be done. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is mainly good and the best lessons are informative and challenging.
- Leadership and management within the subject are effective, showing a clear sense of direction in planning change and improvement.
- The curriculum is well balanced with good opportunities for students to reflect on what might be learned from religion.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the students' personal development especially the spiritual dimension of their learning.
- The range of writing opportunities is too narrow and skills in writing for the subject are not systematically developed from Years 7 to 11.

Commentary

141. Standards in Year 9 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Students have a sound awareness of the distinctive features of belief and practice in a range of religious traditions. Focused work in lessons helps students to make steady gains in their understanding of important religious ideas such as the meaning and significance of symbolism. Good use of talk and discussion is particularly helpful for middle and low attaining students, allowing them to gain confidence in sharing views and opinions. Work for more able students is, too often, undemanding which limits the development of their thinking and reasoning skills at the level and rate of which they are capable. Students with learning difficulties make good progress through well-planned support and are able to work at an appropriate pace. Achievement overall is satisfactory.
142. There were no entries for GCSE in 2003 but a small group of students followed a full course GCSE religious studies in 2004. Standards of the current Year 11 following a non-examinable general religious education course are in line with the average expected in the local agreed syllabus. The students have a clear understanding of the qualities of important religious figures such as Gandhi and of their impact then and now. Assessment assignments show some mature reflection on life's fundamental questions. The students make substantial gains in their knowledge and understanding. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good.
143. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned and the purpose of the learning is made clear to the students. Teachers expect students to work hard and behave well. Most students rise positively to these demands and work co-operatively with their teachers and with each other. The best lessons make good use of open questions and inspire students to think for themselves. In a lesson in Year 8, for example, students worked enthusiastically to reflect on the importance of a 'murti' to a Hindu community. Students in a lesson in Year 10 came up with some interesting ideas on the problem of evil and suffering. In these lessons the teacher's very good command of the subject is used well to widen the students' perceptions, and learning is good. In a minority of lessons that are less successful but still satisfactory tasks are too easy, especially for more able students. On occasions, in lessons taught by non-specialists religious ideas are not fully explored. In one lesson, most untypical of the school, students' poor behaviour was a barrier to learning.
144. Homework is used well to help students to consolidate their learning and the students make appropriate use of ICT in their presentations. In-class assessment, the use of the reward system, and appropriate use of praise, help students to check their understanding. Students

gain useful knowledge of their progress through regular reviews of their work and through the consistent use of constructive comments in marked assessment assignments. Most students are aware of their subject and curriculum targets but are as yet unsure of their level of attainment and what they should do to improve.

145. Good opportunities for personal reflection provide a firm basis for students' development in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of learning. Some lessons are too highly structured and leave little opportunity for the students to work independently. There are some useful links with the local faith communities for visits, for example to places of worship, helping students to appreciate religion at first hand. Artefacts are used well in lessons. Accommodation and resources are adequate.
146. All students in Years 7 to 11 are provided with their entitlement to religious education. This is a considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection. The head of department knows what needs to be done to maximise the opportunities that this provides, especially for students in Years 10 and 11, several of whom talk of their regard for the subject. The subject is effectively and thoughtfully led. Monitoring and support for both students and non-specialist teachers are efficiently managed. There is good capacity for improvement.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- The teaching of textiles is consistently very good.
- A significant amount of the teaching of design is very good.
- There is consistency in the standards reached.
- More challenging opportunities need to be provided for students in systems and control.

Commentary

147. Standards reached by Year 9 students since the previous inspection have improved significantly and are now above national averages generally with some students reaching standards well above average. Students make good progress in many areas of designing, and in making, but are especially good at organising and planning their work, generating design ideas and evaluating their progress. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 many are able to use ICT to carry out fundamental research and complete a task analysis. The quality of making with resistant materials could be improved with more access to computer aided machinery (CAM).
148. By the end of Year 11 the standards that students reach are above average overall and sometimes well above. Many students demonstrate competent skills in using ICT to complete a task analysis, and can develop a specification for a product based on a detailed investigation of the requirements of the user. Students have also developed a greater variety of graphical techniques to improve their quality of presentation, and in textiles students personalise their designs by creating 'mood boards', sometimes to a very high level of achievement. Students are sometimes mistakenly expected to acquire knowledge which is not directly related to the project in hand. Achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is good.
149. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Lessons in Years 10 and 11 are very good, where a broad range of strategies is used to support learning in aspects of design, including the use of peer assessment as adopted in textiles, and paired discussions as

in food technology. In the best lessons teachers also share the purpose of the lessons with their students, have well-prepared exemplar materials to illustrate concepts and aid understanding, and perform practical demonstrations quickly and accurately. Time and resources are managed extremely effectively to ensure practical work is completed. ICT is firmly established as an aid for developing design skills.

150. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has an effective presence in the department, is a very effective role model and leads by example. Relationships between specialist teachers of the various materials are effective and productive. There is a clear vision of where the department is heading supported by clear priorities in the development plan. The majority of individual teachers are committed to the team policies and procedures that are in place and talk enthusiastically about successes in the department. Schemes of work are detailed and linked to the National Curriculum requirements although there are not enough opportunities for students to learn about the 'high-technologies' as is expected in systems and control, including CAM. Monitoring of provision in the subject is well developed. The accommodation is on one site, which promotes a corporate identity, although the food technology rooms do not meet health and safety recommendations and need updating. The school has plans to change the nature and layout of the accommodation for this subject.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement by Year 9 and Year 11 is very good.
- Teaching is very good and inspires students.
- There is a very wide range of work in two and three-dimensional art and design.
- Assessment is very good and students know what they have to do to improve.
- There is inadequate accommodation for the large classes in Years 7 to 9.
- There is a need to improve and ensure health and safety arrangements.

Commentary

151. Students enter school with broadly average skills in drawing and painting. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average for the vast majority of students. The majority show good awareness of composition and use line effectively. They have a good knowledge of the theory of colour and use colour dramatically. The few students who have below average skills finish their work with less quality and have spent less time on their work. By the end of Year 9 achievement is very good.
152. In 2003 GCSE examination results were well above average with over 80 per cent of students gaining A*-C grades and 4 per cent gaining grades A*/A. This continues a rising trend since the previous inspection. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are also well above average. Work is bold and dramatic with very good use of line and colour. All work is highly individual and students use a good range of media including clay, printing and sculpture. Year 11 students were inspired by a visit to a sculpture park and this broadened their vision of how to present their ideas symbolically. Studies in Surrealism also inspire students to present their ideas inventively. There is very good use of ICT for research and in the manipulation of images that adds to the success of work. Achievement is very good. Students build systematically on their skills and acquire confidence to experiment widely.

153. Teaching and learning are very good. The teachers have very good expertise in the subject. They give very good demonstrations in the key skills of drawing and painting so that students learn from visual examples. They use a very good range of illustrations from the work of major artists and art movements that inform and inspire their students. They encourage students to be creative and imaginative and ensure that there is provision for individuals to work to their own strengths. They promote skills which help students to be critical and analytical of their own work and that of their peers. Students gain a good awareness of the place of art and design in the world of work.
154. Assessment is very good. All students get very good individual support and are made aware of what they have to do improve. This ensures that all students, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, make equally good progress.
155. Leadership and management are excellent. There is great vision and enthusiasm for promoting standards and achievement. There are stunning displays of students' work that inspire and inform. There are very good attitudes to the subject, and a higher than average proportion of students choose art and design in GCSE.
156. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by promoting the emotive in art and by the focus on students' personal interests, concerns and experiences.
157. There is very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards and achievement, teaching and learning and students' attitudes have improved very significantly. However, there is unsatisfactory improvement in accommodation and resources are still barely adequate. In view of the wide range of materials used in lessons there is a significant and important need to maintain these effectively and to wash surfaces to ensure adequate health and safety.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management support very good, well-planned teaching.
- Good relationships and high expectations support learning.
- The good assessment policy helps teachers and students.
- There is a healthy instrumental programme at elementary and intermediate level but it requires more rigorous monitoring of provision to increase higher levels of expertise.
- Basic skills in Year 7 require a more sustained level of continuity and progression.
- Accommodation remains inadequate and resources require further improvement.

Commentary

158. Standards in music are within national averages by the end of Years 9 and 11. Many students enter school with standards in music below National Curriculum expectations and this restricts their capacity to achieve higher standards by the end of Year 9. Small numbers of students have studied music in Years 10 and 11 but have produced a variable quality of GCSE examination results in recent years. The standards of the present Year 11 are below average in some of their work. Standards of instrumental and vocal tuition across the school vary in range from elementary to intermediate level. The department did not have leadership for a significant length of time prior to the appointment of the present head of department and this has negatively affected standards overall. The present head of department has introduced a series of measures that are beginning to produce encouraging results.

159. Achievement by the ends of Years 9 and 11 is now good in the students' current work. The current quality of teaching is giving students the confidence to meet lesson targets successfully. In Year 10 the ICT skills of the teacher are helping students achieve higher standards in composition. Students with special educational needs achieve well; this was particularly noticeable in a Year 8 lesson where two students with special educational needs were applauded for the quality of their achievement.
160. Teaching is very good and at times excellent. The two teachers are highly competent musicians who know their subject very well and can teach effectively at all key stages, including post-16. A wide range of teaching strategies is used: paired work, independent learning, plenary sharing and whole-class teaching. There is a strong work ethic, with good discipline and relationships producing positive interaction between staff and students. The teachers work very hard, planning is rigorous and they offer a broad extra-curricular programme. The result is that the quality of learning is clearly improving. There are examples of good quality literacy and citizenship and of aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension combining to support learning.
161. Leadership is very good. The new head of department has created an atmosphere conducive to learning and she supports the assistant music teacher very well. There is a caring ethos. The department is managed very well and music is promoted as an inclusive subject. The curriculum is broad and balanced although a more structured approach to the teaching of notation in Years 7 to 9 would improve the competency of older students.
162. A new assessment policy, which includes baseline and peer assessment, is informing the department and encouraging more effective planning. The department needs to look at ways of using information from its own baseline assessment to plan Year 7 courses in particular and develop teaching strategies to encourage the continuity and progression of basic skills throughout Years 7 to 9.
163. There is a clear need to monitor the instrumental and vocal teaching more rigorously and to develop a closer dialogue with the main provider of those services.
164. Accommodation remains inadequate, with poor storage, limited space in one classroom and insufficient practice rooms. There is insufficient ICT equipment to meet the needs of the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and many keyboards need replacing. A wider variety of sound sources, notably tuned percussion instruments, would enhance the available teaching resources.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching and learning are leading to good and very good achievement.
- There is a strong sporting ethos in the school.
- Extra-curricular sports provision is outstanding.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- Improvement since the last inspection is excellent.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but require further improvement.

Commentary

165. Standards by Year 9 are above average. Teachers' assessments show that, in the past three years, over 90 per cent of students achieved the nationally expected standards. School sports co-ordinators and older students work with children and teachers in partner primary schools

and standards are above average on entry in Year 7. In Years 7 and 8 students develop a wide range of skills in many different activities. The majority can send and receive in ball games, particularly rugby and hockey, and demonstrate good technique and fitness levels in athletics. Lessons include time for students to practise and refine skills, work together in groups, watch others and comment on their own and others' performance. This reinforces learning, so that by the end of the Year 9 all students are reaching standards above expectations and achieving well.

166. By Year 11 standards are well above average. The combination of increased curriculum time, very good teaching and an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities results in a high standard of physical education and school sport. In hockey and dance students work independently to organise and coach others. By the end of Year 11 the majority can plan, perform, coach, lead and officiate in sport. Teachers encourage students to do their very best in games, athletics, swimming and gymnastics and to participate in after-school sport. Consequently by the end of Year 11 most achieve highly. A significant number of students excel in school, county and national competitions. Leadership by students is developed throughout both key stages; students are expected to lead warm-ups, demonstrate to others and take responsibility. Sport education is taught particularly well and makes effective use of additional curriculum time in Years 10 and 11. The majority of students are exceeding the national target of at least two hours each week of high quality physical education and school sport within and beyond the curriculum.
167. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are expert at maximising lesson time. They have high expectations of students, use questioning well and provide quality feedback on how to improve. Teachers make learning in physical education fun. Learning support assistants ensure that students with special educational needs receive very good individual support. Teachers' planning needs to ensure that students achieve their very best in all lessons. Assessment of performance in lessons is used well, but further measures are required to ensure that students set targets, and know what standards they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Further use of digital analysis software and the installation of computer facilities in the physical education classroom would enhance learning.
168. The very best teaching is in Years 10 and 11. Students following the GCSE course consistently reach well above average standards. A few Year 9 students passed the GCSE short-course examination. These results are exemplary and are a direct result of very high quality teaching and learning, particularly in theory lessons. Personal exercise plans and coursework are completed to a very high standard. Achievement is high because the pace and challenge in lessons place considerable demands on students to provide answers in quick succession, complete tasks and test each other. The competitive nature of lessons means that students have to work hard; however, time is spent ensuring learning is secure before moving on. Homework is set regularly to reinforce learning.
169. Students' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Participation rates are very high and the standard of physical education kit worn by all students is exceptionally good. They thrive on the system of rewards. Sport is celebrated through displays around the school and the presentation of stamps, colours, ties and awards for high achievement. A few talented students act as sports prefects, supporting the work of the physical education department and championing school sport. There is a strong sporting ethos in the school; extra-curricular sports provision is outstanding. In 2003 the senior rugby team were national champions and four boys represented England at different age groups. Several girls play hockey and netball at county level and many teams and individuals regularly achieve success at a local level. Older students serve as role models and younger students strive to achieve similar success that contributes to the very high standards in physical education and sport.
170. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The subject leader has reinvigorated physical education, raising the quality of teaching and learning, and is making physical education much more inclusive and accessible for all students. Increased staffing

levels enhance the curriculum and extend opportunities for enrichment. Closer monitoring of lessons would remove some inconsistencies in teaching and learning and improve standards further. The department is responsive to new ideas and embraces new initiatives. Partnership working with other schools and community sports clubs is very well developed. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent. Facilities are good and make a positive contribution to the very high standards in the department.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies was inspected in Years 10 and 11 only.

A small group of students is beginning to follow a vocationally-based **leisure and tourism** course in Year 10 but it was not possible to make judgements about overall provision or standards at this stage in the development of the course. Sampling showed current teaching and learning to be satisfactory with some good features.

Business studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of students is good; they make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of business terms.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good because teachers use challenging questions and a wide range of teaching approaches.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good because teachers support them well and have very effective classroom management skills.
- The leadership and management of the department are good; the newly appointed head of business studies has established clear priorities for future development.
- Raising the profile of the subject in the school and increasing the number of students following the GCSE course are areas for development.

Commentary

171. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were average although those in 2002 were well above average.
172. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment in the work of students currently studying the subject are above average. Most students have a good understanding of the difference between direct and indirect costs, can give practical examples of each of them and are able to explain how costs vary over time. Higher attaining students can accurately distinguish between the internal and external stakeholders in a business and identify the positive and negative aspects of their relationship with it.
173. Overall, the achievement of students is good. They make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of profitability ratios and types of stakeholders and in being able to apply such terms to practical business situations. Good development of analytical skills was demonstrated by Year 10 students describing the relationship between a football club and the local community.
174. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is currently better than students' achievement because staffing difficulties in the past have had a negative impact on students' progress. These have now been resolved. In all lessons, teachers use challenging questions to check students' understanding of the subject. This was the case in a Year 11 lesson on finance where the teacher engaged students in a stimulating debate about the importance of a firm's profits as an indicator of its profitability. A wide range of well-timed teaching approaches,

supported by very good business case studies, ensures students' interest and involvement throughout lessons whilst there are many opportunities for them to develop applications of ICT in the subject. Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good because teachers support them well and have very effective classroom management skills.

175. The leadership and management of the department are good. The newly appointed head of business studies has established clear priorities for the future development of the subject, including raising the profile of it in the school and increasing the number of students following the GCSE course. The department has made good progress since the last inspection because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus for inspection was the citizenship course.

The nature of the school's curriculum and timetable meant that it was not possible to make an overall judgement about the provision for personal, social and health education.

Personal, social and health education

Commentary

176. PSHE was not inspected as a discrete subject. Judgements, where possible, are indicated below.
177. The well-planned course for PSHE is very good. A well-structured, innovative programme is provided in enhanced curriculum days. It covers a wide spectrum of topics relevant to the developing maturity of the students and their life beyond school. Sex, health and drugs-related issues as well as matters relating to cultural diversity and racial harmony are covered and well supported through extensive links with community services. Students consider this work to be enjoyable and challenging.
178. It was not possible to observe teaching, but discussions with students and scrutiny of work show that there is a high level of commitment to this area of the curriculum. The breadth of opportunities for students to evaluate their own and others' learning is an especially strong feature of the PSHE provision. This makes a significant contribution to students' personal development and, in particular, each student's awareness of how well they are doing. They use their self-knowledge well in regular formal and informal progress reviews with their form tutors. The careers and guidance elements fully meet the students' entitlement and engage them positively in decision-making and confidence-building activities.
179. The leadership of the co-ordinator for PSHE is very good and the comprehensive provision is planned with a clear sense of direction. The co-ordinator inspires outstanding teamwork and the excellence of the management of PSHE is exemplified in the many highly organised events that typify the programme of work. PSHE is making a valuable contribution to the students' learning and achievement and has become important to the overall ethos of the school.
180. At the time of the last inspection the quality and impact of the PSHE provision were good. Good improvement has been made since then.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress in citizenship.

- Teaching is good because the subject is very well led and managed and supported by high quality centralised planning and the use of appropriate learning resources.
- A well-constructed scheme of work enables the three elements of citizenship to be inter-related well during enhanced curriculum days, while an audit has identified opportunities where other subjects make a discrete planned contribution.
- The underlying principles of citizenship permeate many aspects of the school's life and work.

Commentary

181. Standards in citizenship are above average and students achieve well by Years 9 and 11. For example, in Year 7 students are first introduced to the roles and responsibilities of being a member of the school community. This leads to high quality work on the electoral process during the selection of form representatives. All students participate actively and use their emerging knowledge to justify and make an informed choice. Key themes, such as representation, are revisited regularly on a well-planned cyclical basis allowing students to develop increasingly sophisticated insights into the knowledge and understanding they need to become well-informed citizens. By Year 11 students are using this well-developed knowledge of citizens' rights and duties effectively to form and express their own views. For example, they critically evaluate and debate the merits of different democratic voting systems such as first past the post or proportional representation well and learn to critically consider competing views that may not be their own, while reflecting upon what active participation really means.
182. Teaching and learning are good and are continuing to develop well despite many teachers lacking experience in the subject. During enhanced curriculum days all teachers are able to draw upon a very well organised and intelligently planned scheme of work that is effectively supported by high quality centralised planning and well-matched learning resources. After each such event students and teachers all actively participate in a rigorous and frequently critical self-evaluation exercise that requires them to reflect and report upon the quality of their own participation and learning and that of others, and the extent to which it was promoting their responsible involvement in school or community activities. In this way the key principles underlying citizenship education are being actively embedded into the teaching and learning culture of the school. For example, in a Year 10 assembly developing links with a school in Durban, South Africa, were used to raise difficult issues that required students to engage in further enquiry before considering if and how they might effect change within the school's wider global community.
183. Other subjects also make an effective discrete contribution to teaching citizenship. An outstanding example is the work in Year 11 on political and community division in Northern Ireland taught within the history department. During one of these lessons students applied their very good knowledge of political events in the province very well to interpret and challenge the significance and potential ambiguity of partisan 'symbols' that very often limit people's capacity to act independently as well-informed or responsible citizens. In this lesson learning was transformational.
184. Leadership and management are very good. The senior leadership team have given the co-ordinator a clear brief to develop the subject so that it meets all the students' needs, complements the school's existing curriculum including its local community and global links, and meets legal requirements. They also have a thorough understanding of citizenship and provide good role models for other teachers by their own pro-active participation in the subject's delivery. The co-ordinator has responded exceptionally well and energetically to her brief. She has produced a very good modular scheme of work that allows the three elements of the programme of study to be linked; this allows students to use their emerging knowledge of the topics to practise the skills of 'enquiry and communication' and 'participation and responsible action' well. She has established a robust and committed approach to continuing to improve the subject and has demonstrated an outstanding ability to motivate staff and champion citizenship across the school.

185. At the time of the last inspection there was no requirement to report on what is now a new and separate subject and so no judgement is made here regarding improvement since then. However, the school has made good progress in introducing and developing citizenship across the whole school.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The tables below show entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	10	100.0	80.1	60.0	23.7	51.0	29.9
Biology	19	89.5	65.2	15.8	11.1	30.0	20.6
Business studies	4	100.0	76.4	25.0	16.3	37.5	26.2
Chemistry	16	75.0	72.7	0.0	13.9	20.6	24.1
Communication studies	2	100.0	86.4	50.0	23.8	40.0	32.0
Dance	1	100.0	86.9	100.0	35.0	50.0	34.5
Drama	6	100.0	86.5	66.7	19.6	45.0	30.6
English / English language	5	100.0	82.9	20.0	17.5	40.0	28.7
English literature	9	88.9	85.9	11.1	19.1	24.4	30.2
French	5	80.0	78.2	0.0	18.9	24.0	27.6
Design and technology	4	75.0	74.9	50.0	15.1	40.0	25.3
General studies	33	42.4	73.9	6.1	17.8	13.0	25.7
Geography	3	100.0	74.3	33.3	19.8	33.3	26.5
German	3	66.7	81.5	0.0	19.3	23.3	28.9
History	13	76.9	80.7	0.0	19.5	23.1	28.6
Information technology	4	50.0	61.9	25.0	10.9	20.0	21.4
Mathematics	8	50.0	61.9	12.5	17.1	13.8	22.1
Music	1	100.0	86.5	0.0	21.4	30.0	30.7
Other sciences	1	100.0	71.4	100.0	15.8	60.0	24.3
Other social studies	11	90.9	69.7	27.3	16.7	30.0	24.1
Physics	3	66.7	68.6	0.0	14.4	13.3	22.7
Religious studies	4	75.0	80.2	0.0	22.6	27.5	23.1
Sports / PE studies	4	75.0	73.2	25.0	11.4	27.5	23.1

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	25	100.0	98.6	76	50.2	102.4	87.5
Biology	29	100.0	96.4	37.9	39.2	77.9	78.6
Business studies	11	100.0	80.1	45.5	36.8	83.6	80.1
Chemistry	13	100.0	97.6	46.2	49.0	83.1	84.9
Communication studies	15	100.0	99.4	46.7	37.8	80.0	82.1
Drama	11	100.0	99.5	18.2	40.1	81.8	83.6
English/English language	31	100.0	99.4	25.8	36.3	77.4	80.9
English literature	27	100.0	99.5	55.6	46.5	91.9	86.5
French	8	100.0	98.8	50.0	51.5	85.0	87.6
Design and technology	10	100.0	97.8	40.0	35.0	82.0	77.9
General studies	84	100.0	94.7	38.1	31.0	82.4	73.1
Geography	12	100.0	98.7	41.7	44.5	85.0	84.0
German	6	100.0	98.4	16.7	47.9	83.3	84.8
History	34	87.6	84.6	50.0	44.6	87.6	84.6
Information technology	8	100.0	95.6	37.5	24.6	77.5	69.5
Mathematics	12	100.0	96.7	75.0	55.6	98.3	88.8
Music	6	100.0	98.8	16.7	38.9	60.0	81.1
Other social studies	30	100.0	97.4	46.7	42.7	81.3	81.8
Physics	7	100.0	96.7	57.1	44.6	85.7	81.7
Spanish	2	100.0	98.3	50.0	50.2	90.0	86.9
Sports / PE studies	6	100.0	98.0	16.7	30.9	76.7	75.2

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
No students entered	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

A-level GCE courses in English language and literature and in French were inspected.

Sampling took place of lessons in Spanish (AVCE) and Italian (GCSE). Standards in Spanish were well below average and achievement was low but students were benefiting from very good quality teaching and learning. Standards in Italian were above average for the very small group just

beginning a GCSE course to add to their abilities in other languages. Good teaching and learning built on the enthusiasm of the students.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is good.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subject and of examination requirements is very good.
- Students' independence of thought is developed very well.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Most students are keen to participate in discussion.

Commentary

186. Standards are above average overall in English courses. Results in 2003, at A2 level, were around the national average in English language, but above in English literature. AS results were below average in English literature, but were well above average in English language. Achievement in English in the sixth form is good.
187. Some students enter the course, especially in English language, lacking confidence. The terminology is unfamiliar to them, but most quickly learn to use language frameworks. Students who are continuing the course in Year 13 have become proficient in identifying the significance of language features in a variety of texts. They refer confidently to linguistic theory. In English literature, in Year 12, students quickly learn to annotate texts for themselves and are prepared to share their views. By Year 13, they can analyse social and historical factors. Both boys and girls take part in vigorous debate. They can organise their views in formal presentations, sometimes cogently. In written work, some middle attaining students need to justify their opinions with more evidence. Higher attaining candidates can back up their opinions with precise analysis. Overall, in current work, standards are above average and students make good progress across Years 12 and 13.
188. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and often very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. In English language, they give students confidence by showing them the relevance and importance of their own experiences in language use. Teachers provide useful notes and glossaries and ensure that students have a wide range of texts, including transcripts, to analyse. Students are encouraged to form their own independent views, and by Year 13 they are ready to plan their own research project. At this stage of the course, very good teaching resulted in students learning a research methodology that they could apply for themselves. In literature, teachers use well-chosen background materials to promote discussion. Questioning is used well to draw out students' own judgements. Tasks are set up very well so that students carry out their own research and present their views to others. In both courses, good teaching enables students to work independently, and also promotes good quality discussion. Most students join in whole-class discussion, but a few, mainly in Year 12, do not.
189. Teachers have very good knowledge of examination requirements. Students' written work is carefully marked in accordance with assessment criteria, with suggestions for improvement.
190. Leadership of the courses is very good, with a commitment to high standards. The courses are very well managed, especially in creating successful teamwork among staff. Students are given a clear overview of the courses and the assessment criteria. English in the sixth form is enhanced by opportunities to visit the theatre, attend conferences, work with writers, and join the reading group. Progress since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

191. The language and literacy skills of students in Years 12 and 13 are very good. Key skills are not taught separately, but communication skills are developed well through all courses. Discussion and debate are encouraged, and teachers use good questioning to draw students in. Students give formal presentations with appropriate visual aids, including *PowerPoint* presentations. They are confident in using a range of sources for their independent research. They learn to construct arguments, for instance a balanced argument on the influence of the media on social behaviour, written in French by students studying this language.

French

Provision in French is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge.
- Teachers use excellent planning.
- There is very good use of new technologies.
- Some students have very good command of the language and speak fluently and accurately.
- There is a smooth transition from GCSE.
- The quality of some written work is very good.

Commentary

192. Provision both for French and for modern foreign languages overall in the sixth form is excellent. Language courses, for example in Italian and Spanish, for students not taking A-level courses are an unusual but strong feature of curricular provision in the sixth form.
193. Standards on entry to the French course are high. This and a carefully planned transition programme help students to cope well with the rigours of the advanced course. The number of students taking French has increased and the retention rate is very good. Standards are rising and are currently well above average. This is an improvement on the 2003 results in national examinations, when standards at AS and A2 level were average. More boys than is usual are opting in to the course. Achievement is very good and some students show an impressive ability to absorb and re-use new language.
194. Good use of new technologies gives students and teachers access to up-to-date materials from the Internet and satellite television. By the end of Year 12, students can write about a range of current affairs and discuss moral issues such as euthanasia. Some students wrote sensitive and moving essays on the topic of immigration, imagining themselves in the position of an immigrant in France. The facilities in the ICT suite are well used and teachers monitor students' work by talking to them individually, in French, through headphones and guiding them to improve their work. There is a range of applications to help students to consolidate their knowledge of French grammar.
195. Students on the A2 course can paraphrase very difficult passages, downloaded from topical websites, using correct terminology, such as 'palliative care'. They read fluently and with good accents and intonation, tackling even the most challenging and obscure phrases. In one class, students watched a Truffaut film and made notes, using key words, in order to comment on the theme. They made sensitive and mature comments about the juxtaposition of innocence and corruption, unpicking the symbolism of the film. The teacher helped students clarify what they wanted to say about the balance between good and evil. Rigorous checking and questioning prepared the students well for a demanding activity in the subsequent lesson. Some students used an impressive array of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

196. Teaching is never less than very good, and it is often excellent. Excellent leadership and management support it. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge steers students towards the acquisition of a good style of writing. Their planning and preparation are excellent; they prepare students well for the different components of the course and so students learn very well. Some students answer questions at length with good pronunciation and a high standard of accuracy. Teachers' use of French to teach and explain is exemplary. They expect students to engage with them in French, so students are becoming increasingly confident speakers. When they do not know a word, they are often able to paraphrase and thus sustain a sophisticated dialogue. This good practice, coupled with extensive reading in French, helps students to think in the language and so become confident writers as well.

Example of outstanding practice

In a Year 12 French class excellent teaching and use of ICT help students to make the transition from GCSE.

The teacher takes control of the class computers to introduce a verb, which students use quickly to write a sentence on their mini-whiteboards. The task becomes more challenging as they add extra elements to their sentences. Lesson objectives are clearly set out on the intranet and students can see whether the lesson is proceeding according to plan. They work their way through a series of exercises to revise irregular verbs, using a check button when they are unsure, but otherwise challenging themselves to remember. The teacher limits the time available for each activity so that there is an appropriate level of tension and no time is wasted. Meanwhile he uses the communication system to talk to individual students, responding to errors he had noticed on the mini-whiteboards. He questions and encourages them, and so helps them make progress without making deficiencies obvious to the rest of the class.

197. Very good progress in developing modern foreign languages since the last inspection, together with the excellent leadership, is moving achievement forward rapidly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and well supported by good teaching and learning.
- The use of assessment is very good.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are very good.
- The range of modules offered is very good.

Commentary

198. The inspection focused on the AS-level and A-level courses in mathematics and further mathematics.
199. Standards attained at A2 level in 2003 were well above the national average, with a higher percentage of students achieving grades A or B. The below average results at AS-level for students in Year 12 in 2003 has meant that the department has taken up the recently offered revised option to take the third module assessment in the November of Year 13. Consequently there will be no AS results for 2004 for Year 12 students.
200. Standards of work seen in lessons and in a scrutiny of work are above average and are based on good achievement. Mathematical arguments are well presented with full working supported by appropriate diagrams. Higher attaining students annotate their work to highlight key learning objectives. By Year 13, these students have developed their algebraic skills to prove conjectures using a variety of techniques. Some lower attaining students are sometimes

hindered in their progress within new topics by the inaccurate application of earlier algebraic techniques.

201. Teaching in all sixth form mathematics courses is good and consequently students learn well. The teaching of further mathematics is very good. Teachers have subject knowledge that is very good or better. They use this to plan questions to challenge students and to provide high quality notes and exemplar questions to support them. Teachers' questioning allows students to reason and they are encouraged to ask questions. Students work with very good levels of concentration and good collaboration to resolve difficulties, leading to increased levels of confidence with the subject. Teachers place very good emphasis on the phrasing of answers being mathematically correct and use homework effectively to extend the learning of the lesson. The use of assessment to track students' performance is very good, with detailed analysis of areas of strength and weakness.

Example of outstanding practice

High quality planning of and activities in a Year 12 mathematics lesson led to outstanding learning.

In one outstanding Year 12 further mathematics lesson, the teacher's planning was of very high quality, building on the students' reasoning to establish the results in pure mathematics necessary to further the students' understanding of projectile motion in mechanics. The highly interactive style used in the lesson maximised students' achievement as they worked with full concentration on each step of the developing argument. Concise notes were made only when the full argument had been explored. Students' confidence in the derived results was a testament to their understanding and the skill of the teacher.

202. The curriculum in the sixth form is very good and includes opportunities for enrichment. Students are offered a very good choice of modules including pure mathematics, applied mathematics, statistics, mechanics, discrete mathematics and numerical mathematics. Student opinions are sought via questionnaires to consider a range of issues including interest in particular modules and preferred teaching styles.
203. The leadership and management of mathematics in the sixth form are very good. Strategic plans identify appropriate priorities for raising achievement and the department's close tracking of student performance is an example of the good self-evaluation that exists in the department. The use of ICT supports management systems very well.
204. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and in the standards attained.

Mathematics across the curriculum

205. Standards of competence in mathematics are above average and support students' progress in other subjects. Students make good use of measures of correlation in geography. They use mathematical diagrams to illustrate types of vocabulary in religious studies in Year 13, and they consider Plato's mathematical reasoning in religious studies in Year 12.

SCIENCE

Chemistry was the focus for inspection.

Biology was sampled through one lesson observation in which the subject matter was expertly delivered and students made sound progress.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching is supporting the improving results.
- Group sizes are becoming rather large due to the increasing popularity of the subject.
- Results could be further improved, especially at the higher grades.

Commentary

206. Courses are run for GCE AS and A2-level. The A2-level results in 2003 were average. All students achieved a pass and the number of students achieving the higher grade passes was average. These results were a good improvement on those achieved in 2002, which were slightly below average. AS-level results in 2003 were average although a below average number of students achieved the higher grades. Retention rates are very good.
207. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average and these standards are achieved because of very good teaching. In relation to their standards at the start of the sixth form the achievements of students are good and their very positive attitudes mean that the quality of learning is very good and they make good progress as they move through the sixth form. There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students. Students in Year 13 make good progress in lessons and are achieving well in relation to their GCSE results. In one lesson these students demonstrated excellent use of ICT skills when giving *PowerPoint* presentations to the class about Period Three elements. Year 12 students are building well on work covered at GCSE and are becoming confident with the rules of nomenclature of organic chemistry molecules, and higher attainers are able to draw the molecular structures of complicated molecules.
208. Teaching in chemistry is very good overall, enabling students to learn well. Teachers have high expectations and ask challenging questions. They display very good subject knowledge so that they are able to give clear explanations of facts and the enthusiasm that they have for their subject is transmitted to the students. Lessons are well planned, have a brisk pace and include a variety of teaching and learning styles to maintain students' interest. Reviews at the end of each lesson help to consolidate learning. Students are encouraged to share ideas and help each other. There are plenty of opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills through mini research projects. There are pleasant working relationships between teachers and students during lessons so that students feel able to ask questions if they need to. Although ICT is used, the staff would like the facility to use it more.
209. Assessment is rigorous and carried out according to examination criteria. Marking is thorough and appropriately annotated, giving clear guidance to students on areas for improvement. There is regular testing during and at the end of work modules, and targets are regularly reviewed so that students are always aware of their progress. Homework is set on a regular basis and is used to reinforce work covered in lessons, often comprising past examination questions. Lunchtime drop-in sessions are held for students who need additional help and intensive weekend revision courses are held off-site at examination time.
210. Leadership and management of the department are very good and there is a good team ethos within the department with all staff being committed to the continued improvement of examination results. The head of department is currently targeting the potential number of higher grades. The increasing popularity of the course now means that the group sizes have become rather large but an additional group would have staffing implications. All staff are chemistry specialists enabling them to deliver lessons with confidence. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The department receives very good support from the technical staff. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good as results were then well below average.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subject.
- High expectations of endeavour encourage students to be highly motivated and involved.
- Teaching methods are not sufficiently adapted to a wide range of students' abilities in the very small teaching groups currently in the sixth form.

Commentary

211. Students follow an A-level GCE course. Standards overall are above average and current achievement is very good. In 2003 only a small number took the A2 course, and reached well above average standards but too small a number for statistical comparison took the AS examination. The ICT course is not as popular now as last year, with very few students in the current Year 12 and 13 classes. Standards in work seen and in lessons are average to above average. Students who are methodical in their organisation and diligently ensure they meet all the assessment criteria of the course attain higher standards and achieve very well. Where these attributes are less well developed then standards are not so high.
212. Overall, teaching is very effective. Considerable strengths lead to very good learning. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are reflected in effective planning that incorporates carefully sequenced tasks backed by very good use of resources. Good use of exposition and discussion, and a good variety of activities within a lesson, help sustain students' interest, as in a Year 12 lesson where students quickly gained familiarity with the social implications of ICT in manufacturing and commerce. Learning is strongly reinforced by giving individual students differential support whilst they work. Students are made clearly aware of the teachers' high expectations of learning and deadlines, often linked to examination requirements that are to be met within lessons and in homework assignments. One particular area of teaching needs development: students in small group tutorial situations should be more overtly involved in contributing to the session.
213. Students are confident about their work, but often lack confidence to speak clearly and cogently about it. Students feel well supported and appreciate the day-to-day interest that teachers show in them and the more formal discussions with them about their coursework and progress. Students' work is rigorously assessed, and they value highly the new on-line arrangements for giving them prompt subject-specific feedback and guidance using a software package.
214. Excellent leadership and management incorporate a clear strategy for raising standards and achievement. All those involved in teaching the ICT course demonstrate a very high commitment and endeavour to support students and improve their effectiveness. Since the previous inspection, a GCE course replaced an after-school course in conjunction with a local college and indications are that the most recent unvalidated results are markedly improved. Reviewing course provision in relation to local circumstances, and increasing recruitment onto the sixth form course, are challenges well within the capacity of the new post-16 teaching team.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

215. There is no subject teaching of ICT for the great majority of students in the sixth form other than for the small number studying examination courses in the subject. However, courses in many subjects ensure ICT skills and capability continue to be developed. For example, students make very good use of manipulating digital images in their exploratory studies in art and design. Individual students in French are ably supported in applying ICT skills, and satellite communication exposes students to news and current affairs programmes in the languages they study. Video conferencing supports a student of further mathematics. Many teachers use data projection to enhance presentation in their lessons. Word processing and Internet research form integral components of coursework in many other subjects. Students put the facility to very good use when completing university application forms (UCAS). There are

currently no computers dedicated exclusively for sixth form use. Instead, the students find satisfactory the arrangements for them to have a drop-in facility for using a computer workstation wherever one is free, either in ICT lessons or in the school library.

HUMANITIES

Advanced GCE courses in geography, history and religious studies were inspected.

An A-level GCE government and politics course was sampled. Teaching and learning are good.

An A-level GCE psychology was sampled. Teaching and learning are good.

The school does not provide for a general religious education course for all students.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is a decline in the number of students opting for sixth form study of geography.

Commentary

216. In recent years the geography department has gained A2-level results in line with national average of A to E grades, although the number of students opting for the subject has fallen. The percentage of students obtaining the highest grades (A, B) fell to below the national average in 2003. Although the average points score fell, it was higher than the national figure. This represents satisfactory achievement overall given the standards of the students when they started the course. In 2003 the standards reached by girls was well above the national average but that of boys was below average. Twenty-six students were entered for AS examinations in 2003 and all achieved grades A-E that were in line with expectations.
217. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' folders confirms that standards are above average and that achievement is satisfactory. The oral and written work is sound and standards are in line with what they were at the time of the last inspection. Students successfully build on the skills and knowledge that they have acquired. For example, they demonstrate detailed information about places, environments and themes and show knowledge of geographical terminology. They show understanding of the way in which a wide range of physical and human processes interact to influence the development of geographical patterns. They undertake geographical investigation, collecting a range of appropriate evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources, using relevant skills and techniques. They communicate their findings clearly and can evaluate the validity and limitations of their evidence and conclusions.
218. Good teaching leads to effective learning where students are well motivated, inquisitive and committed to study. Teaching is carefully planned and lessons are well structured. The teachers use their very good subject knowledge and questioning skills to challenge students. Teachers now use a greater variety of strategies to enhance students' learning, including ICT. Students are given opportunities to study aspects of the course that interest them and are taught independent learning skills and strategies that help to equip them appropriately for the demands of further and higher education. As a result students are well motivated and work hard. They work well co-operatively in pairs and small groups and relationships are good in lessons.
219. Leadership and management of the geography department are satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and work well together. Their knowledge of individual students' capabilities and learning styles contributes well to the students' achievement. The use of data to set individual student targets and monitor performance is improving although other self-evaluation

techniques such as lesson observation are not used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Weaknesses in accommodation have a negative impact upon the morale of staff and students.

History

Provision for history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and students achieve very well overall.
- Teaching is very good, always enthusiastic and sometimes inspiring.
- Students have excellent attitudes to learning and collaborate very well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Opportunities for learning by independent analysis and evaluation are restricted.

Commentary

220. Standards at AS-level and at A2-level are above average. This reflects the results of examinations in recent years. A particularly good feature is the very good results at A and B grades. Students achieve very well overall.
221. The overall very good achievement is due to consistently high quality teaching, some of which is imaginative and inspiring. This is based on a very good grasp of examination requirements and the high quality marking and guidance given by teachers for all aspects of students' work. Expectations are very high.
222. Students in Year 12 are coming to terms with the increased demands of AS study as this is well supported by teaching that is clear, precise and engaging. Teachers plan for progression very well. Consequently, students rapidly learn techniques such as note taking and reporting back on their own research. By Year 13, students can write mature, analytical essays that address the question, showing an impressive factual knowledge. Their understanding of complex sources is often very good, based on a thorough grounding in background events and personalities. However, some students lack confidence in applying learning to arrive at their own explanations of broader questions, partly due to less emphasis being placed on this expectation in some lessons.
223. Teaching is very good and based on very good subject knowledge. Teaching methods combine a very good mix of approaches. Some teaching is particularly engaging. For example, lecture style lessons based on overwriting transparencies focuses learning very well due to the high quality of explanation, energy and good humour of the teacher. This lecture style approach is very effective in laying out the big picture and conveying the main issues. A very effective Year 12 lesson about Rasputin was imaginatively and amusingly based on the lyrics of a '70s pop song. A lesson about serfdom in 19th century Russia was made more relevant by references to the modern day experience of slavery.
224. The sixth form courses are very well led and managed and the team of teachers effectively collaborates on planning and assessment. Improvement since the last inspection is good. New courses have been very well established due to a rigorous process of evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and student performance.

Religious studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding and their achievement is very good.
- Teaching is always good or better and lessons are well informed and interesting.
- Students show a high level of interest and learning is very good.
- The course is well planned to meet the needs and aspirations of the students.

Commentary

225. The inspection focused only on the optional GCE course taken by a small number of students. The number of students entered for AS and A2 level work each year is too small to make viable comparisons with national averages. In 2003 eight students entered for the AS paper and gained results in line with their predictions. Four of the students achieved better than their average in other subjects. Standards of work seen in the current Year 13 are above average. This is as a result of well-focused and engaging teaching. Students have a thorough understanding of the facets of religious language and can effectively explain the various views of scholars in this field. Students come to their sixth form work without previously experiencing examination work in this subject. They make substantial gains in reasoning and applying thoughtful comment when introduced to new ideas. Achievement is very good.
226. Teaching is good, often very good. The teachers' expertise in the subject ensures that content and materials in lessons are thoroughly researched. The teacher uses topical illustrations, often drawing on mathematical principles especially when introducing unfamiliar and philosophical ideas such as Wittgenstein's idea of functional analysis. The teachers' enthusiastic delivery inspires the students to work to the best of which they are capable. Good humour and friendly relationships combined with excellent use of time enable students to learn confidently and quickly. Even though the number in the groups is very small, students are encouraged to participate and as a result there is good interaction among them.
227. Assessment is used constructively to promote progress, especially through the diagnostic comments in the marking of assignments. The teacher supports the students effectively in lessons and creates good situations in which they can evaluate their own learning. The students are knowledgeable about the grades they are capable of achieving and how they can work towards success. Religious studies is making a good contribution to their academic as well as their personal development.
228. The course is effectively led and managed. Resources are adequate. There is a useful supply of reference material available. The head of department monitors the course and the students' performance efficiently and has prepared a clear development plan with well-identified strategies for further improvement.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

An A-level course in design and technology was inspected.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology (product design, resistant materials and textiles products) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- ICT is used extensively for design purposes.
- Sophisticated levels of design developments and decisions are achieved.
- More opportunities should be available to enable students to discuss the social and environmental factors related to modern technologies.

Commentary

229. There are no previous results available for this particular course, but design and technology students in 2003 reached above average standards in GCE A2 examinations. By the end of Year 13 standards are above average and sometimes well above average, particularly where students design and make with fabrics and other textile components. To set the scene for designing a product, these students can also produce very creative mood boards by applying skilfully an extensive range of graphical media. Students are very capable at using advanced search facilities on the Internet for finding inspirational ideas. Free-hand sketch work and computer-aided design (CAD) skills, which have both improved significantly by the end of Year13, demonstrate a maturity in individual style and sophisticated presentation skills. Students are competent at developing and articulating specific design details and taking account of the views of others. They write carefully constructed letters as if they were from businesses and companies that give detailed specification requirements for a product. These standards represent good achievement for these students.
230. Teaching is mostly good and sometimes very good. Teachers of the A-level course have a good understanding of the industrial world, including a working knowledge of total quality management and its expectations with regard to the development of product for a pre-identified market. Opportunities, however, for debating the advantages and disadvantages of social and environmental issues related to modern technologies are sometimes missed. Well-prepared exemplar materials help teachers to demonstrate precision of communication, especially with the production of working drawings and matching practical outcomes to an initial specification. Good relationships between students and teachers provide opportunities for students to discuss their work in detail and to receive good feedback from thorough assessments and up-to-date advice on examination requirements.
231. The head of department has a clear presence around the department, is a very effective role model and leads by example. The subject leaders of resistant materials and textiles work closely together by sharing and planning ideas and practices, which provides a coherent and united approach to supporting their students to produce successful and some very interesting products. The very good leadership and management support the good achievement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Advanced level courses in art and design were inspected.

An A-level course in music was sampled by observation of one lesson in which good achievement was supported through very good teaching and learning. The achievement of students following the music A-level course is improving because of the leadership of the recently appointed head of department.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is excellent because students are inspired by the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers.
- All work is highly individual, imaginative and creative.
- There is a very wide range of work in two and three dimensions.
- There is very good use of ICT for research and development of work.

Commentary

232. In 2003 standards in AS-level were well above the national average; half of the students gained grade A and three quarters gained grades A or B. Standards of work seen during the inspection are at a similar level and achievement is excellent. All students respond well to the individual tutorial style of teaching and value the freedom to approach and develop their work in individual ways with no barriers or limits on their ideas. They gain inspiration from the work of major artists and art movements and use their knowledge and understanding of art in highly individual ways. They research ideas thoroughly and experiment widely.
233. In 2003 examination results in A2 were equally impressive; over half gained grade A and over three quarters gained grades A or B. Standards of work seen are at a similar level and achievement is excellent. Again all work is highly individual in concept and in development. All work is highly creative and imaginative. In both years work in drawing and painting is bold and dramatic with exquisite use of line and colour. Life drawing is also particularly good as is sculpture, casting and clay modelling. There is very good use of ICT for research and experiments. Students are mature, serious and composed and speak lucidly about the development of their ideas.
234. Teaching and learning are very good. There is a quality of excellence pervading the department that is due to the teachers' vision and enthusiasm for the subject. The teachers are able to imbue their students with confidence and give excellent guidance on how to research specific aspects of their work. They promote higher order thinking skills and lead the students to be analytical and to consider innovative ways to develop ideas. They lead students to consider a wide range of artists' work for inspiration and to develop their own individual styles. The quality and range of experimental work in sketchbooks are excellent. The shared teaching in both AS and A2 is valued by the students who benefit from the different perspectives, interests and expertise of their teachers. Assessment is ongoing in all lessons; students discuss their progress and aspirations and know what they have to do to improve. There is good promotion of work-related learning and there is an impressive record of students progressing to art in higher education in recent years.
235. Leadership and management are excellent. There is great vision and energy that have led to a vibrant ethos in all areas of the department. The studio environment created, where all students have their own working space, is conducive to work. All students keep their work ready for continuation and devote a great deal of time outside of lessons to perfecting their ideas. There are stunning displays of students' work that inspire and inform. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by considering these aspects in their personal responses.
236. There is very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards and achievement have improved very significantly as have students' attitudes. Art is a very popular subject; one-third of the sixth form students take art. This is largely due to the success of the department and the opportunities provided to experiment and to be creative. There is a need for more technical help in view of the range and diversity of the work being done. Overall, this is now an exemplary department.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

237. A GCE A-level course in physical education /sports studies was inspected.
238. Intermediate and advanced vocational courses in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism were sampled. Leisure and travel courses currently serve a niche market in the vocational curriculum post-16. Results show impressive gains in terms of the value being added so that standards reached are in line with the national averages and demonstrate very good achievement. This follows from the good teaching, highly structured materials, the very good grasp of assessment criteria, and careful monitoring of student progress, which lead to good learning. Students taking the courses normally have a lower prior attainment in terms of Year 11 examination results and there are varying numbers studying them. This results in

inconsistent group sizes, usually with small numbers. There are some mixed year group and mixed course classes leading to differing qualifications being taught in the same lesson which compromises opportunity, but it is well managed. Students make good progress in lessons because their learning is very well guided by the in-house materials which make clear what is required and show how to reach the next grade. Teaching is good since it uses a variety of methods and resources including visits and speakers. Students also learn to use ICT extensively and appropriately, thus developing their ability to work independently. There is clear evidence of progression through the year in the work seen because of the good organisation, clear use of the assessment criteria, feedback from teachers after an assignment and the ability to meet deadlines. Accordingly, achievement is good. Very good leadership and management are provided by the head of vocational education who has a clear grasp of the subjects and how to raise attainment. Also impressive is the pastoral care students receive from the teaching team, which aids their increasing maturity and personal and social development. The school has recognised the urgent need to plan for national changes to curriculum and assessment in these areas.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students take responsibility and act as ambassadors for the school.
- Achievement in extra-curricular sport is outstanding.
- Not enough use is made of ICT.

Commentary

239. Standards are well above average. A-level physical education/sports studies is well established and whilst relatively small numbers of students follow the course, results are improving and are above the national average. In 2003 six students achieved pass grades. Standards in Year 12 lessons are average, but scrutiny of students' work shows that they have a thorough understanding of observational techniques and training methods. Coursework is completed to a very high standard, usually word-processed and enhanced with digital images and graphical analysis. A large number of students play sport at a high level and therefore have a very good understanding of training methods and personal fitness. This helps them achieve higher grades for their personal exercise plans.

240. Achievement is very good because teaching is well planned and delivered at pace. Very good questioning techniques ensure the majority are challenged to think for themselves and ask questions. All students progress at a very good rate. Some students do not have prior learning from GCSE physical education so teachers review aspects of physiology and biomechanics and relate learning to practical sporting contexts to reinforce learning. Teachers have high expectations of their students and expect them to be fully prepared for lessons. At times, detailed questioning reveals a lack of depth of knowledge of some Year 12 students because they do not do the required reading prior to lessons. Further monitoring of student research and homework is required to improve this. Boys and girls make very good progress in physical education. In partnership with the local sports college ten students achieved the Junior Sports Leaders Award in 2003 and in 2004 two students achieved the Community Sports Leaders Award. Students use these qualifications to deliver sports coaching to primary school pupils and organise sports festivals.

241. Teaching and learning are very good. Curriculum time has been extended to provide students with additional time to research and consolidate learning. Teachers have very good working relationships and good subject knowledge, and challenge students to work hard. Homework is set regularly and marking provides good quality feedback on what to do to improve. The

physical education classroom is an excellent facility for theory lessons, providing students with reference materials, displays and texts to support learning. The addition of networked computers should be a priority to allow ICT to be used much more effectively in lessons and help to raise standards further.

242. Whilst students have no dedicated curriculum time for core physical education they access facilities on a casual basis and are encouraged to take part in the enrichment activities on offer. Students are proud to represent the school in sport and be ambassadors for the school. For example, the senior rugby team wear school blazers and ties on match days, organise their own warm-ups and act as good role models for younger students. The team were national winners in 2003 and four boys represented their county and country at under 18 level.
243. Leadership and management are very good. Sixth form provision is enhanced by the development of examination courses and leadership awards. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent. Recently purchased digital analysis software should be integrated into the A-level course to support learning. Further monitoring of student progress and targeted support is required to help students achieve higher grades.

BUSINESS

A GCE A-level course in economics was inspected.

Economics

Provision in economics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of students is very good; they make very good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and application of economics concepts.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good; teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a wide range of approaches together with relevant case studies.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are very good; they work very well together and with the teacher.
- The leadership and management of the economics course are good; clear priorities for future development have been established.
- Links with business, including the use of speakers and fieldwork visits, allow students to draw on real-life examples, but this is an area for further development.

Commentary

244. The department offers AS and A2-level courses in economics with ten students in Year 12 and 14 in Year 13 currently following them. There are good levels of retention with most students completing their courses.
245. In 2003 all candidates entered for the A2-level examination obtained pass grades. These are recorded in the table of A-level results under the heading of 'Business'. By the end of Year 13, standards in work seen during the inspection were above average. Most students can analyse the demand for football tickets using Internet research, telephone interviews and meetings with representatives of management. They have a good understanding of pricing strategies and can explain what is meant by the marketing mix and niche markets. Most can calculate the contribution of a product to a firm's profits when discussing the reasons for discounting hotel bedrooms.
246. The achievement of students is very good. They make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of economics concepts and applying them to practical situations.

This was demonstrated in a Year 12 lesson where students demonstrated their increasing ability to give a detailed analysis of the factors affecting the demand for ski holidays and why they can change over time.

247. Students achieve very well because of the very good teaching and learning. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to capture students' interest and involve them fully in class discussions. Lessons have a fast pace because teachers use a wide range of approaches together with relevant case studies that enable students to extend their understanding of economic theories. Teachers give very good levels of support to students, particularly in developing their confidence to work independently and carry out research. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They work very well together with very good relationships being observed in all lessons.
248. The leadership and management of the economics course are good. The newly appointed head of business studies has established clear priorities for future development, including increasing the number of students following the course. Links with business, including the use of speakers and fieldwork visits, allow students to draw on real-life examples, but this is an area for further development. There has been good progress since the last inspection because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

An advanced vocational course in health and social care was inspected.

Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching using a specialist team leads to effective learning.
- Student and staff relationships are very good.
- Students are well motivated and keen to learn.
- Some larger resources are becoming dated and will need to be replaced.
- Links with outside agencies could be developed further.

Commentary

249. There are no Year 13 results available for 2003 as no students started the course in 2001. The current Year 13 students are all predicted to achieve a pass on the basis of their Year 12 unit results. Retention rates are good.
250. Year 12 and Year 13 students are taught together as there are small numbers in each year group. The standards of work seen in each year group are above average and students in both Years 12 and 13 are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Students have a clear understanding of the various stages of human development and in one lesson they produced good oral presentations on this topic. In another lesson students demonstrated competency in computer skills when using the Internet to access information about physiological processes for an assignment. The written work of both year groups is well presented and students are developing their discussion skills.
251. Teaching in health and social care is good, so the students learn well. Different modules are taught by specialist staff who are widely experienced with relevant subject knowledge so that they are able to deliver the different aspects of the course with confidence and are fully aware of the course requirements, enabling them to help and advise students on their coursework assignments. Lesson aims are clearly stated at the start of lessons so that students know

exactly what they are to learn and reviews at the end of each lesson help to consolidate learning. There are good working relationships between staff and students, and teachers encourage class discussions and take care to ensure that all students become involved. Students make good progress in lessons and learn well because of the good teaching and because they are highly motivated. They are responsive in lessons and interested in the various topics covered. They take a pride in their work as shown by their coursework assignments that indicate that they explore a wide variety of avenues when undertaking their personal research work. Many of them wish to pursue a career in a caring profession. They work well together and help each other in a mature and sensible way.

252. Assessment and monitoring of student progress is good. The marking of students' work is thorough, provides good feedback to the students and follows the criteria of the examination board.

253. The department is well led and managed and the head of the department is keen to continue to improve results. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. There is a very good range of books available to the students but the high photocopying costs necessary for the course limit the purchase of resources and some of the larger items are becoming dated. The AVCE course did not exist at the time of the last inspection, but has evolved from the old GNVQ course, which was then fairly new to the school and improvement since then has been good.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

254. PSHE was not inspected as a discrete subject. Work was scrutinised, students spoken to and documentation reviewed. Indications are that the well-structured programme is appreciated by students as one of the ways in which they are able to enhance their personal development. It was not possible to observe teaching because much of the taught work occurs in discrete time-tabled days across the whole school. The course builds well upon developments in the main school, including a great deal of support between students, contributing to their social development. Students receive advice and information from a variety of sources and appreciate the wide range of people with whom they have contact. The arrangements for PSHE are clearly effective, being reflected in the excellent responses to school exhibited in students' actions and attitudes. Students are well supported through the careers provision and know what the options are for higher education. Students know that there are adults to turn to if they have problems to discuss. Form tutors and subject teachers are making increased use of target setting to support students' development and students are well able to identify how they can make progress.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is		1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Students' achievement	3	3
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		1
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	1	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		1
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		1
Accommodation and resources	4	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1	1
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	1	1
The leadership of the head teacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	2

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