

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH CRAVEN SCHOOL

Keighley

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121692

Head teacher: Dr A Cummings

Lead inspector: Mr B A Jones

Dates of inspection: 29th November – 2nd December 2004

Inspection number: 268915

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

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Terms used in this report

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the sixth form, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at school.

At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) or the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (A-level). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (AS), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (AEA).

Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of students: 11 – 18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1716

School address: Holme Lane
Cross Hills
Nr Keighley
West Yorkshire
Postcode: BD20 7RL

Telephone number: 01535 632861
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr I Harris
governors:

Date of previous 7th December 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a larger than average mixed comprehensive school. There are 729 boys and 695 girls in the main school. The school has a large sixth form, comprising 292 students. The school has changed little in terms of size and composition since the last inspection. Students come from a variety of backgrounds, including rural and urban, advantaged and disadvantaged communities. Overall, the intake is of average socio-economic status. On entry to Year 7, the intake is broadly average, but the presence of selective schools nearby means that a significant proportion of local higher attaining students go elsewhere. The vast majority of students are white and a small minority is of Asian background; altogether, around three per cent of students come from other minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few students whose mother tongue is not English and none who are at an early stage of learning English. Some six per cent take up their eligibility for free school meals, which is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is 11 per cent, which is below average. The school provides for a wide range of needs throughout the age range including the sixth form, mainly specific learning difficulties, or social, emotional or behavioural problems. Around two per cent have statements of special need, which is average. Last year, some 23 students joined the school and 74 left, other than at the ages of 11 or 16. Attainment on entry to Year 12 is lower than normally found in sixth forms and

amongst the lowest in the local area because the school has open access to entry to the sixth form with no minimum qualification.

The school has specialist Engineering and Technology College status. The school has Artsmark, Sportsmark and Healthy Schools awards. It takes part in Duke of Edinburgh Award, Young Enterprise, Young Engineers, and Sports Leadership Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18462	B. Jones	Lead inspector	
9132	J. Godfrey	Lay inspector	
30690	G. Allison	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
33019	S. Aspinall	Team inspector	Geography
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	History
30749	H.Boyle	Team inspector	Art and design (sixth form)
15079	A. Boys	Team inspector	Science
22695	R. Cardinal	Team inspector	Business studies; work-related learning (WRL); provision for students with special educational needs
30800	B. Colley	Team inspector	Sociology (sixth form)
19586	W. Easterby	Team inspector	English, theatre studies (sixth form)
11508	C. Griffin	Team inspector	English
20287	D. Harris	Team inspector	Modern languages
30825	K. Hayton	Team inspector	Biology, physics (sixth form)
30996	A. Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)
22046	J. Jolliffe	Team inspector	French (sixth form)
15678	J. Radford	Team inspector	Religious education; English as an additional language (EAL)
30901	S. Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design
2079	T. Slack	Team inspector	Design and technology; engineering (sixth form)
31192	J. Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education
1340	D. Wigley	Team inspector	Music; citizenship
8341	W. Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)
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West Park
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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	12
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	18
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	29
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	32
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	34
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	69

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the school is good and it provides good value for money.

Teaching is good and students achieve well. This is an improving school and much of the work of the school is very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is led and managed well; governors make a very good contribution and there is a clear direction to the school's development.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan well and have high expectations of students' work and behaviour. This leads to productive learning.
- Students achieve well overall and very well in German, drama, physical education and music.
- Students' achievements in mathematics, ICT and French are below those in other subjects.
- Teaching support staff are very effective in helping the learning of different groups of students, including those with special educational needs.
- A very good curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of all students aged 14 to 19.
- The new system of monitoring students' progress helps to raise their aspirations and gives students clear targets for improvement. Assessment is used well to provide a basis for good advice and guidance.
- The provision of careers advice is unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8.
- The school has very good links with other schools, colleges and the local community. These links have been enhanced by the school's specialist college status.
- Library facilities are inadequate to support learning effectively.

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection. Teaching is good, as it was previously, and standards are higher. Weaknesses, including those in curricular provision, have been redressed and students are benefiting from an expanded curriculum that offers very good choice. The school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Achievement is good. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were above average. This group of students performed in line with those in schools with whom they were broadly

comparable in terms of attainment at the end of Year 9. In 2004, results were average overall, but below average compared to similar schools. The drop in results was largely attributable to low grades on some double GCSE courses in vocational subjects. These courses have since been judged to be unsuitable and are no longer offered. Standards seen in the inspection are above average in Year 9 and in Year 11, and are higher than recent results because of effective action taken by the senior management team. Students achieve well throughout Years 7 to 11. Standards in the sixth form are average, and students achieve well. Standards are rising across the school because good systems and strategies have been put into place to monitor the performance of subjects. As a result, successful interventions have been made where standards are too low. Weaknesses in teaching have mainly been eradicated. Students with special educational needs and the highest attaining students achieve well. Students whose mother tongue is not English achieve well, in line with their peers. There are no significant differences in the standards of boys and girls.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good and their attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good throughout the main school. There is a good level of consistency to the amount of good and very good teaching and there is a significant amount of excellent teaching throughout Years 7 to 11. As a result, learning is consistently good. The qualities that students bring to their learning in terms of their positive attitudes and good behaviour are significant in their good achievement.

The curriculum is very good and meets well the needs and aspirations of students. Pastoral care in the school is good because the good relationships between teachers and students support personal development and academic progress well. Students receive good, well-informed advice and guidance so that they take courses that best meet their choices and fit their individual needs. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges and the very good links with the local and wider community enhance students' learning opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both good. Leadership by the head teacher and key staff at senior and middle management levels is good. The school is managed well. Governors do a very good job overall, but the school does not comply fully in providing an act of collective worship on a daily basis, and there are some omissions in the information provided for parents.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think this is a good school. Their children settle well and are happy in school. They feel teachers' high expectations ensure their children make good progress. A small number would like more information about their children's progress. Students like the school and feel trusted. They know that expectations are high and they are expected to do their best. They like the wide range of activities on offer and the pastoral care they receive. A high proportion is concerned about behaviour, bullying and racial abuse, but inspectors found behaviour to be good and good procedures are in place to promote harmonious relationships and deal with incidents of bullying.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards and students' achievement in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and French;
- improve the provision of careers advice and guidance in Years 7 and 8;
- improve library provision to support learning more effectively.

Sixth form

- monitor the contribution made by subjects to developing students' key skills to ensure a greater consistency in provision;
- improve the library and study facilities to support students and help them to develop their independent learning skills.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship for all students;
- meet all the requirements in providing information to parents.

THE SIXTH FORM AT SOUTH CRAVEN SCHOOL		
	The sixth form is larger than most other sixth forms. The number of courses provided has been successfully expanded to meet the needs of all sixth form students at the school.	

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form shows good effectiveness. It takes in students from a very wide range of prior attainments, and through good teaching and a very good curriculum enables them to achieve well. The sixth form is led well, and supports students well. Overall, the sixth form shows good cost effectiveness.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are rising. Students achieve well generally and very well in engineering, art and design and drama.
- Leadership and management are good; weaknesses in teaching have been identified and tackled successfully leading to higher standards.
- An imaginative and innovative curriculum has been developed and meets well the needs and aspirations of students with a wide variety of attainment.
- Teaching is good and leads to good learning. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to enhance and support the learning of students with special educational needs.
- The contribution made by subjects to developing students' key skills lacks consistency.
- The library and study facilities are inadequate to support students and help them to develop their independent learning skills.
- There is a good system to monitor students' progress and support them in their work.

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	English language satisfactory. Standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. French good. Students achieve well because of good specialist teaching and students' positive attitudes. Standards are above average. In sampled work in German , students are achieving well in response to the good teaching they receive. Standards are above average.
Mathematics	Mathematics good. Students' standards are above average and they achieve well in response to the good teaching they receive.
Science	Biology satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, resulting in average standards and satisfactory achievement. Physics good. Students achieve well and attain above average standards because of good teaching and their own good attitudes to their study. Sampled work in chemistry showed satisfactory achievement and above average standards. The Advanced Vocational Science is providing a good educational experience for the relatively few students participating with students achieving higher

grades than in their other subjects, representing good achievement. The course is well planned and managed and is a good addition to the post-16 science curriculum.

Information and communication technology	In sampled work in ICT , standards are average; teaching and achievement are good.
Humanities	Sociology good . Standards are average, reflecting good achievement in response to good teaching. Sampled work in geography showed that very good teaching and learning and very good students' attitudes are resulting in very good achievement by Year 13, with standards well above average. Sampled work in psychology showed good teaching and achievement
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Engineering very good . Students' very good attitudes make the most of very good teaching and students achieve very well. Standards are average, students having started from a low base in Year 12. Product design GCE A level was sampled. Teaching and learning are very good; students are achieving very well and reaching above average standards as a result of very good teaching and the level of challenge in the work. The students' attitudes to the work and the subject are excellent.
Visual and performing arts and media	Art and design very good . Very good and enthusiastic teaching capitalises upon students' talents. Students work hard, achieve very well and enjoy their art. Standards are well above average. Theatre studies/drama very good . Very good teaching, often excellent, inspires students who achieve very well. Standards in Year 13 are average, but in Year 12 where students enter with a background in drama, standards are well above average. Music GCE A level was sampled. Standards were above average and students were achieving well in response to very good teaching.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical education and sports studies good . Standards are average. Students achieve well because of good teaching and their own very good attitudes.
Business	Business studies good . Students achieve well in response to good teaching. Standards are above average.

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 school reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Academic support is good. Students enjoy good and supportive relationships with staff. Students know what their academic targets are and their progress towards meeting them, thanks to good marking and record keeping.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are both good. There are very good systems in place to monitor the work of the sixth form and assess the effectiveness of teaching. Good planning has ensured a very good curriculum in this open access sixth form that effectively meets the needs and aspirations of all students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students regard this as a good sixth form and enjoy being students here. They find teachers are accessible and helpful and work is challenging and demanding. They

appreciate the well-informed advice and guidance they receive on careers. In the inspection questionnaire, half of them stated that students did not get on well together, but inspectors found relationships appeared to be good and supportive during the inspection, more in keeping with the school's own study of opinions. Similarly, while students stated that the range of enrichment activities was not good, this was not found to be the case in the investigations during inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement in the main school is good in Years 7 to 11. Standards are above average in Year 9 and in Year 11. In the sixth form, standards are broadly average, reflecting the open access policy that leads to a wider than average range of attainment; achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good throughout Years 7 to 11 because the good teaching across the school means that students learn well. As a result, standards are rising.
- Students achieve well in most subjects, and very well in German, physical education, music, and drama.
- Students' achievements in mathematics, ICT and French are below those in other subjects.
- Sixth form standards are rising because weaknesses have been tackled and the curriculum is very well suited to students' differing needs. Standards are well above average in art and design and above average in business studies, French, mathematics and physics.
- Students' good attendance, good behaviour and positive attitudes are important factors in their good achievement.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school because they are supported very effectively by teaching assistants.

Commentary

Main school

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were average. When account is taken of their standards on entry, this group of students under-performed in mathematics and science but achieved satisfactorily in English. The trend of improvement in results to 2003 was below the trend nationally. The 2004 results in English have not yet been fully validated, but students' results were very similar to 2003. In mathematics, the 2004 results were average and improved from well below average to average compared to students in similar schools. In science, results improved from below average to average compared to all schools and to similar schools. Overall, this group of students achieved satisfactorily.
2. Overall results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average compared to all schools and average compared to schools deemed similar in terms of students' attainment at the end of Year 9. In 2004, results were average compared to all schools, but below average compared to similar schools. The drop in results was largely attributable to low grades on some double GCSE courses in vocational subjects. These courses have since been judged to be unsuitable and are no longer offered. In addition, these students had fewer than average high attaining students and this was reflected in the below average proportion who gained five or more grades at A*-C. In relation to their starting points in Year 7, these students achieved satisfactorily. The trend in results to 2003 was broadly in line with the trend nationally. The trend up to 2004 has not yet been established.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.5 (34.3)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	34.9 (34.8)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	33.7 (32.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 267 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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	56 (49)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (93)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	36.9 (34.9)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 275 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Students join the school with levels of attainment that are average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, standards are more varied. For example, in design and technology they are well below average and are below average in art and design, music and physical education. In the work seen in Year 9, standards have improved in most subjects, reflecting good achievement.
4. In Year 9, standards are above average overall; this reflects good achievement. Standards are above average in English and science; they are average in mathematics. This group of students achieve well in English and science and satisfactorily in mathematics. In Year 9, current standards of work are well above average in German and music and here students achieve very well. Standards are above average in history, geography, physical education and citizenship and achievement is good, and very good in physical education. In design and technology, standards are below average, but achievement is good in relation to students' starting points. In other subjects, standards are average and achievement is mainly satisfactory. Standards are rising in general, and instrumental in this is the good use of the national strategy, which is now used well in teachers' planning. As a result, there is a consistency of approach that helps students to learn more effectively.
5. In the work seen in Year 11, standards are above average. There is a similar pattern to achievement in Year 11 and students achieve well in the great majority of subjects. Overall, the level of students' achievement is clearly linked to the good teaching they receive throughout Years 7 to 11. Standards in mathematics, French and ICT are exceptions and here standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory; teaching in these subjects is satisfactory rather than good. Standards in German, music and drama are well above average and students achieve very well. Standards are above average in English, science, history, geography, physical education, business studies and citizenship and students achieve well, and very well in physical education. Standards are average in other subjects and students achieve well in relation to their starting points in Year 10. Current standards seen are above average in most subjects and higher than recent examination results. The improvement is the result of careful monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the senior management

team and by heads of faculties and subject departments. As a result, weaknesses in teaching have been tackled effectively and good practice has been spread. The impact of changes in staffing is not yet fully apparent in all subjects. In mathematics, for example, there are still weaknesses, but there is a good capacity for further improvement as the changes made by the new leadership and management in the department take effect. In addition, the curriculum has been modified and meets better the needs and aspirations of all students, and this has helped to ensure that achievement is better.

6. Standards of literacy are above average. Students enter the school with average standards in literacy. Overall the standards observed are above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Skills of speaking and listening are good. Students express themselves clearly across a diverse range of subjects such as design and technology, music and religious education. Reading expression is good and most read confidently. Most students can convey their knowledge and understanding effectively by writing with clarity. A small proportion make too many errors in their writing, finding the writing process very difficult. Overall, their well-developed skills ensure that students have full access to the curriculum and that they are able to respond to the learning demands that are made of them. Standards of numeracy are average. This is because numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons and through other subjects, with all subjects planning formally in their schemes of work to develop and use mathematical skills. Students' competence in the use of ICT is average. This is an improvement from the previous report because a strategy to provide resources in subject areas has stimulated improved teaching in subjects across the curriculum.
7. The higher attaining students and those who are gifted and talented achieve well. This is because teachers plan their work effectively to challenge them. They are also given good additional challenges through extra-curricular work and opportunities to study additional subjects such as statistics. There are no students at an early stage of English language acquisition, and those students who come from ethnic minority groupings achieve well, in line with their peers. Most of these students are in Year 7, with smaller numbers in other year groups, and the school is making good headway in developing effective systems for monitoring their progress. Differences in the attainment of boys and girls are not significantly above the national average. Both groups of students achieve well throughout the school. The achievement of students with special needs is good and in line with their peers. In 2004 all students with statements were entered for a minimum of five GCSEs. Nearly all achieved pass grades in all subjects entered, with only one exception in one subject.

Sixth form

8. Attainment on entry to the sixth form varies considerably. Overall, the attainment on entry to Year 12 is lower than normally found in sixth forms and amongst the lowest in the local education authority. Standards seen are average and this represents good achievement overall.
9. In 2003, results overall met expectations that were set on the basis of students' prior attainment, and the group as a whole achieved satisfactorily. In the 2003 GCE A level examinations the average points scores of all students was broadly average. In relation to these students' standards at entry to Year 12, this represented satisfactory achievement. Within this broad category, there were some significant variations and

Year 12 AS students achieved well, as did the lower attaining students in Years 12 and 13. Male students' results were below average, while female students' results were above average. Results improved in 2004, with male students gaining better results while female students' results were similar to those of 2003. There is no national comparison data at this time.

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	89.8 (90.8)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	18.9 (28.7)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per student	230.9 (234.9)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 138 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

10. In the work seen in the inspection, standards are average overall. However, in the subjects seen in the inspection sample, much is above average and where it is average at this point in the course, there is a good capacity for improvement and students are on target to raise the level of their work further. In work seen during the inspection, it is evident that standards are rising, particularly in subjects like art and design where standards are now well above average, and mathematics and business studies where they are now above average. This is the result of careful action from the senior management. Well-focused monitoring and evaluation of the work of subject departments have led to weaknesses being tackled effectively and good practice being spread. Teaching is now consistently good and students have a very clear understanding of examination requirements, and what must be done to improve their work. This accounts for observed standards being better than recent examination results in a number of areas.
11. During the inspection, work was seen in detail in 11 subjects and was sampled in a number of others. In Year 13, students achieve very well in art and design and standards are well above average. In drama and engineering, standards are broadly average, but this represents very good achievement in relation to the starting points of these students. In business studies, French, mathematics and physics, standards are above average and achievement is good. Standards are average in physical education and sociology and achievement is good. In biology, where standards are average, students achieve satisfactorily. Only in English language are standards below average, but when account is taken of students' starting points, achievement is satisfactory. There is a similar pattern to achievement in these subjects in Year 12. However, standards in drama in Year 12 are well above average because these students have experienced and benefited from very good teaching in the subject in their earlier years in the main school.
12. Inspectors found the standards of communication, application of number and the use of ICT to be above average in the subjects inspected in detail. Only in biology were the standards for each skill no higher than average. During lessons, well above average communication skills were observed in engineering, drama and French. Well above average standards of ICT skills were observed in engineering and art and design. Students' mathematical skills enable them to achieve well in other subjects studied. For example, in business studies students were interpreting data from various types of graphs. In psychology the students analysed data effectively from

questionnaire returns. Good graphical analysis and use of formulae were evident in physics and physical education. Across all subjects the standards of working with others, study skills and problem solving were above average. The school supports the students' progress effectively in key skills via a separately taught course, which provides Year 12 students with a 12-week module in each area of communications, number and ICT. This core experience impacts well on the students' standards. However, monitoring and evaluating key skills across all post-16 subjects are not systematic enough for the school to be clear about the strengths and weaknesses in different subject areas and development requirements.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Students' attitudes to work and behaviour are good. Attendance is above national averages and good. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. Punctuality is good. The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of personal development is good. The school has a good working ethos to promote learning and achievement of all students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' good attitudes to learning enable them to achieve well.
- Relationships across the school are good and supportive.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Exclusions have risen considerably over the last year, but the school's policy of using short exclusions is effective in improving behaviour and very few students are excluded on more than one occasion.
- Attendance is good and improving steadily year on year thanks to the school's effective monitoring and promotion of good attendance and the efforts of parents and carers to get their children to school.
- The provision for students' cultural development is very good.

Commentary

Main school

13. Students learn well as a result of their good attitudes. Most students, and especially as they get older, are interested in their work and keen to achieve their best. They are attentive, well motivated and respond well to teachers' questions. They concentrate well in lessons and apply themselves well to tasks. In the very few lessons students become restless and lose concentration, this is related to unsatisfactory teaching and poor motivation of students. Students particularly enjoy drama, physical education, German and religious education. They work well on their own and with each other in pairs and groups. Students are friendly, polite and helpful. They enjoy community responsibilities such as raising money for good causes and participating in sports and drama productions. They feel trusted by the school to act responsibly.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll, Years 7-13	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1646	98	3
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	8		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2		
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	3		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	35	11	2
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	1	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	4		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2		
Chinese	2		
Any other ethnic group	0		
No ethnic group recorded	7	4	

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

14. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspections and is good in lessons and around the school. On the inspection questionnaire, a large proportion of students expressed concerns about behaviour. However, during the inspection, students responded well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. On the very few occasions when behaviour was unsatisfactory this was related to teachers' unsatisfactory classroom management. A significant number of students stated that staff do not treat them fairly and with respect, but this was not evident during inspection. Behaviour in the corridors and at break times is mostly good, although there is some smoking in the toilets, which offends many of the students. Students are careless with their litter in the playground, but there is little vandalism or graffiti.
15. Exclusions have risen significantly since last year and are average for a school of this size. They are most often for disruptive behaviour and recently there has been a rise in drink and drug-related incidents leading to exclusion. The school's policy of using short exclusions is effective in improving behaviour and very few students are excluded more than once. Exclusions are mainly white boys of British origin.
16. The school works hard to promote good racial relationships and to prevent bullying and this results in good relationships across the school. Students work well together in mixed groups and appreciate the efforts of others. Students in Year 7 appreciate the support they received from older students when they joined the school. There is a

high awareness of bullying and although a high proportion of students are concerned about harassment, the school has good strategies for dealing with incidents and most students and parents are pleased with the effectiveness of action taken.

17. Most subjects contribute in a positive way to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although the school's provision is not yet formally planned and monitored. Students' spiritual development is satisfactory. In subjects such as English, music and religious education, students are encouraged to develop self-awareness and to take part in activities which have a spiritual dimension to them, such as discussions on poetry, creative writing, exploration of different religious beliefs and a wide variety of music making. However, in the week of the inspection, the school assemblies and tutor sessions did not include an act of collective worship and there was little time available for quiet reflection. The school provides good opportunities for students' moral development. There is a clear code of conduct that students understand and accept, and they receive good moral messages in personal, social and health education. Activities such as debates and class discussions give students good experience in learning to respect different points of view.

18. Social development is good. Citizenship lessons make students well aware of the responsibilities of living in a community and representatives on the school council have a role in decision making. Students work together well, particularly in the performing arts, team sports and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Students' cultural development is very good. Large numbers of students are involved in music clubs and the school's comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities enables students to follow courses in archaeology, ceramics, French and Spanish and to join lunchtime clubs for chess and science. Gifted students take part in the countrywide 'Maths Challenge' and students in Year 7 develop their cultural awareness and linguistic skills on the very popular trips to North-Rhine Westphalia and Brittany. The school's longstanding support for the work of the Monteverde Conservation League in Costa Rica provides students with a practical way of helping to protect the rainforests and appreciating the cultural traditions of others.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	1.0
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.

19. Attendance is good and improving year on year as a result of a range of effective initiatives used by the school and the efforts of parents and carers to ensure their children's good attendance. The attendance officer knows students and their parents well and has made a good contribution to raising attendance over the last year. In 2003/4 it reached 93.7 per cent. The majority of parents appreciate the need for good attendance. Unauthorised absence is in line with national averages. Registration procedures are good and most form time is used well to enhance students' learning and personal development. There are good systems to monitor attendance to school and individual lessons that enable the school to tackle problem areas and individuals effectively. The provision of extended work experience and courses more suited to the needs of all individuals has helped to improve attendance. Punctuality is good except when buses are delayed on congested roads.

Sixth form

20. Students in the sixth form have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy being in the sixth form and are keen to do their best. In engineering and drama they are extremely well motivated and attitudes are often excellent. In other areas they are often quiet and passive learners. Relationships between students are harmonious and they support each other well. Behaviour is good, but in March last year an unfortunate racist incident culminating in physical violence resulted in the exclusion of a several sixth form boys of white British and Pakistani Asian origin. The action taken by the school characterised its positive approach to ensuring harmony in the school. Students understand the importance of being in school and in lessons, and attendance is satisfactory overall. In some subjects such as sociology and English the unsatisfactory attendance of a small number of students is affecting their achievement and brings overall figures for attendance to average. A new system of swipe-card registration has been introduced this term but has yet to be embedded effectively to monitor attendance. Form tutors monitor attendance and follow up any absences. The attendance of the large majority is good and reflects students' very positive attitudes.
21. Overall, the school makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of sixth form students. Students are very eager to take on responsibilities. They have their own committee, which has an input on school issues and organises charitable events. They enjoy being 'escapees' or 'buddies' to support younger students. They also help with paired reading and in lessons in the main school; students are pleased to accept a wide variety of responsibilities such as working with children in local primary schools and they provide good role models within the school. There is good participation in the Young Enterprise Award scheme, in the annual dramatic production and in sporting activities. For example, the 'Escapee Scheme' offers very good opportunities for them to help younger students to appreciate the importance of acceptable behaviour. As elected members of the sixth form council and committee students gain experience in community work by organising fund-raising for local and national charities. The general studies course enables students to develop their spiritual awareness through discussions on beliefs and values and they are encouraged to further their cultural development through the community education programme and the extra-curricular activities provided by subject departments. Students are good ambassadors for the school on outside visits.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education. The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are good. The curriculum is very good. Pastoral care is good. The school has satisfactory links with parents. There are very good links with other schools, colleges and with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good at all levels and leads to good learning. Students' positive approach and their good behaviour are significant factors in their good achievement. The assessment of students' work is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high level of consistency in the amount of good and very good teaching across the curriculum and across most years. Teaching is particularly good in the sixth form.
- Teachers' subject specialist knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching have a good impact on achievement.
- Learning is good because of the positive qualities students bring to their studies, seen in their good behaviour and above average attendance.
- Teachers use the national strategy effectively in their planning to give a clear structure to progression within lessons.
- The amount of non-specialist teaching in ICT, art and design and religious education leads to satisfactory rather than good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9; teaching in mathematics and French is satisfactory rather than good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 208 lessons.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
9 (4%)	59 (28%)	89 (44%)	42 (20%)	7 (3%)	2 (1%)	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.

Main school

22. Teaching and learning have improved following a review of monitoring systems after some under-achievement was identified in Year 9 national tests in 2003. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of both teaching and learning were put into place to include heads of subject departments more centrally in the process. This has been a successful initiative and this aspect of the work of middle managers is now good. As a consequence, results improved in 2004 and in the work seen in the inspection, teaching and learning are good, students are achieving well and standards are rising throughout the school. In the work seen in the main school, three quarters of teaching is good or better and a third is very good or better. There is a significant amount of excellent teaching.
23. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in nearly all subjects and is very good in German, physical education, drama and music. On occasion there is excellent teaching that thoroughly engages and enthuses students, arousing their curiosity and demanding that they respond with their best efforts. Such teaching was seen in physical education, drama and religious education. There is a consistency in the structure and planning of lessons that uses the approach recommended in national strategies and ensures that students are given a common format to their learning and understand what is expected of them. Within this structure, teachers use a variety of approaches that keep students' interest and concentration, capitalising on their positive attitudes and their wish to do well. As a result, good learning takes place in most lessons.
24. Teaching is also good in Years 10 and 11 and there is more good teaching and less that is unsatisfactory. Teaching is undertaken almost exclusively by subject specialists. In mathematics, French and ICT, teaching is satisfactory. In all other subjects it is at least good,

and in German, drama, music and physical education, it is very good. Some excellent teaching was also observed in drama, citizenship and PSHE.

25. In Years 7 to 9, timetabling constraints have led to some pockets of non-specialist teaching, where insufficient training has resulted in teaching that is satisfactory rather than good. This occurs most commonly in Year 8, where there was more unsatisfactory teaching than in the rest of the school. It also occurs across Years 7 to 9 in ICT, religious education and art and design. Standards in ICT are average, but in contrast to most subjects, students' achievement is satisfactory rather than good because teaching is satisfactory rather than good. There is some unsatisfactory and poor teaching in mathematics and, again, overall achievement is satisfactory rather than good and there are weaknesses in the teaching of French, with the same result. Some unsatisfactory and poor teaching was seen in history, but this was uncharacteristic and teaching and achievement overall in history are good. The school's senior team have a good awareness of these weaknesses and have already put in place monitoring and support to improve the situation. In mathematics, for example, new leadership is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
26. The great majority of teaching is undertaken by teachers who have good levels of subject expertise. They combine this with a secure knowledge of the examination demands in their subjects. They plan well to help students acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding relating to their particular subjects. Students respect this and play their part by taking responsibility for their learning, for example in their positive approach to completing homework. Teachers are good at making students use the technical language of their subject, particularly in question and answer sessions and at the beginning of lessons where good starter activities are used in order to engage students. In the best examples, as most commonly seen in English lessons, students learn well as they take on the response of another and add their own contribution and improve the answer.
27. Teachers maintain high expectations regarding students' level of effort and behaviour and they demand a great deal. Students are clearly focused on achieving the best they can in their GCSE examinations and teachers use this to challenge and stretch them and ensure that good learning takes place. As a result, classrooms are characterised by an orderly working atmosphere where achievement is valued and students want to learn. Throughout Years 7 to 11, teachers engender positive relationships between students, building on their own good relationships with their students. This enables teachers to maintain a firm but friendly approach in their teaching. Typically, students work very hard and the atmosphere in lessons is one where students can be trusted to work independently, whether on their own or in pairs or groups. This encouragement of independent learning works well among students throughout Years 7 to 11 and across the ability range. Only rarely is behaviour unsatisfactory and when this occurs, teachers have good strategies to ensure that the progress of the rest of the class is not adversely affected. Only once did inspectors see unsatisfactory behaviour resulting in insufficient progress being made by the class as a whole.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 11 lesson in drama demonstrated how well students achieve when responding to the

teacher's high expectations and carefully focused planning when preparing for their mock practical GCSE examination.

Students focused on clearly publicised learning objectives. Probing questions from the teacher triggered perceptive responses on the significance of key terms: 'breaking down'; 'barrier'; 'emotions', 'impact'. Challenge was high: achieve top band criteria and the highest grades (also displayed and referred to.) Intellectually prepared, students launched into a high energy warm up led by one of the class: loud repetitive counting accompanied by jumping in time shook off the world outside. To maximise emotional impact the teacher challenged the students' comfort zone through working on the dark theme of violent deaths. The mood changed. Students worked individually, engrossed as they silently prepared an enactment of a violent death distributed randomly via 'death cards'. Meanwhile the teacher stressed qualities sought in the objectives, focusing minds and bodies on performance. Different presentations performed simultaneously. Now immersed in the mood and genre, the students worked in pairs: the killer and the victim. Performances conveyed strong characterisation through language, tone, projection, mannerisms and gestures: the obsessive hunter and the helpless victim. Powerful realisations that destroyed the actor/audience barrier. And then the close: suddenly GCSE students again evaluating each other's work in a secure environment; affirming strengths; identifying points for improvement; securing excellent learning.

28. Arrangements to meet the learning needs of all students are good. Teachers are fully committed to including all groups of students, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Measures to ensure equality of opportunity are good in most subjects and very good in science and music. For example, teachers' planning is mostly suited well to the differing needs of students so that gifted and talented students as well as those with special educational needs are stretched and challenged appropriately. Teaching of students with special educational needs is good. Support staff are very effective because of the specialist roles they perform. These roles significantly enhance the quality of support given. The fact that some support staff specialise in different areas of the curriculum has a significant impact upon teaching and learning through their acquired subject expertise as well as through their knowledge of individual students. Knowledge of individual needs is significantly enhanced through the deployment of support staff to year groups. For example, the post-16 support assistant meets with each identified sixth former to provide academic support on a regular basis. A particular focus on the learning of students with the most significant needs is achieved through the use of some support staff to target those students in different areas of the curriculum.
29. The school has successfully promoted the teaching of literacy skills by all teachers through their own subjects and it is mainly good. Teachers' skills and confidence in their use of ICT in lessons have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The teaching of numeracy skills by subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory.
30. Assessment is good. The thoroughness and constructive use of assessment are good in most subjects and diagnostic testing is used well to plan provision for individuals and groups with special educational needs. The recently introduced student progress monitoring system effectively supports students' progress and effort across the whole school. The available data is used well to establish the level of individual students' achievement and to enable comparisons to be made against national benchmarks. Value added approaches and target setting are well established across the school.

31. Senior and middle managers, and most subject teachers, make good use of the available assessment information to respond effectively to the needs of students. Procedures for assessing students with special educational needs are good. In most subjects assessment is used well for lesson planning. Marking usually provides good feedback for students about their standards and what they need to do to improve them further. Very good practice exists in history, physical education and English.

Sixth form

32. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the sixth form. In the 11 subjects inspected in detail, because teaching is good, standards are improving and are higher in general than recent results. Standards are above average in mathematics, physics, business studies and French. In all these subjects teaching is good, and students learn well and achieve well. In drama and engineering, teaching is very good and students achieve very well. Only in English language and biology was teaching satisfactory rather than good, and here students' level of achievement is satisfactory and the impact on their standards is not as pronounced.
33. The teachers' depth of subject knowledge and their good understanding of the examination demands of their areas lead to effective teaching. They prepare students well and this is at the heart of the rising standards taking place. Students appreciate teachers' expertise, their helpfulness in assessing progress and the easy access to teachers' support when needed outside lesson time. The positive qualities in the teaching in the main school are also found in the sixth form because many teachers include both the main school and the sixth form in their teaching schedule. Students bring a good level of maturity to their work and a keenness to do well. As a result, lessons are characterised by a shared commitment to hard work and good co-operation between students that results in a positive working atmosphere where learning is valued.
34. Students with special needs are fully involved in lesson activities because of the high level of support that is very well matched to individual needs. The good teaching they receive ensures that they receive the same level of challenge as their peers and they achieve well in common with their peers.
35. Assessment is good. The thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment are good, continuing smoothly from the main school into the sixth form. The available data is used well to enable comparisons to be made against national benchmarks and for individual student achievement. Senior managers, the head of sixth form, subject teachers and tutors closely monitor students' standards and achievement. Good systems are in place to chart students' academic progress and effort. Value added approaches and target setting are well established.
36. Good use is made of the available assessment information by senior and middle managers and most subject teachers to respond effectively to the individual needs of students. In some subjects such as business studies and engineering, assessment is used well for lesson planning. Marking is thorough and linked well to examination criteria. Subjects provide regular feedback to students with very good practice existing in art and design, drama and physics.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good, especially in the 14-19 age range. Opportunities for enrichment of learning are very good. The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning of the curriculum is thoughtful and innovative.
- The overall breadth of opportunities is very good and the range and number of courses meets the needs of the learners in the 14-19 years age range very well.
- There is a very good range of enrichment opportunities. Provision for sport and recreation is very good.
- The school is meeting the minimum statutory requirements for providing careers education, but the quality of the course in Years 7 and 8 is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for students with special educational needs is very good with innovative and imaginative use of teaching assistants.
- The school has satisfactory levels of book and computer provision, but the library provision is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Main school

37. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum is supported well by thorough planning. It has its own place in the school's development plan under the direction of a member of the senior management team. Strong emphases on national intervention strategies, such as the Key Stage 3 Strategy and the requirements on the college as a specialist college, have had good impact on teaching and learning. In addition, the leadership has been innovative in the manner it has approached curricular planning so that it best meets the needs and aspirations of all students.
38. The curriculum provision in Years 7 to 9 is good. In addition to the required coverage of National Curriculum courses, drama is available for all students. The school offers an introduction to the GCSE statistics course in Year 9, thus meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. The continuity and progression of the design and technology curriculum are very good. The motivating music curriculum results in above average recruitment to GCSE music courses. Special events such as a health day and a 'Prison me no way day' enhance the students' personal development. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection regarding the arrangements for teaching art and design and music, inadequate time for electronics in ICT and weaknesses in cross-curricular ICT have been rectified. The planning for careers education is not satisfactory; neither is the curriculum progression in the separately taught ICT lessons.
39. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is very good and has thoughtfully taken full advantage of opportunities to be more innovative for this age range. Students choose from a wide range of subjects. All take accredited courses in English, mathematics, science (single or double award), and design and technology. All also take accredited courses (either at GCSE or internally accredited) in religious studies and citizenship. Students may follow two distinct pathways: one, the middle volume band, allows some students to take fewer GCSE subjects but to use the additional time available to take accredited vocational courses matched to their needs. These include business, engineering, health and social care, ICT, land and environment, and art and design.

Other students, in the high volume band, select from a very good range of subjects including Latin, business studies, drama, sociology, physical education, engineering, ICT, and music as well as subjects from the humanities such as geography and history. The only weakness in this strong provision is the relative lack of available accredited vocational courses for the students in the higher volume band.

40. The school's programme of additional activities to enrich the curriculum is very good. It is popular and valued highly by students in all years. Students who were interviewed regarded the school's additional activities programme as a significant and valuable part of their lives at the school. The provision for sport is very strong and successfully addresses the dual focus of offering representative competitive sport as well as sport and recreation for life-long involvement. Activities in the arts are good with significant strengths in drama. Many subjects offer additional support by putting on after-school or lunchtime clubs and classes. Visits abroad are available in history and modern foreign languages.
41. Careers education delivered through the curriculum is satisfactory through the established course in Years 9, 10 and 11 and is good in the sixth form. However, the quality of provision in Years 7 and 8 is unsatisfactory. There has as yet been no formal careers education in Years 7 and 8, but the school has outline plans to teach this later in the year, so that statutory requirements are met. Careers education is taught within the personal, social and religious education (PSRE) programme and supplemented in form times and assemblies. A careers teacher has recently retired and has not been replaced. The newly appointed careers co-ordinator has yet to establish an oversight of careers provision across the school.
42. The provision of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. It is incorporated into PSRE and complemented in assemblies and form time. PSHE is also enhanced through religious education, health and social care and land and environment in the main school and classical civilisation, general studies and philosophy post-16. It is taught by a core group of staff and supplemented by visitors and awareness days such as a health awareness day, a crime awareness day, a multi-faith day and a 'baby simulator' programme.
43. All students have full access to the National Curriculum apart from a minority in Year 11 who are disapplied from modern languages and some other aspects in order to allow them to take further vocational courses. Curricular programmes are effective in ensuring equality of opportunity, with vocational courses on offer to all students in Years 10 to 13. The curriculum meets well the needs of gifted and talented students. As well as good challenge in lessons, there is a good variety of enrichment courses in the school and opportunities to take part in regional and national initiatives, for example the 'Maths Challenge'.
44. Provision for students with special educational needs is good and the school's arrangements for providing additional support for these students are very good. Faculties meet students' needs in their subject areas through professional judgements on the deployment of support staff allocated to them as well as through differentiating the curriculum. The deployment of support to each year group enables individual staff to become 'experts' in their knowledge of year groups and also to perform specialist roles, for example advising on the composition of form groups in Year 7 and on work experience placements in Year 10. The needs of students with statements are appropriately prioritised in the organisation of support; the provision overall is effective. Additional support outside of lessons further enhances the

provision overall with paired reading sessions for Year 7 students led by sixth formers, breakfast groups to build social skills and informal 'drop-in' arrangements. An enhanced curriculum project gives some older students with particular needs a wide range of opportunities to develop basic skills and to gain experience of the world of work through work and college placements.

45. Accommodation is satisfactory. At present, some subjects are housed in temporary classrooms, but these are being replaced currently. The accommodation for music is excellent, and is very good in design and technology. Some subject areas are in suites and this improves communication between teachers and allows flexibility of use. Some rooms are too small. This is especially so in art and design. The library is very small for the size of the school. The dining facilities are similarly cramped, as school halls have to be used for this purpose. The school manages and maintains the accommodation well. The school ensures that it gets the best value for money by managing some conversions itself. The development of the drama studio is a particular success.
46. Overall the match of teachers and their subject qualifications is good. There is a good match between the number, qualifications and experience of teachers and the needs of the curriculum in most departments. However, the school has had to deploy some non-specialists in several subjects, mainly in Years 7 to 9. In art and design and religious education this is impacting on the achievement of students as it is in ICT where 50 per cent of the teachers used are non-specialists.
47. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide very good assistance with the teaching of the curriculum to students with special educational needs. The specialist role of these assistants is a very effective and innovative staffing arrangement. Deployed via faculties and by year groups, they provide very good support to identified students in all year groups. Technical staff undertake a valuable role, assisting and supporting the teaching of the curriculum in several subject areas. Site management staff provide an efficient service and have completed some innovative projects that have made a significant difference to the condition and appearance of the school. Secretarial staff make a similar contribution to the smooth running of the school including an important back-up role to senior pastoral staff.
48. Resources to support learning are satisfactory but the library is inadequate. The library is housed in a small but pleasant environment and is used well at social times in the day for quiet reading. It is small and the stock of books falls far short of the national recommendation for a school of this size. Whereas a few subjects such as science use the library well to support students' learning, most subjects make too little use of the facility to promote the development of students' reading and research skills. Weakness in management has resulted in under-utilisation and development of this resource. The availability and use of books and ICT in subjects are good and the provision has been enhanced through the school's designation as a technology and engineering college.

Sixth form

49. Sixth form provision is very good and there is a very extensive range of courses for students. The high staying on rate into the sixth form and the successful rate of entry into higher education confirm the effectiveness of the provision.

50. The curriculum provision is very good and provides a very good match to the needs and aspirations of the students. More than 100 students left school to enter higher education degree courses in 2004. Students gain GCE AS, A level and AVCE accreditation from a range of over 30 courses. In addition to traditional academic subjects, courses are also available in business, media studies, engineering, theatre arts, sports and physical education and ICT applications. Other courses include geology, philosophy, politics, psychology, Spanish and classical civilisation. There are also GNVQ courses at intermediate level in art and design and ICT, and GCSE courses in English and mathematics. The sixth form recruits well and the retention rate is high. The school supports the students' progress effectively in key skills via a separately taught course, which provides Year 12 students with a 12-week module in each area of communications, number and ICT.
51. The enrichment opportunities in the sixth form are very good. Representative sport continues into this phase of the school. Fixtures are better established than often seen at this level. Students may also complete a range of activities that results in the award of the school's graduation diploma. This relatively new and exciting scheme enables the students to achieve more than academic success through involvement in a range of activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, supporting form tutors of younger students, working with younger students in need of support, supporting lessons, or taking part in community activities. The first graduation evening took place in 2004 when 70 students graduated.
52. All students, except GNVQ and further mathematics students, follow a general studies course that includes the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT. One lesson of general studies in Year 13 was sampled during the inspection. Teaching was good and the teacher worked hard to help the students to develop some understanding of how global civilisations developed from early man to the powerful dominant nations of today. Students were attentive and, although passive, they gained a good insight into the evolution of capitalism. Other students with particular goals such as entrance to Oxford or Cambridge are given additional guidance and support for applications and interviews. There are very good links with outside organisations. Young enterprise activities flourish. Students take up work placements abroad. Science students visit higher education institutions. PSHE in the sixth form supports personal development and academic progress well and prepares students well for life after school. The statutory requirement for the provision of religious education in the sixth form is met through a module on culture and morality in the general studies course, which is followed by all students taking subjects at GCE A level. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the school was in breach of the statutory requirement.
53. There is a good match between the number, qualifications and experience of teachers and the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation for post-16 students is satisfactory. Most rooms are suitable for sixth form teaching with the exception of business studies where the rooms are too small. The quantity and range of books in subjects and access to ICT are good, but the use of the library as a learning resource and facility for independent learning is unsatisfactory due to the small size of the room and the very limited range of books available. There is a lack of other study space for students. The positive approaches of both staff and students currently overcome the barriers that the accommodation presents to learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of students' welfare, health and safety. Staff provide good pastoral support. The advice and guidance based on effective monitoring are good and have a positive impact on achievement. The school takes good account of students' views and involves them in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a health and safety officer and procedures are good.
- Induction arrangements for new students are good.
- Pastoral care is good and students have very trusting relationships with adults in school. This gives them the confidence to achieve well.
- Registration time is used well to promote learning and personal development.
- Students' academic progress is well tracked in relation to their personal development so that good advice and support are provided as they go through the school.

Commentary

Main school

54. Procedures for dealing with students' welfare, health and safety are good. Good procedures are in place to deal with child protection issues. The school has its own health and safety officer who ensures that good heed is paid to students' safety in lessons and on visits out of school. Risk assessments are completed routinely within subject areas. Internet service provision is safe and secure. Supervision at break times is good, but the toilets are used as a refuge for smokers. The canteen offers a range of healthy foods and a good proportion of students opt for these.
55. Pastoral care is good and enables students to achieve well in a secure and supportive environment. Induction arrangements are good because of the very good links with local junior schools and students settle very well. Form tutors, heads of years and teaching assistants get to know students well and have a good oversight of students' academic progress and personal development through the school's new system of student progress monitoring. Students enjoy good relationships with their form tutors and form time is usually used well to enhance their personal development. Students are aware of their attainment and target levels in nearly all subjects. They are fully involved in termly reviews with their form tutor and parents to set targets for future improvement. The behaviour policy is regularly reviewed and both parents and students are consulted. Behaviour is well tracked and congratulatory letters often sent to parents. Incidents of bullying and racism are monitored and dealt with effectively. Patterns of behaviour are analysed well to target areas for improvement. There is a good range of support for individual and more vulnerable students.
56. The school has very good systems for analysing and reviewing the progress of different groups of students. The progress of boys and girls, different ethnic groups and students with special educational needs is carefully monitored, ensuring that action can be taken to tackle any identified differences in achievement for these groups. Review procedures for students on the school's register of special educational needs are very good with whole-school termly reviews of progress adapted to review individual education plans. Students with statements also benefit from these regular reviews.
57. There is a very good and comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education within personal, social and religious education (PSRE), which is well planned to guide students through school choices and prepare them well for life after school. The careers programme is

satisfactory and enhanced by the Connexions service. There is as yet no careers education in Years 7 and 8, which is unsatisfactory, but there are outline plans to deliver this later in the year. Advice on the option choices for Year 10 is sound. Students in Year 10 value a week of useful and well-organised work experience. Medium volume students have the option of a further week in the Autumn term, which many of them take up. Extended work experience placements and work-related learning have improved the attendance and achievement of previously less motivated students. Students have good advice on post-16 options including provision outside of school. Although some information is provided in the PSRE faculty, the careers section in the library is unsatisfactory. Guidance into the sixth form is based on 'Stepping Stones' so that individuals are guided onto the most appropriate course for their needs and abilities.

58. Students' views are regularly sought through review meetings, surveys and the school council. The head teacher always attends council meetings. Students were formally consulted over changes to the review system and their views taken into consideration. Most students feel the school is interested in their views.

Sixth form

59. The same care is taken of the students in the sixth form as in the rest of the school. A change to the tutorial system has resulted in some students in their final year having a new tutor. This may explain why such a large number expressed that they felt that there is not an adult in the school who knows them well. The good relationships amongst the students and with the staff help to ensure that all students feel well supported. Academic support is good. The students know how to improve their work and feel confident in seeking help and support. They know what grades they are predicted and what they are capable of achieving. They receive well-informed careers advice and good support for university applications.
60. Students are consulted and have a good opportunity to contribute to school development through the school council and sixth form committee. Students in Year 12 were involved in the appointment of new head of sixth form. They are now working on improving facilities and catering in the sixth form common room. They lead much of the charitable work that involves students across the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents. There are very good links with other schools, colleges and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents like the school and support their children's education well.
- The new progress monitoring and review system is popular with the majority of parents and more parents attend consultations with form tutors than did previously with subject teachers.
- There are very good links with the local and wider community to widen students' experiences and to enhance learning.
- Very good links with primary schools ease transition to secondary school.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges to support the development of technology and engineering and extend learning opportunities.

Commentary

Main school

61. The school's sound links with parents enable parents to support students' education well. Parents consider this to be a good school, where teaching is good, expectations are high and their children make good progress. They are very pleased with the way their children settle in school and like the range of activities on offer.
62. In order to meet the needs of students with special educational needs, the school has established very good links with feeder schools with regular visits by teaching and support staff. Through these close contacts there is, for example, early prior knowledge of future students with complex needs so that provision can be organised well in advance. Links with parents of students with special educational needs are very good and reinforced by the whole-school termly reviews of progress.
63. The school values its links with parents and provides a good range of useful information. The governing body annual report to parents and prospectus are satisfactory, but do not have information on arrangements for the admission of disabled, steps taken by the school to enable disabled students to be treated on equal terms with others and facilities to help access for the disabled. There is no information about the next election of parent governors or resolutions from the last meeting. There is insufficient information on the school's policy for special educational needs and the training and professional development undertaken by staff. The prospectus does not have local and national average figures for GCSE and vocational qualifications. Students' planners are used effectively and are regularly checked by tutors and parents. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend the work in the classroom. The vast majority of parents support their children's learning well at home by providing computers and Internet access.
64. A small proportion of parents would like more information about their children's progress. Parents are invited to termly reviews with their children and attendance is good. The school has decided to sacrifice fuller written annual reports for termly progress monitoring summaries complemented by consultation meetings with form tutors. Most parents find these helpful, but a small number of parents who cannot attend these meetings do not receive comprehensive information to enable them to help their children's progress. They would prefer to return to annual meetings with subject teachers. The school has consulted parents and finds that the vast majority prefers the new style of consultation. However, in order to meet the needs of all parents, the school has recently modified procedures to provide more opportunities for subject-based consultations, particularly for parents of students in Years 10 and 12. The school is quick to contact parents when there is a problem and likes to send letters of praise as well. Parents are consulted on issues such as the new review system and the school takes good account of their views. The majority of parents appreciate that the school values their views. The Friends of the School support the social and financial life of the school well and promote closer links between home and school. The complaints procedure is published and effective.
65. The school's leadership has worked hard and to very good effect to ensure that it has very good links with the local and wider community to enhance students' learning, achievement and personal development. A wide range of visits and visitors broadens students' knowledge and social development very effectively. For example, the 'Get Moving' dance company performed in school, religious education students visited a Tibetan Monastery in Scotland and residential trips to France and Germany are oversubscribed. Students support local and national charities such as Children In Need, Rainforest and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children very well. The school has very productive links with the North Yorkshire Business and

Education Partnership and a very good range of useful work experience placements is found locally for students in Years 10, 11 and 12. Very good support and sponsorship was found from local business and industry for the school's technology and engineering college status and they continue to support the school and work-related learning. Members of the community make very good use of the college's facilities to promote lifelong learning. An outreach worker is effective in improving parental participation in the courses on offer. The school provides very good support for youth work in the community and has very good links with local sporting clubs.

66. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges that make a significant contribution to achievement and personal development. These are enhanced by its technology and engineering college status. English, mathematics, science, technology and physical education teachers take lessons in primary schools. Work in primary schools is very successful in easing transition between Year 6 and Year 7. Students take part in work experience in primary schools. The school works closely with local colleges to ensure a wide range of options for students from Year 10 onwards. The very good links with Craven College and the College of the Dales support family learning and ensure that post-16 provision is well co-ordinated. There is no shared or linked provision with other schools and colleges. There is a wide range of sporting links and 55 Year 10 students joined young people from schools around the region to take part in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fair in Skipton in October. The school makes a very good contribution to the training of teachers.

Sixth form

67. The very strong links with the community continue to enhance students' experiences in the sixth form. Year 12 students benefit from work experience placements in the local area and from a work link the school has in the Netherlands. Students are very active within the community, especially in their support of charities, participation in the Young Enterprise Award scheme and in helping with games and physical education in primary schools. Backing from local employers and membership of the White Rose Consortium has been effective in supporting university applications.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed well. The head teacher's good leadership, along with very well informed support from governors and key staff, has ensured the clear direction and continued improvement of the school. Governance is very good, though statutory requirements are not met for collective worship and in the provision of some information to parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher and a strong team of senior managers provide good leadership and are very clear in their focus on raising standards and improving students' achievement.
- Leadership is very successful in ensuring that all students are included and well integrated into school life.
- Planning for the future is well focused on raising standards.
- Faculties, subject departments and pastoral areas are led well.
- Governors know the school very well and play a very effective role in supporting, challenging and holding it to account.

- The management of the school is good. There is good practice in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of performance of individual departments and the school as a whole; data about the performance of subjects is used well to tackle weaknesses and drive standards up.
- While there is much that is good in the teaching of key skills in the sixth form, the contributions of individual subjects are not monitored and evaluated closely enough.

Commentary

Main school

68. The school has moved forward strongly over the past few years since the previous inspection. This is in large measure due to the head teacher's very clear vision for the school, well shared with staff and governors, and his energy in translating it into action. Central to this vision is the raising of standards even further by improving the quality of education students are offered. In this context two major initiatives are already providing impetus for improvement. Firstly, the introduction of 'student progress monitoring' has created more efficient ways of ensuring that students' progress is watched and charted over time. Through this, the students' form tutors have much greater responsibility for the oversight of their academic and social development and can pick up under-achievement before it becomes too serious. Secondly, the very good new curriculum in Years 10 and 11, tailored much more closely to the needs of individual students, is also the product of strong innovative thinking and the drive to carry it through. The ethos for learning is good. Students are happy and proud of their school. Parents share their satisfaction.
69. These initiatives could not have become reality without the co-operation of governors, staff and parents. It is clear testimony to the head teacher's success in communicating his vision that he has the full support and loyalty of the governing body and his team of senior managers. Very effective consultation is at the heart of this co-operation and has allowed the head teacher to carry out measures that might otherwise have met with greater resistance. The deputy and assistant heads form a strong stable team complementing each other's and the head teacher's strengths and providing good leadership and whole-hearted support. These staff are strong role models and have an open approachable presence around the school.
70. Good links between these senior managers and the heads of faculty are well established and lead to frequent dialogue and good communications between them. Heads of faculty and pastoral leaders, too, provide good leadership, reflecting and sharing the vision from the top. Through coaching and support from their 'link' senior staff these managers have become increasingly accountable for the performance of their areas of responsibility and the welfare of the staff they lead. Leadership in drama, history, music, German, physical education, citizenship and special educational needs is very good. While satisfactory overall, there is room for further improvement in the leadership of ICT, religious education and French.
71. Through a well-defined process involving staff and governors, the school has a good plan for improvement that extends beyond the immediate academic year and has the raising of achievement at its core. However, there is not enough information in the plan on the dates by when certain objectives are to be carried out.

72. Governance is very good. Governors take an active role in the leadership of the school and make a positive contribution to the planning and decisions that help to shape the vision and direction of the school, particularly in the areas of staffing, financial management and curriculum planning. They are in a very good position to hold the school to account for the standards and quality produced. Governors act very effectively as a critical friend to the school, both challenging and supporting on the basis of a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors have not ensured that the school fully meets the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship and there are some omissions in the information the school sends to parents.
73. The school is managed well. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are undertaken effectively. As a result, weaknesses have been identified and tackled and departments benefit from the dissemination and sharing of the best practice in teaching. This has led to standards rising and teaching that is good overall, with a good proportion of very good and excellent teaching. The school gathers and uses data effectively to analyse its performance and to compare with other institutions locally and against national standards. The head teacher and other managers show a very good awareness of the importance of curricular innovation. There are good systems and strategies in place to review progress and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives taken in terms of their impact on raising standards. The school's specialist technology and engineering status has come about due to farsighted planning and good management, including a good contribution from governors. The benefit of this status is being seen in the very good links being established with other institutions and the community, and the enhanced learning opportunities that have resulted. Students and parents are positive about the manner in which the school is led and managed.
74. The school leadership successfully promotes equal opportunities and full inclusivity. Senior staff provide very good leadership in ensuring that teachers and students are aware of equality issues, ensuring that promotion of equality of opportunity is very good. The school monitors the implementation of its equal opportunities policy and policies on dealing with racial discrimination and ensuring racial equality. As a result of the positive stance on equality of opportunity, provision is good in most subjects, with very good provision in science and music.
75. Leadership and management have very effectively transformed the whole school approach to special needs. The provision for students with special educational needs has very clearly become a whole school responsibility. Faculty and pastoral heads are responsible for special needs because support is deployed to them yet at the same time there is very good co-ordination of the whole-school provision at senior management level. The most significant result of these relatively recent changes has been the professional development and empowerment of support staff. They have acquired a specialist status within the staffing structure that enhances the whole-school approach to special needs
76. Procedures for staff performance management are satisfactory and firmly rooted in the drive to improve standards. There are very good procedures for the induction of all new staff and especially for newly qualified teachers who follow a programme of induction activities and have a mentor from whom they gain help, constructive criticism and advice. Arrangements for professional development are good and are

linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. The teachers are supported well by technicians and assistants. The balance of age and years of service with the school is good and the school has experienced few problems of recruitment in recent years other than in English and physics. There are strong links with local industry, especially engineering, and the school has prioritised the recruitment and retention of staff with industrial experience. Subject specialists, mainly graduates, account for the great majority of lessons taught and have a positive effect on the quality of education provided. The school is also a good provider for initial teacher training.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	6772237	Balance from previous year	-97859
Total expenditure	6343585	Balance carried forward to the next	330793
Expenditure per student	3652		

77. Financial planning and management are very good. The principles of best value are applied carefully and effectively. There are very good processes in place to ensure that the school consults and compares to gain best value in its spending. Educational priorities are costed appropriately and the school has a clear view of how priorities can be afforded. Specific funds are used appropriately. Both the main school and the sixth form provide good value for money.

Sixth form

78. The leadership and the management of the sixth form are both good. There is a clear vision that is shared by staff, senior managers and governors as to the part played by the sixth form in serving the local community. The same management systems that ensure that the main school runs well also operate within the sixth form. As a result, the management structures in place ensure that there is good communication, good value for money and a common aim to drive up standards. Arrangements for the oversight and guidance of sixth form students work well. The specialist college status is giving further impetus to improvements in standards and to ensuring a curriculum that best meets the needs and aspirations of the student body.

79. The leadership in the sixth form sets high standards and provides a good role model for staff and students. Subject leadership in the sixth form is good and monitoring systems have identified and tackled weaknesses in teaching effectively. Where weaknesses have occurred, support has been given and/or changes made. Review procedures are good and self-evaluation relating to students' progress is effective. The one exception is in the provision by subjects for the teaching of key skills. While much of the work is good, there is no overview of the contribution made by each department, and provision is inconsistent. The school monitors performance data effectively and takes action to keep students and departments on course with their targets. Day-to-day management of the sixth form is good. Students are satisfied with the provision they receive and state that the sixth form is well run.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning (WRL)

Provision for WRL is **good**. It meets statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- WRL is led effectively, giving a clear direction for its further development.
- Work experience is well organised to meet individual needs.
- There are strong and developing links with the local community, including businesses and colleges.
- Curriculum development is placing an increasing emphasis on vocational courses that are relevant and meet the needs of students, although some students have wider opportunities than others.
- The absence of an audit of current provision limits further planning.

Commentary

80. The school offers an increasingly diverse range of examination courses that have a strong WRL link. In 2003, GCSE results in business studies were above average. In child development nearly two thirds of those entered achieved grades in the A*-C range. In agriculture just under half of those entered achieved higher grades. Overall pass rates were high in all three courses. In 2004 over three quarters of students entered for business studies achieved A*-C grades, with one third gaining grades in the A*/A range. In engineering and ICT, students' attainment was much lower in gaining higher grades. All students entered for intermediate GNVQ art and design gained passes with half gaining merits and one a distinction. In GCSE health and social care all gained passes with one third in the higher grade range.
81. In work seen achievement is good overall. Standards varied between courses in lessons sampled. Standards were average in art and design, land and environment and in GCSE business studies. They were below average in GNVQ business studies, engineering and in health and social care. They were well below average in vocational ICT.
82. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good both in land and environment and in art and design. Students gain a wide experience of the world of work through courses studied where, for example, vocational courses link study to work experience placements. Engineering students benefit from the excellent links that have been developed so that they gain 'real world' experience of local industry on a regular basis. GNVQ business studies students will gain a different but equally relevant form of real experience with planning for the new course involving the group running a school stationery shop.
83. There is a satisfactory programme of careers education, although there are unsatisfactory elements to the provision in Years 7 and 8. There is a good programme of work experience. The Connexions service is appropriately involved in working with groups and individuals to provide independent careers advice. The work experience programme is led well and has been developed to take account of recent curriculum changes so that all students taking a vocational course follow a placement directly linked to their course. The programme is linked well to individual needs as well as being efficiently administered. Non-teaching staff work very effectively in a variety of roles including liaison with students, administration and placement visits. Some students with particular needs have an enhanced programme of work placements and college experience.

84. The leadership of WRL is good and the provision is managed well. Curriculum planning has clear priorities that focus on progression and achievement. The school has looked very carefully at students' achievement on vocational courses across the 14 to 19 age range and is developing a range of courses and accreditation that maximise opportunities for success and progression. Innovative development of the curriculum has significantly enhanced WRL although there has as yet been no audit of provision. The curriculum now in place has increased significantly the range of vocational courses on offer although not for all students. The strength of recent curriculum development has been enhanced by well-established and developing links with local colleges, training providers and local industry. College placements are part of the provision for some courses. Staff links between the school and local colleges are a valuable means of professional development that further enhances the overall provision.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good as a result of consistently good teaching methods.
- The use of assessment is very good and improves learning and achievement.
- The teachers' positive attitudes encourage and motivate the students well.
- The department is led well and its day-to-day management is very good.
- Some aspects of teaching require improvement.
- There are too many classes that have more than one teacher.

Commentary

85. Standards on entry are average. Results in the 2003 national tests for 14 year olds were broadly average and as expected. Results were above average in 2001 and 2002. In 2004 the results, although not yet validated, improved to a level normally associated with above average standards. The 2004 students did better than expected given their average standards on entry. In the 2003 GCSE English examination the proportion at A*-C grades was above average. Students did better than expected given their results at the end of Year 9. Results in English literature were well above average. In 2004, the English results, as yet unvalidated, were lower and at a level associated with an average performance, yet nearly 20 per cent gained grades A*/A, which is well above the usual national average. Literature results at A*-C fell to a level that would normally be below average. The fluctuation in results reflects the school's difficulty in recruiting and retaining specialist English teachers during recent years. Current staffing has better stability.
86. Standards in the current Years 9 and 11 are above average. The students' achievement is good in each year. In Year 9 about eight in ten students are working at the expected level or higher. They have made good progress in the organisation of their writing, their use of standard English and their understanding of literary techniques. About four in ten students are working at the higher standards of Level 6 or 7. In Year 11, the work of more than six out of ten students is at a standard associated with the A*-C range. The proportion working at the highest grades of A*/A also broadly matches the significantly above average figures of recent years. This indicates very good achievement by higher attaining students given the school receives a below average proportion of these students on entry. A minority of students in Years 9 and 11 do not reach average standards. Their work contains too many errors, is not detailed enough and lacks sustained analysis of texts. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good. They receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants.
87. The standard of teaching and learning is good. Students are making good progress in the skills of the subject, in their application and concentration and in working effectively with others. This good progress results from very good curriculum and lesson planning. Lessons include a good sense of purpose and focus supported by a busy sequence of activities related to the learning objectives. The consistent use of teaching methods that explicitly show students how to achieve the lesson objectives has a major impact on progress. In addition, relationships are good. Students respond well to the teachers' constant encouragement. Assessment is very good. In lesson after lesson, teachers made expectations clear and

effective by frequent reference to the grade and level criteria that the students needed to achieve. Students of all attainments are benefiting from this explicit approach. Marking is very informative about strengths and weaknesses. Some areas are underdeveloped. There tends to be not enough use of open-ended whole-class questioning and discussion to enhance better independent thinking. Review summaries are used well at the end of lessons but learning progress is not always checked during lessons. In the small number of classes where concentration levels are lower, too much time is given for the completion of some tasks, so undermining achievement. Some students appear not to have done as much extended writing as others. The above average proportion of classes that share teachers means that some students' learning is affected adversely. The proportion is small, because the department plans its work carefully and to a common format, and then monitors learning to ensure that continuity is maintained.

88. Leadership of the subject is good. Its management is very good. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Up until two years ago, the department experienced difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels, including head of faculty, and this impeded progress. However, the current subject leader, in post for just over two years, has succeeded in achieving a good consistency in teaching and learning in this very large department. His systematic evaluation of its effectiveness through analysis of data, examination performance, and of teaching and learning is very good. It has led to effective improvement actions and improved standards. This is evidenced by the high figures of those reaching GCSE grades A*/A and in the improvement in those reaching Level 6 or higher in Year 9 tests. He has developed a good team identity and raised expectations of what the students can achieve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

89. The provision for the development of literacy skills is good overall and standards are above average. Heads of faculty are held responsible and expected to ensure literacy skills receive appropriate emphasis in curriculum planning. Members of the senior leadership group and the whole-school literacy co-ordinator carry out the monitoring of this. Science makes very good provision and uses an effective range of literacy-based methods to enhance the learning and understanding of concepts. The provision for literacy in mathematics is unsatisfactory. There is no policy; literacy does not receive enough focus in schemes of work, nor does it receive enough emphasis during lessons. Overall, subjects support the development of knowledge and understanding of their areas well through good emphasis on key terms and concepts. The development of writing skills needs to be more systematic in geography, history in Years 7 to 9 and religious education.

Modern foreign languages

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in French; the gap is wider than the gap is nationally.
- Higher attaining students, most of them girls, achieve well and have well above average standards.
- Much of the teaching, while satisfactory overall, does not provide enough opportunities for students to practise speaking in French.
- Students with special educational needs in Year 9 achieve very well because they are taught very demandingly and have excellent support in the classroom.
- Students benefit from the very good use made of ICT in some lessons.

Commentary

90. In 2003, GCSE results were above average and students mostly achieved satisfactorily. Girls did especially well and better than boys by a much bigger margin than nationally. In 2004, as yet unvalidated results fell to below average, reflecting in part the effect of unexpected staffing changes.
91. Standards in Year 9 are average and students are achieving satisfactorily. Higher attaining students, mostly girls, write accurately and have a good understanding of past and future tenses. These students speak French with reasonable confidence but their pronunciation is often very English-sounding and they lack sufficient practice in speaking French. Low attaining students and those with learning and behavioural needs achieve particularly well because they are taught very well in small groups and have excellent support in lessons. In too many lessons, however, standards of speaking and listening are barely adequate because students have too little opportunity to hear French spoken and to practise speaking in a systematic way.
92. Standards in Year 11 are also average and achievement overall is satisfactory. The most able linguists write well and have a very good grasp of French grammar, though they lack a richness of vocabulary that comes from writing in a variety of contexts. A minority of students have not reached a high enough standard because they lost confidence and motivation in Year 10. Strong new teaching has successfully rekindled their interest but they are still under-achieving. As in Year 9, students do not have enough opportunity to speak and listen in French because many of them, especially boys, do not speak with confidence or fluency.
93. Teaching varies considerably but is satisfactory overall. Learning, too, is satisfactory. The best teaching, which is very good, has a strong brisk pace and involves students in lots of vivid activities, such as competitions, games and pair work, which help them understand new language. The department's computerised whiteboard and other ICT resources are used very well to engage students and keep their interest. Alongside very strong teaching, the learning support assistant makes an excellent contribution to the learning of students with special educational needs. In around half of the lessons, however, teachers do not use French enough in the classroom or give students enough chance to speak. Such teaching does not appeal to boys. As a result of this, some students' speaking skills are less well developed or French-sounding than expected. Teaching does not insist that students use French for routine matters such as apologising for being late.
94. The French department has satisfactory leadership and management. The department reviews and evaluates its own performance well and it is well managed on a day-to-day basis. Good quality accommodation and resources help in this process. Students benefit greatly from a well-subscribed annual trip to northern France. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are similar, but a higher proportion gain grades A*-C. A number of the good points mentioned in the report are still in evidence. However, the department has not taken enough action to raise the quality of teaching and learning to the level of the best, or to ensure that boys achieve at least as well as girls.

German

Provision in German is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in German have risen in the past few years and are now well above average.
- Students achieve very well because they are taught with unusual flair, challenge and enthusiasm.
- Students with special educational needs achieve as well as the others because they are very well supported in the classroom.
- The German department is very well led and managed and has made significant progress since the previous inspection.
- Students are not taught enough German for routine use in the classroom.

Commentary

95. In 2003, GCSE results were above average and students mostly did better in German than in their other subjects. Girls did better than boys by more than the national difference. These results are part of a consistent upward trend in performance, which was repeated in 2004 and is strongly reflected in the work seen in the classroom.
96. Standards in Year 9 are well above average and students are achieving very well. They speak with unusual confidence and often with good German pronunciation. This applies as much to boys as to girls. Higher attaining students use different tenses with ease to describe events in the past and hopes for the future. Students of lower attainment and those with learning needs achieve equally well, especially in developing their speaking and listening skills. They are taught with the same level of challenge, but in smaller groups and with excellent support from teachers and support staff. Many students, particularly girls, write well in German, too, as they are given ample opportunities to write at length and have a good eye for grammatical accuracy.
97. Standards in Year 11 are also well above average. Students at this stage are mostly of middle and higher attainment, but they are still achieving very well. Boys and girls have similarly good understanding of spoken German because their teachers are very fluent and use the language abundantly in class. Students of average attainment respond to very demanding teaching by speaking in well-accented German that is rich in vocabulary. The highest attaining students write accurately using language that is varied and idiomatic. Students of Asian heritage achieve as well as their peers. The real keenness and motivation of the large majority of students in both phases are important factors in their achievement.
98. Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. This leads to very good learning in almost every lesson. Teachers use German nearly all the time so that students have to listen carefully and respond swiftly. Most of the teaching is very well suited to the ways in which boys learn: clear, lively, demanding with plenty of movement, visual stimulus and opportunities to be active in speaking. This works equally well with girls who relish the challenge and grow in confidence when the success they experience is praised, leading to a greater willingness to respond. Marking is very good with regular reminders of progress and helpful comments on how to improve. Teaching does not

insist enough on students using German for routine requests such as asking to borrow something.

99. The German department is very well led and managed. German teachers are a very strong team of experienced specialists who work well together. They routinely share ideas and resources and are very good role models for other staff and students. The head of faculty and of the German department systematically review performance and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. It is an open, learning department that is not content to stand still. For this reason the progress German has made since the previous inspection has been very good. Standards, achievement, teaching and learning have all improved significantly and the reservations in the previous report have been successfully dealt with.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement, while satisfactory, is lower than in most other subjects.
- The new leadership and management are good. A clear focus to improving standards is now provided for the subject.
- Assessment procedures do not provide sufficient information for students about their standards or how to improve.
- Teachers' planning is good. A good range of activities is provided to help students learn.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching where lessons are not managed well enough, the pace of lessons is too slow and students do not consolidate their learning well enough.
- Attitudes of students are good. They usually behave well and work productively.

Commentary

100. Results in the 2003 Year 9 national tests were average. In relation to their earlier learning, there was some significant under-achievement in this group. 2004 results were higher and a significantly higher proportion of students gained Level 6 and above; achievement was satisfactory. In the Year 11 GCSE examinations results were average. The proportion of students gaining the higher A*/A grades was below average. Students did not perform as well in mathematics as they did in most other subjects studied. Achievement was satisfactory. In 2004, results, as yet unvalidated, improved.
101. In Year 9, standards are average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their standards on entry to the school. Most students recall their tables confidently in doing calculations mentally, but lower attaining students have difficulty in making calculations without the help of a calculator. In Year 9, the highest attaining students convert fractions and decimals to percentages quickly whilst average attaining students find squares and square roots of whole numbers confidently for calculations when using Pythagoras' Theorem. In Year 11, standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their earlier standards. The highest attaining students know the shapes of graphs for different algebraic functions, while most other students find solving equations difficult. Students' problem solving skills have been developed effectively and as a result students attempt GCSE coursework tasks confidently.
102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well; they provide a good range of activities to meet the needs of students and to help them learn. For example, Year 7 classes work in groups to collect and analyse data from other students and Year 11 students use computers to analyse graphs of algebraic functions. Consequently, students with special educational needs, as well as those who are gifted and talented, achieve as well as other students. Despite the use of some non-specialist teaching, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and ensures that new skills and concepts are clearly explained. The mathematics strand of the government's national initiative in Years 7 to 9 is being implemented well in teachers' planning although the objectives for lessons and key words are not always used well enough as a focus for learning. Teachers' questioning usually involves students well and provides opportunities for students to share ideas and strategies with each other. The pace of lessons is often slow; students do not always complete sufficient tasks in the time allowed and as a result make limited progress. Teachers generally manage

and organise students well so that they behave well, work productively on their tasks and co-operate well with each other when asked to work together. This is encouraged by the good relationships with the teachers and with each other. There is some unsatisfactory teaching. This occurs where management of lessons is weak, students disrupt lessons with the result that students make limited progress, and learning and achievement are unsatisfactory. Teachers use homework effectively to support students' learning although marking is not consistent. A minority of teaching does not provide sufficient information for students about what they need to do to improve their work. In addition, where this occurs, students' standards are not assessed regularly enough during the term so that they know how well they are doing in relation to national levels.

103. The recently appointed head of faculty is leading and managing the subject well. In a short time the strengths and weaknesses have been identified and a clear vision and direction have been provided. Although students' standards and the quality of teaching have not improved significantly since the previous inspection, there are now good systems and strategies in place to tackle this. Students' performance is now being analysed and evaluated well. Schemes of work have been rewritten to include the new national initiatives and provide a good basis for improving standards and achievement. There are now good procedures in place to secure further improvement, but the new drive for improvement has not yet had sufficient time to have a significant impact on standards or achievement throughout the department. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory; ICT requirements are now met and a policy for numeracy across the curriculum is now in place.

Mathematics across the curriculum

104. Students' competency in mathematics is average and numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons. The school has a written policy for developing students' numeracy skills across the curriculum and most subjects are making a satisfactory contribution to supporting those skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving due to good leadership and management and good teaching.
- Assessment of students' progress is good, resulting in appropriate targets that help students to improve.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs, ensuring that achievement is good in all years.
- Behaviour is good overall, but some lessons do not have enough pace and challenge to ensure that all students are kept fully engaged in their work.

Commentary

105. Standards in the 2003 Year 9 national tests for students were average but below those in similar schools. The results were an improvement on the previous year and met the school's target for science. The 2004 results were further improved and the school's target was met. There was no significant difference in the standards attained

by boys and girls. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average and in line with those in similar schools. Boys did slightly better than girls but the difference was not significant. On average, students did not do as well in science as in the other subjects they took, but the proportion attaining the highest grades was average. The 2004 results were broadly the same as the previous year.

106. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards are rising, with students of all abilities achieving well by the end of Year 11. Overall standards are above average in Years 9 and 11, representing good achievement compared with standards on entry to the school. There are no significant differences in the achievements of students in different groups such as the gifted and talented and those with special needs. Students in Years 7 to 9 gain an increasing understanding of the key ideas in science and their practical skills develop well. Work in Years 10 and 11 consolidates this knowledge and understanding so that good achievement is maintained. All students have the necessary skills in English, mathematics and ICT to enable them to succeed in their work.
107. Teaching is good in all years and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. One lesson was unsatisfactory because a significant number of students were not fully engaged in their work, reducing the quality of learning for others. The most successful lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with work that is well planned to stretch the students and retain their interest. Appropriate practical work often features in these lessons. For example, a Year 7 class that included many students with special educational needs made very good progress in their understanding of floating and sinking because the lesson had interesting practical work and was very well planned and managed. It was further enhanced by very good support from two teaching assistants. A strong feature of many lessons is that students are encouraged, through effective questioning techniques, to explain their ideas and to predict outcomes based on their knowledge. This was apparent in a Year 11 lesson on radiation where a low attaining group made very good progress in their understanding due to skilfully planned discussion work and a lively presentation, helped by very good support from the teaching assistant. In the less successful lessons, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teaching does not keep the students fully engaged in their work and the pace slackens and learning is not as effective. Teachers assess the students' progress regularly and set targets for improvement, helping them to achieve well. A weakness in lesson planning is that typical examination questions are not used often enough to help the students to understand how to improve. Routine assessment includes homework that is set and marked regularly, although marking varies in style and does not always give enough constructive advice.
108. The subject is led well and management is good. The head of faculty has given a clear lead in focusing on raising standards and improving quality and this is beginning to have an impact on results. Effective curriculum development has ensured that courses match the students' needs although the option arrangements mean that some high attaining students choose to do the single science course. Self-evaluation systems are good, with effective recording and analysis of data, leading to improved action planning. Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place, mostly to good effect, but this has not yet eliminated inconsistencies in marking and in behaviour management. Support from the science technicians is good but they are often

stretched in keeping up with the demands of practical work taking place in several different areas of this large and dispersed faculty. Good leadership has ensured that improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards, achievement and teaching have improved and specialist college status has brought an improvement in resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are becoming independent users of ICT because of the good resources that are available.
- Students have good attitudes and are interested in the subject so they concentrate well during lessons.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive.
- Students' achievement in Years 9 and 11 are below those in most other subjects.
- Achievement by students in Years 7 to 9 is restricted by lack of lesson time and too much non-specialist teaching.
- The significant strengths within ICT are not being fully utilised because of the fragmented leadership and management structure within the department.

Commentary

109. No examinations were taken in 2003. The unvalidated 2004 results in the vocational GCSE indicate well below average attainment. These students' achievement was, however, satisfactory, when account is taken of their starting points.
110. In Year 9, students' standards are average. This represents satisfactory achievement as they enter the school with average standards. Most students are confident users of ICT, and are willing to experiment and to find their own solutions. Students show good ICT skills in producing a brochure for a garden centre. They combine text and images well and higher attaining students' brochures are clearly related to the needs of the target audience. ICT is used well by most students for research. However, achievement by students in Years 7 to 9 is held back by lack of lesson time. Students have limited opportunity to consolidate their skills, as long periods may elapse between each block of ICT. In addition, the significant proportion of non-specialist teaching in Years 7 to 9 also affects achievement. For example, these teachers do not emphasise enough how spreadsheets can be used to model a budget when calculating income and expenditure for a holiday. In Year 11 students' standards overall are average and achievement is satisfactory. Most students following the GCSE course know how databases can be used to analyse and manage a video rental business. Lower attaining students are less clear about the purpose of different parts of a database and how they link together. There is now satisfactory provision for all students to develop their skills through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course in Years 10 and 11. These students use ICT well to research environmental issues, present information, analyse questionnaires and graph their findings.
111. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 and 10 to 11 is satisfactory. The best lessons use a variety of methods that challenge and involve the students, so maintaining their interest. Teachers support individual students well and so help them overcome difficulties effectively. Students with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive from learning support assistants. Students have good attitudes and are interested in the subject so they concentrate well during lessons. Behaviour is managed well so that in most lessons students' learning is not interrupted. Students are interested in the subject so they work with good concentration during lessons. Most lessons are planned well with the most effective having a review session that consolidates the main learning points. Marking is good with clear points for improvement included. Target setting and discussion with students about the steps they should take to reach their targets are good in the GCSE courses. In Year 7 to 9, although students know their target grades, insufficient emphasis is placed on how they should improve their work in relation to the National Curriculum expectations. The non-specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9, although competent in their use of ICT, do not pitch their lessons clearly enough at the levels required by the National Curriculum. As a result some lessons lack challenge and students' learning, while satisfactory overall, is less secure than in Years 10 and 11, where students receive more time and more specialist teaching.
112. Both leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. Responsibility for the whole school development of ICT is fragmented. As a result the strengths within the subject are not being fully utilised. The specialist ICT teachers have improved as a team in recent months. They

now have a clear focus on improving students' attainment. However, support and training for the non-specialist teachers are inadequate. The schemes of work are not clearly enough related to the National Curriculum requirements. This has contributed to over-generous assessments at the end of Year 9 in the past. Whole-school technical support and development are led and managed well. There is a clear vision from this team, for improving of ICT for learning throughout the school. Resources are good so most students access their work in ICT, and other subjects, effectively throughout the school and often e-mail it to and from home. There are ample opportunities for students to use ICT out of lesson time. They are, therefore, developing as independent users of ICT. This reflects good improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory. Attainment was also described as unsatisfactory at that time and standards are now average and students' achievement is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

113. There is satisfactory use of ICT in other curriculum areas and standards are average. This is an improvement from the previous report. The well-planned network and a strategy to provide resources in subject areas have stimulated this improvement. Teachers' skills and confidence in their use of ICT in lessons has also improved. As a result ICT is especially well used in those subjects that have their own suite of computers, for example in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Several other areas have smaller clusters of computers that are also used effectively such as in art and design. ICT is used satisfactorily in many subjects to research, communicate and present information, such as coursework in Years 10 and 11. However, the ICT provision in the library is poor. Some subjects still have difficulty in accessing the computer rooms. Also ICT is not yet fully incorporated into the schemes of work of all departments.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 11 and standards are above average.
- Teaching is good overall but non-specialist teachers sometimes reduce the impact on learning.
- Students want to learn and behaviour is often very good, making teaching very effective, especially as teachers give much individual help.
- The department makes good use of baseline data and uses this to track students' progress and to set clear targets for each student.
- There is a need to adapt the newly introduced scheme of work so that it extends the most able students and contains teaching resources adapted to those students with special educational needs.
- The departmental improvement plan is not precise enough and is too short term to be effective in driving standards up.

Commentary

114. In 2003, GCSE results were above average. The results represent good achievement and there was a steady improvement over the last three years to 2003. Girls do significantly better than boys. In 2004, there were far fewer candidates and unvalidated results were lower.

115. In Year 9, standards are above average. Students' work is detailed and impressive and represents good achievement when compared to their level on entry to the school. They have acquired good map-reading skills and are able to recognise landforms using contour lines and cross sections. Their written work shows a good understanding of how physical and human processes shape the landscape. Higher attaining students make good use of homework assignments to explain environmental issues such as the clearance of the Amazon rain forests but there is a need to further develop extension work in lessons that will challenge and interest the most gifted students. Lower attaining students are given good support in class on an individual basis but again there is a need to further develop teaching materials that are better adapted to their needs. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 demonstrate little practical use of ICT in their work.
116. Standards in Year 11 are above average and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Most students write well and can link cause and effect in some detail. Most students can apply a range of skills to their GCSE coursework, for example to demonstrate the impact of tourism on the nearby settlements of Skipton and Malham. After-school coursework clinics are effective in helping any interested students to further improve their work.
117. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Students benefit from a core of specialist teachers who are well prepared and have good subject knowledge, which is evident in their whole-class teaching and their explanations to individual students. Non-specialist teachers in the department cope well but in some lessons have less impact on learning because of their lack of a wider geographical knowledge. A newly introduced scheme of work in Years 7 and 8 is helping to produce lessons that are stimulating and relevant but they are not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. Teaching is helped by the fact that most students want to learn and by behaviour that is often very good. Teachers know their students well and give much individual help to those with special educational needs so that they are able to cope in mixed ability classes. Classroom assistants sometimes give further support to students with a statement of special educational need and make a real difference to the effectiveness of the learning experience for these students. Teachers set homework regularly and marking is supportive and helpful.
118. The department is well led and the management is satisfactory. The head of department has a clear vision of the contribution to be made by geography to the whole-school curriculum. The department makes good use of baseline data and uses this to track students' progress and to set clear targets for each student. However, there are two improvement issues that the department has not fully addressed. The department improvement plan does not focus sufficiently on improvements in teaching and learning. Planning is too exclusively short term and does not specify success criteria for measuring progress made with initiatives, nor the accurate costs involved. The scheme of work in Year 7 and 8 is new and needs to be further refined so that it is lesson specific and includes strategies to meet the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and the more able students. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards and achievement have continued to improve and the quality of teaching has been maintained. Assessment of students' progress continues to be a strong feature. The

deployment of resources and accommodation, criticised at the last inspection, are now strong features of the department. However, there is still a need to address the issue of strategies to support students with special educational needs and to extend and challenge the most gifted and talented students.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is leading to rising standards.
- Students know how well they are doing because of the very good assessment systems.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive.
- Weaknesses in grammatical accuracy reduce attainment for a minority of students.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching where students do not learn enough and make insufficient progress in lessons.

Commentary

119. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were average, but improved appreciably in 2004. Girls attained higher results than boys did, but both were above their respective national average. The results show a rising trend over recent years.
120. In Year 9, students' standards are above average and their achievement is good. They have a good understanding of chronology and can place events in time. Students are knowledgeable about historical topics and have improved research skills because they are getting regular practice. They develop skills in using sources of evidence but do not interpret evidence enough. They understand about the development of black peoples of America and are aware of the social and moral issues of the slave trade. Students with special educational needs achieve well because of the regular guidance they receive. Higher attaining students write well but the quality of writing of many students is reduced by grammatical weaknesses. Students enjoy discussion, but generally they do not develop their ideas enough. In Year 11, standards are above average and students achieve well. Students have extended their knowledge and understanding of historical topics and are able to use a variety of evidence to interpret how politicians viewed events and expressed their ideas, but many students do not see the deeper significance of political decisions. Students continue to build on their knowledge of historical terms. They have good chronological understanding and are able to evaluate the reasons for events but do not explain answers fully enough. There is continuing grammatical weakness for a minority of students.
121. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good. Students learn well because the lesson objectives are relevant and the tasks are structured to provide variety of activity. This generates interest and leads to students achieving well. Good use is made of resources and students with special educational needs are supported well through additional adult help. Work is regularly marked and students are very well informed about how well they are doing through the regular assessments. The day-to-day marking, however, gives insufficient attention to the improvement of grammatical

accuracy. Some poor teaching was observed. Here, students did not learn enough because teachers did not engage students' full attention and ensure students concentrated well enough in order to make progress and learn. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is good and students learn well because all teachers are subject specialists and explain points clearly so learning is rapid. Students achieve well because teachers are preparing students better for GCSE coursework and improving question-answering skills. As a result the quality of writing is improving and GCSE standards are rising. Uncharacteristically, some unsatisfactory teaching was seen where challenging behaviour was not managed well enough and had an adverse effect on the learning of all the class.

122. The leadership of the subject is good and management is satisfactory. The subject leader has clear vision and has identified appropriate priorities for development. There are good systems for evaluating and reviewing the subject's performance and these have led to improved teaching and learning. The budget is linked to future needs and has resulted in improved resources. The schemes of work have been revised for Years 7 to 9, but not yet extended to Years 10 and 11. The marking system is consistently applied across the subject but not enough attention is given to improving students' literacy weaknesses. Data is used well to evaluate examination results and to track progress, but teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are too generous. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the raising of standards and improved GCSE results.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of the short course examination at GCSE is raising standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the subject because of very good relationships in the classroom.
- The extent of non-specialist teaching is a barrier to learning for some students.
- The proportion of time given to religious education in Year 8 is barely adequate for the coverage of the locally agreed syllabus.

Commentary

123. The small number of students who took the GCSE full course examination in religious studies in 2004 achieved very well. At this point, there are no national comparators, but students' grades compared very favourably with their results in other subjects.
124. Standards in Year 9 are average. They meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Most students have a sound knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major world religions. They also make thoughtful comments about what they have learned from religion such as the search for meaning in life and the effect and purpose of pain and suffering. Higher attaining students are adept at relating religious teaching, such as the Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path in Buddhism, to the practicalities of modern life. However, although most students achieve in a satisfactory way when compared with their standards on entry to the school, a minority of students do not make satisfactory progress because of shortcomings in the teaching arrangements.

125. In Year 11 where all students are following the GCSE short course in religious studies the standards are broadly average. In relation to their starting point in Year 10, most students are achieving well in getting to grips with the requirements of the examination syllabus. Students of all levels of attainment are keen to take an active part in the lesson and they put forward their views confidently. They can describe the different religious and moral attitudes towards ethical issues such as the termination of life and are learning successfully how to support their responses with relevant textual references. They use ICT effectively for research and presentation of work. Students with special educational needs generally achieve as well as other groups of students because work is carefully matched to their requirements and they receive good classroom support.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Some lessons are of a very high quality. Good relationships in the classroom are a strength of the teaching and students' attitudes to learning are very good. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 because all lessons are taken by specialists whose firm command of the subject and lively, challenging approach enable students to gain a good knowledge of the different elements in the syllabus and to think things out for themselves. In Years 7 to 9 the lack of consistency in the quality of the teaching resulting from timetable restrictions and curriculum organisation adversely affects the learning in some lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, but it was apparent that, for example, teachers who have to 'fill in' for the odd lesson are not confident in subject knowledge and the focus in some lessons is on personal and social education rather than religious education. Teaching in these situations was satisfactory rather than good. Assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Regular marking enables teachers to monitor progress effectively but some achievement is over-rated and students do not always receive clear advice on how to move from one level of attainment to another.
127. The department is led and managed in a satisfactory way. A strength of the leadership is the way in which staff are encouraged to share ideas and evaluate the effectiveness of different teaching styles. However, the limited time available for staff meetings has a negative impact on efforts to achieve consistency in teaching standards across this large department. A key area for improvement is the effective deployment of specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9. Although there is a good match of teachers to the needs of the subject, teachers do not always teach to their strengths because of timetable constraints. In Year 8 the inclusion of units for personal and social education and citizenship within the programmes of study restricts the amount of time available for religious education. However, the recent revision of the locally agreed syllabus and the publication of the non-statutory national framework offer good opportunities for a review of the existing provision in Years 7 to 9. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in that the statutory requirement for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is now met as all students now follow an accredited course in religious studies at GCSE. The subject makes a strong contribution to the development of students' spiritual awareness and appreciation of different cultural traditions.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have positive attitudes to the subject, which contribute to their good level of achievement in all years.
- Teaching is consistently good, leading to good learning.
- The leadership and management of the acting head of faculty are good.
- The curriculum is good and enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for students to enter designing and making competitions.
- Assessment procedures give insufficient attention to reviewing and revising students' targets for improvement as projects develop.
- Planning for the development of design and graphical communication skills in Years 7 to 9 is not refined enough.

Commentary

128. In 2003, students gained results in their GCSE examinations that were in line with the national average at the higher grades A*-C. The results in resistant materials and product design were above average, and below average in food, textiles and systems and control. In 2004, the provisional results at grades A*-C were significantly lower than those achieved in 2003. While the results in textiles improved significantly, other course results were lower.
129. In Year 9, standards are below average, and are markedly lower than teachers' assessments of previous years. These assessments were inaccurate because National Curriculum levels were interpreted too generously. However, achievement is good as the starting point in Year 7 is well below average for the majority of students. The standards of the girls are slightly above those of the boys. In general, the girls have better developed design skills than the boys. Making and constructional skills are more highly developed than design skills for many students, particularly the lower attaining students and those with special educational needs. Higher attaining students have a more secure grasp of subject knowledge and vocabulary. Graphical skills are below the level expected for most students. Students are not given enough opportunities to use their ICT skills to develop their work.
130. In Year 11, standards are average and at this stage the students are meeting targets that put them well on course to achieve results at GCSE similar to those of 2003. All students are now studying GCSE product design and they work in two material areas (resistant materials and food or textiles) over the two years of the course. Their work shows good achievement and for some of the higher attaining students, achievement is very good. The standards achieved by the girls continue to be higher than the boys. The girls' design work usually shows more rigorous evaluation of their work and analysis of their research when developing their designs. The strength of the boys' work continues to be their practical making skills. Graphical skills for most middle and higher attaining students are at expected levels, as are their subject knowledge and vocabulary.
131. Teaching and learning are good in all years. There is a significant amount of teaching that is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a range of

challenging projects and tasks in a variety of materials that make increasing demands on students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. As a consequence all students make good progress from a well below average starting point in terms of experience and attainment. Good behaviour and the positive attitudes of the students add to the effect of the consistently good and better teaching to ensure that achievement is good in all years. Lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives. However, the teachers do not always share the learning objectives with students at the start of the lesson or review the progress made at the end. Where this happens, lessons lack the sharp focus usually found. Learning resources of good quality are provided to support the learning. Teachers use a variety of appropriate methods to engage the students with their learning. Questioning, explanations and demonstrations are used particularly well in developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills. In all lessons teachers give high levels of individual support and well-informed feedback which encourages the students and raises their level of motivation. There was a loss of pace in some lessons where the teachers did not set time deadlines for the completion of intermediate tasks.

132. The faculty is well led and managed. The acting head of faculty has maintained the focus on identified areas for development and good progress has been made towards the faculty's objectives this term. The school's recently acquired Technology and Engineering College status has provided the faculty with very good accommodation and improved resources, including those for ICT. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by very good extra-curricular activities. The faculty is very successful in supporting students who enter the Young Engineer Award and similar activities, and currently has three students who hold scholarships with the Arkwright Foundation. Assessment practice is satisfactory and target setting is in place for all students. However, not enough attention is given to the targets being reviewed and revised as students' work develops through each project, in order to increase further their rate of progress and achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. While standards are still broadly average in Year 11, the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively and there is good capacity for further improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama

133. Drama was sampled in Years 9 to 11. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were broadly average. Provisional results improved significantly in 2004 to a level normally associated with above average. Higher attaining students did very well. The proportion that gained A*/A was almost twice the national figure. The overall grade was well above average.
134. Standards seen in Year 9 are well above average and represent very good achievement by the all-ability range of students observed. Standards in a Year 11 lesson were very high with a large group of almost 30 students consistently performing at levels associated with grades A* and A. The control, power, range, projection and impact of the students' work were breathtaking. Four lessons were formally observed and two briefly visited. Teaching was never less than very good. The Year 11 lesson was excellent. Highly gifted teaching used assessment criteria and lesson objectives to establish the highest expectations. At the same time the framework given to the students ensured that their responses would be individual and independent. Learning was very skilfully enhanced by ongoing questions and students'

evaluations. The lesson gave students full opportunity to apply the high level of dramatic skills they had acquired over time.

135. Achievement in drama is very good, not only in terms of subject skills but in the students' development of effective working relationships and supporting their skills and confidence in speaking and listening.
136. The department is dynamic, lively and highly effective. Its lessons are occasions to be anticipated and savoured. The work is challenging: students take risks but the outcomes are rewarding. The subject leadership is innovative and aspirational and the teamwork considerable. The subject also enables students to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular events.

Art and design

The provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of curriculum time to build on students' visual literacy is a significant factor in raising standards.
- Teaching is predominantly good and students learn well in lessons.
- Students are developing good independent learning skills.
- The achievement of students following the GNVQ course is very good.
- Too few students gain the highest grades in GCSE examinations.
- The management and leadership of the department are good.
- Assessment systems in the Years 7 to 9 are insufficiently rigorous to accurately assess levels.
- There are too many non-specialist staff in the Years 7 to 9, which is having an adverse effect on the achievement of some students.

Commentary

137. Since the last inspection, GCSE results improved until 2003 when the proportion of students gaining grades A*-C fell to well below the national average. Results rose significantly in 2004. A far higher proportion of students gained A*-C grades and achievement was good. Nearly all students entered gained a grade but few students gained the highest grades of A* and A. Students following the GNVQ intermediate course achieved well; over half the students gained a merit or distinction.
138. Standards seen in Year 9 are average and are of a lower level than recorded in last year's teacher assessments. This is because systems to assess the students' work are not used with sufficient rigour and accuracy. Nevertheless, the standards seen represent a good level of achievement overall, given that the majority of students arrived in Year 7 with a below average level of skills and understanding. Students work in a wide range of media. There is a generous allocation of curriculum time and this is used very well to build on the students' visual literacy. By focusing on students' skills of research and analysis of a range of artists' work from different cultures, standards are raised and students' independent learning skills are built on. Literacy skills are well supported by the written annotation and evaluation of their own and artists' work. Sketchbooks are used very well. The level of students' skills in observing and analysing art limits the standards reached in some areas of the course. Students with special educational needs achieve well, seen for example when using ICT to manipulate the colour schemes of their designs.

139. In Year 11, standards overall are average, although they vary between classes due to the wide range of attainment. Students work on whole-class themes and most confidently use a range of materials and processes to express their creative ideas. Sketchbooks demonstrate a good understanding of how to use artists' work to influence their own. This aspect of students' work reveals most clearly the difference in the standards of average and below average attainers. The latter students' sketchbook work is not undertaken as conscientiously and does not show the depth of knowledge and understanding or continuity of effort seen in the work of others. Higher attainers' sketchbooks are of a good standard but their final pieces of work do not always demonstrate the highest level of technical skill. This reflects on the students' ability to gain the very top grades in examinations. Students competently research the use of pattern in African art and develop further into areas of sculpture, textiles, ceramics and printing. The achievement of most students following the GCSE course is good. The achievement of students on the GNVQ course is very good, particularly for those students who start with a below average level of skills and understanding.
140. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the very best lessons, teachers give very clear explanations and encourage students with careful support, sound advice and timely prompts. They use a variety of techniques to involve and motivate students. Where lessons have weakness, it is generally because the planning is too loose and the pace too slow to fully engage students. Despite the open-plan layout of the department and the limited room space, teachers manage students well, often in very cramped and noisy conditions. The specialist teachers within the department have a good command of their subject and this strongly supports learning. However where students are taught by non-specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9, they experience a lack of continuity in their learning, which slows their achievement over time. The quality of individual attention and knowledgeable advice plays an important role in raising standards. Teachers channel students' strengths into areas of success, which raises their self-esteem. Marking is supported well by diagnostic comments, and targets are recorded in sketchbooks. However, although students know what they have to do to improve, they are not always clear of the level they are working at as ongoing work is given only an effort grade. In both the GCSE and GNVQ course, teachers continue to put a high emphasis on the skills of research and analysis to good effect. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work and the progressive structure of the course gives the students the confidence to develop work in their own preferred style. ICT is used well for research and to develop and extend work.
141. Leadership and management are good and the staff within the department have a strong shared commitment to raise standards. Department policies are clear and informative. Well-planned schemes of work give good direction to the non-specialist staff. Assessment data is used well to plan the curriculum to address areas of underachievement. Emphasis is put on students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and this is well supported by enrichment activities such as working with Asian artists and visits to galleries. Improvement overall since the last inspection has been good; the curriculum is much improved and standards have risen. However, the problem of poor accommodation has not been addressed. The reputation and standing of the subject are raised by the high quality of display throughout the whole school.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from Years 7 to 11 learn and achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Students respond very positively to the high expectations of the teachers, with increasing numbers taking music in Years 10 and 11.
- Very good leadership inspires a highly effective specialist team who teach the music curriculum in a highly structured, developmental manner.
- Computer work, with appropriate software, is underdeveloped, particularly in Years 10 and 11, due to lack of resources.
- Class sizes in Years 10 and 11, and particularly in Year 10, are too large, making ongoing evaluation of students' practical work difficult.
- Recording of individual and group composition in Years 7 to 9 is underdeveloped.

Commentary

142. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above average, with all students gaining A*-C passes. These very good results were maintained in 2004, with all gaining A*-C.
143. In Year 9, students' attainment is well above average. This represents very good achievement in relation to students' starting points in Year 7. Students achieve very well due to the carefully structured, developmental programmes of study, which are taught very well across Years 7 to 9, and due to the students' very good attitudes to the subject. The quality of group and whole-class ensemble playing is very high. In one observed lesson, a Year 9 class gave a very accomplished performance of a jazz-idiom in three parts, on pitched percussion. It was technically almost perfect and very musically presented. Students with special needs competently performed their parts, and talented students expertly played demanding off-beat patterns. In Year 11, standards are also well above average, and all students achieve very well. Standards of composition are very high, with students producing imaginative work, which is technically highly competent.
144. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is very good. Highly qualified music specialists work in a coherent, systematic way, which ensures that students acquire musical skills thoroughly, developing upon what they have already learnt. Teachers have very high expectations and will only accept high standards, particularly in practical performance. Students respond very positively to all challenges, with numbers of male and female students taking the GCSE course in Year 10 significantly rising. Assessment of students' work is thorough, and students know what they must do to improve. However, because class sizes are large, ongoing evaluation of work in the classroom in the current Year 10 is very difficult and the recording of class composition and improvisation performances is underdeveloped.
145. Leadership is very good, and the department is managed very well. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The head of department has completely turned the department round since the last inspection, with standards having been

raised at all levels, the curriculum having been totally reviewed and made attractive to students, and with music gaining increased respect in the school. The well-used music suite is always full of students doing private practice during free times of the day. The head of department is an inspired leader to other members of the department, and all work together as a very strong specialist team.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good command of the subject, which enables students to acquire new skills and apply them well in increasingly more challenging tasks.
- Students achieve very well and attain standards that are above average.
- Learning is enhanced by the students' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Very good leadership and management provide the subject with a clear vision and direction.
- Some of the accommodation is in poor condition and in need of refurbishment.

Commentary

146. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average, though the proportion of students gaining A*/A grades was below average. Provisional results for 2004 are lower than in 2003.
147. In Year 9, standards are above average, confirming assessments made by teachers. This represents very good achievement as they enter the school with skills that are, generally, below average. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers. In dance and rhythmic gymnastics, students achieve very well, especially in their compositional skills. By the end of Year 11, standards in GCSE and core practical activities are above average, representing very good achievement by all students. Students have good knowledge of diet, anatomy and physiology and the components of fitness. Standards in Year 11 rugby are well above average and students are very aware of tactics and principles of play. They use this knowledge very well to coach their peers and suggest ways to improve their performance.
148. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well structured with clear objectives and progressions that are shared with students so they know what they are going to learn. Teachers use their very good knowledge to ensure that all students gain new skills and apply them in suitable tasks. Teachers have very high expectations of students who, in consequence, display very good attitudes and behaviour and work very well in groups. Starter activities engage students immediately and lessons progress at a very good pace, keeping students interested and fully active. In the most effective lessons, students are challenged to analyse their own performance, and that of others, in order to suggest improvements. The teacher's expert knowledge, high expectations and students' response to challenging tasks ensured that learning was excellent in a Year 7 dance lesson. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, teaching was uncharacteristically less effective because students were taught incorrect techniques and were not fully able to achieve all the lesson

objectives. In most lessons students discuss well and use key words to explain and give opinions. GCSE students are able to analyse graphs showing the effects of exercise over time. Little evidence of the use of ICT was seen during the inspection and the department has identified it as an area for development. Talented students extend their skills in a very good range of extra-curricular activities and gain very good individual and team success in local, regional and national competitions. The department regularly meets the national target to ensure two hours of high quality physical activity per week.

149. The department is led and managed very well. There is a clear vision for future development, with a focus on improving the achievement of all students. The department is very clear about its strengths and weaknesses, as the department makes very good use of self-evaluation to monitor progress. Procedures to monitor the achievement of students are very good and students are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers, who are all specialists, are very well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is spacious, but the all-weather surface is poor and the sports hall floor is in need of refurbishment. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection: standards are higher, teaching has improved and the curriculum is much broader, including opportunities to study for GCSE examinations.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

150. The planned programme for PSHE is comprehensive and very good. PSHE is greatly valued by students and the school. The programme includes careers, health, sex and relationships education and drug education. Work is marked, assessed and reported on appropriately in students' reviews. Sex education is taught in science and augmented by support from the school nurse. Students value careers education, especially the well-organised programme of work experience in Year 10, and find it helpful in making informed choices throughout their school life and when they leave the school. Careers provision in Years 7 and 8 is currently unsatisfactory, but there are outline plans for provision later in the year.
151. Lessons of PSHE were observed in all year groups. Year 7 students learnt about the damage that the use of the wrong sort of aerosols has on the ozone layer and its impact on the environment. Students in Year 8 discovered the risks associated with drug and alcohol abuse and others learnt about sensible precautions to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Students in Year 9 were taught the effects of alcohol, cigarettes and illegal drugs on the body and mind. Students in Year 10 in the medium volume band learnt how the use of 'tough love' by parents demonstrates the care and concern they have for their children's well-being. Year 11 medium volume students had a confidence-boosting lesson on how everyone can be 'smart' in different ways and how each individual's skill should be valued. Assemblies and form time were used effectively to enhance relationships, raise self-esteem, develop target setting and advise students about career progression and university applications.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from Years 7 to 11 learn and achieve well as a result of overall good teaching.
- The inclusion of citizenship across many areas of the curriculum, and notably in PSHE and religious education contributes strongly to the caring school community.
- Very good opportunities are provided for students to be actively involved in citizenship.

Commentary

152. Citizenship has been very carefully developed in the school in order to fulfil the school's vision of being an inclusive school in which students will become participant, actively engaged citizens, who will meet the demands of a global community. A very full audit was made of existing provision within subjects. Key subjects principally including strong elements of citizenship are English, religious education, PSHE, modern foreign languages, art and design, music, drama and physical education, and through sociology, psychology, English, classics and general studies in the sixth form. The audit revealed a deficit in the teaching of political awareness, resulting in a new module on this area being recently introduced into the Year 8 PSHE programme. Students in Years 10 and 11 take a short citizenship course, with more than half of the students gaining accreditation at the end of the course. During the inspection, citizenship was observed being taught in Years 7, 8 and 9 PSHE lessons, Years 7 and 8 religious education lessons, and in three Year 10 and one Year 11 lessons. Elements were also seen in other observed lessons.
153. Standards are above average by the end of Year 9, and students achieve well. The good teaching, with strategies for immediately gaining and maintaining students' interest, contributes strongly to students' good achievement. In a very successful Year 8 religious education lesson, students made perceptive comments about symbolism of different world religions, and came to understand why it is important for members of different faiths to get on with each other. In a Year 9 PSHE lesson, students demonstrated their awareness of the moral and social dangers of drug abuse, and its potential adverse effect on society. Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve above average standards through overall good teaching, and because of their good attitudes.
154. Teaching is good. In the work seen in the inspection, teaching and learning were overall good, with some very good and excellent features in some lessons. Teachers start lessons with imaginative activities, which immediately capture and maintain the interest of students. Lessons are developed at a very fast pace, but teachers ensure that time is allowed for students to express and develop their ideas. The structure of lessons is well balanced, mostly in three parts, as teachers reflect the planning recommended in the National Strategy, with successful whole-class plenaries showing progress made.
155. Leadership and management are very good, ensuring that the diverse subject areas that teach citizenship make a good contribution. The co-ordinator is firmly committed to a high quality provision of citizenship. Strategies are thoroughly reviewed each year, further planning is included in the school improvement plan, and the budget is carefully managed. End of Year 9 citizenship profiles have been collated, and levels of attainment identified. There is a programme of visiting speakers and relevant workshops by Theatre in Education. Students are given many opportunities to demonstrate responsibility in the school community. Through a peer-mentoring

scheme, for example, Year 12 students are trained to work with Year 10 students on HIV matters. The Year 10 students, in turn, work with Year 8 students on drug abuse. A 'Young Citizen Award' has been established to be awarded to a student demonstrating outstanding work in the community. There are close links with the local community, and further ones are being developed.

OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

156. In 2003, GCSE results in business studies were above average. In 2004 over three quarters of students entered gained A*-C grades with one third gaining grades in the A*/A range. Intermediate GNVQ was introduced this year as an additional course. One GCSE Year 10 lesson was sampled. In addition, the work of both Year 11 GCSE students and GNVQ Year 10 students was sampled during the inspection.
157. Teaching and learning were good in the lesson seen. Year 10 students worked in groups to plan various events including weddings and parties. They were well motivated and used their initiative very well to achieve a division of labour within groups. They worked productively because they were given clear objectives and a challenging timescale to complete their research. They had access to a wide range of resources and this encouraged the development of their research skills. ICT was used well in both research and design tasks. Year 11 GCSE students were seen preparing coursework on setting up a business. They used ICT well to organise and present their work. Advice and objectives for each section of the work were clear and this enabled them to work independently. All students including lower attainers worked productively, for example to summarise their findings from research into potential gaps in a market. Higher attainers used websites to find out about the tax and employment law implications of setting up a business. Year 10 GNVQ students devised an induction programme for newly appointed checkout operators in a supermarket. They displayed good recall of the benefits of staff training. In previous work they used ICT to design leaflets on job interview hints and job advertisements. Planning included a good emphasis on 'real world' experience including simulated job applications and interviews and setting up and running a school stationery shop.

Health and social care

158. This vocational GCSE course was examined for the first time in 2004. All students entered gained pass grades with one third in the A*-C range. One Year 10 lesson was seen. Teaching and learning were good. Students were encouraged to discuss the different functions of the family. Their responses were used well so that they gained confidence. They went on to consider the advantages and disadvantages of different family types. A good level of challenge was sustained throughout with increasing use made of technical terms as the lesson progressed.

Land and environment

159. Teaching and learning were very good in the one Year 11 lesson seen. Achievement was very good with evidence of well-presented previous work on wild life, caring for animals and growing plants. In the lesson, GNVQ students showed good recall of learning about weather symbols and good skills in presenting weather data as a

graph. Individual students, including those with special needs, were supported very well. Students responded very well to challenging tasks and high expectations.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 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	60.0	80.1	10.0	23.7	19.0	29.9
Biology	11	63.6	65.2	0.0	11.1	15.5	20.6
Business studies	9	88.9	76.4	22.2	16.3	32.2	26.2
Chemistry	9	44.4	72.7	0.0	13.9	11.1	24.1
Classical studies	4	75.0	87.4	50.0	34.3	35.0	35.2
Communication studies	11	81.8	86.4	36.4	23.8	34.5	32.0
Design and technology	2	100.0	74.9	0.0	15.1	30.0	25.3
Drama	1	100	86.5	0.0	19.6	30.0	30.6
English language	20	85.0	82.9	20.0	17.5	29.5	28.7
English literature	9	88.9	85.9	0.0	19.1	26.7	30.2
French	7	57.1	78.2	0.0	18.9	12.9	27.6
General studies	41	51.2	73.9	7.3	17.8	15.6	25.7
German	2	100	81.5	50.0	19.3	40.0	28.9
Geography	9	88.9	74.3	33.3	19.8	34.4	26.5
History	4	75.0	80.7	0.0	19.5	20.0	28.6
Mathematics	29	58.6	61.9	10.3	17.1	19.3	22.1
Music	1	100.	86.5	0.0	21.4	30.0	30.7
Other languages	2	100	82.6	50.0	42.9	40.0	36.2
Other sciences	12	66.7	71.4	8.3	15.8	18.3	24.3
Other social studies	7	57.1	69.7	14.3	16.7	17.1	24.1
Physics	3	33.3	68.6	0.0	14.4	6.7	22.7
Sociology	17	58.8	71.8	17.6	18.4	20.6	25.4
Sport/PE studies	7	71.4	73.2	14.3	11.4	25.7	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	14	100.0	98.6	21.4	50.2	67.1	87.5
Biology	17	94.1	96.4	11.8	39.2	64.7	78.6
Business studies	23	100.0	98.7	25.0	36.8	72.5	80.1
Chemistry	10	90.0	97.6	10.0	49.0	60.0	84.9
Classical studies	7	100.0	99.5	0.0	55.9	57.1	90.9
Communication studies	1	100.0	99.4	100.0	37.8	100.0	82.1
Design and technology	15	100.0	97.8	33.3	35.0	74.7	77.9
Drama	7	100.0	99.5	57.1	40.1	91.4	83.6
Engineering AVCE	19	100	n/a	5.3	n/a	70.5	n/a
English language	30	100.0	99.4	16.7	36.3	75.3	80.9
English literature	19	100.0	99.5	36.8	46.5	74.7	86.5
French	4	100.0	98.8	25.0	51.5	65.0	87.6
General studies	72	77.8	94.7	19.4	31.0	53.9	73.1
German	4	100.0	98.4	25.0	47.9	75.0	84.8
Geography	5	100.0	98.7	20.0	44.5	80.0	84.0
History	9	100.0	99.0	22.2	44.6	68.9	84.6
Mathematics	12	66.7	96.7	16.7	55.6	50.0	88.8
Media: Communication and Production AVCE	12	83.3	71.9	0.0	28.5	41.7	n/a
Music	4	100.0	98.8	0.0	38.9	75.0	81.1
Other social studies	6	100.0	97.4	16.7	42.7	60.0	81.8
Other sciences	42	97.6	97.3	35.7	41.5	80.0	80.3
Physics	7	100.0	96.7	42.9	44.6	88.6	81.7
Science AVCE	8	75.0	44.8	0.0	3.7	40.0	58.5
Sociology	15	100.0	98.2	26.7	44.3	70.7	83.6
Sport/PE studies	7	100.0	98.0	28.6	30.9	77.1	75.2

Level 2 vocational qualifications							
Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E	% gaining grades A-E	% gaining grades A-B	% gaining grades A-B	Average point score	Average point score
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design VQ	12	100.0	69.3	91.7	23.8	105.0	70.2
Information technology VQ	32	87.5	77.9	3.1	23.4	60.6	64.9
Travel and Tourism	1	100.0	71.8	0.0	14.5	80.0	62.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was English language and French. Two German lessons were sampled where teaching was good and standards above average.

English language

Provision in English language is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average; achievement is now satisfactory, having improved from last year.
- Management is working systematically to develop more comprehensive programmes of study and to develop greater subject knowledge in teaching.
- After a period of instability, staffing problems have been rectified, leading to satisfactory teaching and learning.
- Students' folders of work are disorganised, leading to a lack of clarity in their understanding of the course and the progress they are making.
- Too little written assessed work means students are not prepared well enough for their examinations.
- Students do not read sufficiently widely to develop an awareness of different styles of writing.

Commentary

160. Results in the 2003 GCE AS examinations were average. In the GCE A level examinations they were below average. Students did better in their English than in their other subjects. Results in 2004 declined in both examinations.

161. Standards seen during the inspection are below average in Years 12 and 13. Students' achievement is now satisfactory, taking into account this group's below average standards on entry to the course. Achievement is better than in recent years, because the difficulties in staffing that had been experienced up to two years ago have been overcome. Students in Year 12 are beginning to use appropriate terminology, but find it difficult for example to identify adjectives and verbs accurately. They are making good progress with their creative writing pieces, taking careful account of their intended audience. Lower attainers struggle to recognise basic grammatical errors in their re-drafting process. In Year 13, students' folders are disorganised; they lack details of course content and assessment objectives. The folders are not helpful

documents for revision purposes, or to show students how they are progressing. Lower attainers make generalised comments, both orally and in writing, and lack precision and detail. Higher attainers produce systematic and knowledgeable linguistic analysis displaying fluent use of technical terminology. Students do not read sufficiently widely outside lessons, especially the quality newspapers. Thus their knowledge of different styles and genres in writing is below average. Library provision is inadequate to encourage independent learning, but students do use the Internet effectively for research. Female students perform better than male students. Students have more confidence in provision for English now that staffing problems encountered last year have been overcome.

162. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, leading to satisfactory learning. Learning is most successful when students are encouraged to think for themselves, for example when working in groups preparing a brochure to advise George Bush on his speech making. Students analysed sensibly how a text could be effectively organised and what language it would be appropriate to use. When questioning is good, students search for precise responses, but too often it is generalised and students are content with generalised answers. Planning within lessons is good, and students can see how they have progressed, but the long-term precise planning of the course lacks detail. Management is currently developing more precise programmes of study. Assessment procedures are satisfactory with some good practice occurring. For example, Year 12 students analysed coursework pieces for themselves, using assessment criteria, thus developing awareness of how they could improve. Students do not do sufficient assessed written work to prepare adequately for examinations.
163. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection standards had declined. However, under the new faculty leadership, standards and students' achievement are improving. Recent instability in staffing, which adversely affected provision, has been rectified. The school's management and the head of the subject have identified weaknesses and taken effective steps to improve both teaching and curriculum coverage.

Modern foreign languages

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students are confident speakers and have good vocabulary.
- Teachers are conscientious and well prepared.
- The very good relationships between staff and students underpin the very good atmosphere for learning that prevails in classrooms.
- The positive ethos of the department encourages students to enjoy their work and develops in them very good attitudes towards their study.
- Teaching is not linked closely enough to students' targets for improvement and the demands of the examination.
- More attention is needed on improving the standard of coursework.

- Insufficient use is made of ICT, the library and the resource room to develop the skills needed for independent study.

Commentary

164. The numbers of students taking the 2003 GCE examinations at A and AS levels were too low to make valid comparisons with national averages.

165. Current student numbers are still low and attainment is variable, but overall standards are above average in Years 12 and 13 with speaking skills being a particular strength. Students in Year 12 are coping well with the change in the expected standard between Year 11 and Year 12. By the time students reach Year 13, their achievement is good and they are increasingly confident speakers of French. The work experience in France, between Year 12 and Year 13, is of very good benefit and is making a positive difference to their confidence and overall performance. Reading comprehension and writing skills improve well through Year 12 through structured opportunities provided by teachers. By Year 13, students write more independently and confidently, but with varying levels of accuracy. The knowledge, understanding and vocabulary they are gathering, of topics such as the effects of drugs, racism and immigration, the environment and the French Resistance, are increasing their language skills and awareness of citizenship.

166. Teachers are conscientious and plan lessons carefully. Teaching is good overall and some lessons are very good. Students have very good opportunities to hear and speak French during lessons and are now able to use a newly set up resource room with Internet access. However, use of ICT and the resource room for independent study is still limited and students do not make enough use of this new facility in order to develop the skills to meet the challenges of AS and A level. Each student has targets for improvement and their good awareness of these is a motivating influence in their learning. However, teaching support for individuals is not closely enough focused on these targets and on increasing students' independence in developing their language skills. Relationships between staff and students are very warm and this helps provide a supportive atmosphere for learning. Marking is helpful and encouraging but does not provide sufficient focus on how students can improve further. Performance data is carefully analysed at individual level because numbers are too small to define patterns. Nevertheless, there is still scope to use data more, in order to better inform teaching and learning strategies.

167. Leadership and management are good overall, but the characteristics of good teaching and learning are not defined closely enough for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation. The ethos of the department has ensured that students have very positive attitudes to their work. Improvement since the last inspection cannot be judged in terms of standards because of the small numbers taking French then and now.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and students learn well.
- Students are well motivated and work hard.
- The provision is well managed and as a result the number of students studying mathematics is increasing.
- Further mathematics is now part of the mathematics curriculum.
- Assessment needs to be more consistent
- The use of ICT needs to be developed further to support learning.

Commentary

168. In the AS level examination in 2003 the results were at the national average, as in the previous year. In 2003 the girls' results were well above the national average. In the GCE A level examination in 2003 the results were well below the national average. Two thirds of the students achieved a grade. Results were at the expected level for most students and achievement was satisfactory in spite of staffing problems and the loss in confidence students had suffered as a result of the national problem with AS level mathematics in the previous year. The girls' results were better than the boys' results. In 2004, results improved and almost all the students achieved a grade.
169. The standards of work seen in the sixth form are above the expected level. Students are now achieving well because of the effective teaching as a result of the staffing problems being resolved. The students' competent algebraic skills enable them to cope with the differentiation and integration work. Good graph drawing helps the students to answer questions with understanding.
170. Teaching is good and students learn well as a result. Lessons are well planned. The pace at which the work is undertaken is well matched to the needs of the students. Questioning is skilful and the students answer questions with a good level of understanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they give clear explanations. Some teachers are beginning to use the interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. A very good lesson was seen using the interactive whiteboard to help the students revise for the January examinations. Students find the work interesting and challenging. They are aware of their progress and predicted grades and recognise and appreciate the help and support given by the teachers. Relationships between students and teachers are very good.
171. Much of the written work demanded of students takes the form of questions, which test the students' understanding. Homework is set regularly. However, regular tests are not set in an organised and consistent way in order to test the students' retention of knowledge. Marking of work is variable in quality and quantity; the best marking helps the students to know what they can do to improve. Some evidence of the students' use of ICT was seen in the analysis of their work, but this aspect of work is relatively underdeveloped.
172. Both leadership and management are good. Work is well managed in the sixth form. Staff co-operate in the planning and work well together under the good leadership given by the new head of faculty and the sixth form mathematics co-ordinator. Teachers know individual students' strengths and weaknesses well. The curriculum for sixth form mathematics is appropriate and meets the needs of the students. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The effective new leadership

and management have not yet had full impact. Apart from in 2003 the results have improved recently. Increasing numbers of students are studying mathematics and there is now a further mathematics course. The opportunity to study further mathematics is much appreciated by the students and is becoming a popular option.

SCIENCE

The foci of the inspection were biology and physics. Chemistry and advanced vocational science were sampled.

The advanced vocational science is providing a good educational experience for the relatively few students participating and the results attained by the students in 2003 and 2004 were above average, with students attaining higher grades in AVCE science than their other subjects, representing good achievement. The course is well planned and managed and is a good addition to the post-16 science curriculum.

Chemistry was sampled and the standard of the work seen was above the national average and students were achieving in line with their previous performance at GCSE. Results attained in 2003 confirmed this and results in 2004 maintained the standard.

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers have a shared determination to raise standards.
- Students are insufficiently challenged in some lessons.
- Target setting and assessment are good and help students make good progress.
- Schemes of work are unsatisfactory.
- Students are co-operative and willing to learn
- The delaying of the AS examination until January of Year 13 is unsatisfactory because it prevents the students concentrating on their A2 course.

Commentary

173. For the last three years the number of students taking biology has dropped steadily and the results in 2003 were below average, with the boys' performance being significantly worse than the girls'. Overall this represented unsatisfactory achievement for these students. In 2004 the results deteriorated further and this again represented unsatisfactory achievement for those students.

174. The standards observed during the inspection were higher than recent results. Overall, the scrutiny of work and the lessons seen indicate that the students are attaining an average standard. Students' written work shows both care and commitment. There was some work of above average standard seen. For example, work on physiology and transport showed good evidence of research. Other topics, for example heat loss, showed the thorough development from simple volume/area ratios to sophisticated methods of temperature control. The work of both Year 12 and Year 13 students completed in the autumn term showed this much more complete approach to work topics and consequently the attainment of a higher standard. Taking into account the GCSE starting point of the students this represents satisfactory achievement.

175. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students are co-operative and willing to learn but tend to be too passive in class. Lessons are well prepared and planned but the teachers do not challenge students to be more actively involved in lessons and to contribute more to their own learning. Lessons are too teacher-focused. In a good lesson on the circulation of blood the style was brisk and the level of the work demanding; students responded well to this approach and contributed positively and enthusiastically. Consequently they enjoyed a good learning experience. In other lessons the teacher delivered too much information to the students without demanding a thoughtful and scientific response from them and learning proceeded at a slower, albeit satisfactory, pace. Students' notes were amplified and supported by a judicious mixture of teachers' handouts and specimen examination questions. Students have clear targets based on their GCSE achievement when they enter Year 12 and their progress is monitored regularly throughout the course. The students themselves know the level at which they are achieving and what to do to raise the standard of their work. They are very appreciative of the support given to them in this way. Students' written work is marked regularly by the teachers and supported by many suitable handouts to supplement students' notes.
176. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. A new head of department was appointed in September and actions have already been taken to help raise the standard of achievement. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. New work schemes are being developed and there is some sharing of good practice amongst the teachers. The department has good capacity to move forward and standards are rising. The equipment and book resources available are good and the laboratory accommodation is satisfactory but the dispersed situation of the laboratories over the large site still leads to significant logistical problems.

Physics

Provision in physics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, leading to good learning.
- The teachers have a shared commitment to continue to raise standards.
- The delaying of the taking of AS until January in Year 13 is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Assessment is very good, giving students clear knowledge of their progress.

Commentary

177. In 2003 the standards attained at GCE A level were above national averages and students obtained higher grades in physics than in their other subjects. This represents good achievement taking into account the standards on entry to the sixth form. In 2004 only two candidates took the examination and it is not possible to draw generalised conclusions from this small number. AS results for 2003 were below average, reflecting unsatisfactory achievement for those students, but the results in 2004 were above average showing good achievement and indicative of the effectiveness of the action taken by the senior management of the school.
178. The standards seen in the inspection week were above average, reflecting good achievement. A good example of this was seen on the subject of astronomy. The notes and written work of the students on this topic showed both detail and depth of

study and in a very good lesson on astronomy the students were able to express complex ideas with a confidence based on secure knowledge and were able to handle numerical calculations with great confidence. Students' practical skills are good and they are able to handle apparatus with skill and confidence. In a very good lesson on capacitance with Year 13, students were given a task, worked very well together to achieve an effective practical result and were able to evaluate and explain the theoretical basis of their practical work.

179. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well prepared and teachers are both positive and enthusiastic. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace; students are constantly challenged and rise to these challenges with interest and enthusiasm. They respond well and are able to make an active contribution to their own learning. The care and presentation of their notebooks show their commitment to their studies. Their work is marked regularly and their notebooks become real learning aids helped by good handouts from their teachers. Students have clear targets given at the outset of their sixth form career and their progress is monitored on a regular basis and a one-to-one review is held with the teacher each term. Students are very appreciative of this support.
180. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a shared determination to continue to raise standards and to raise the profile of the subject. Since the previous inspection the physics department has made good progress. Standards at that time were below average, where now they are above average. The recent impressive increase in numbers is a good indication of the department's success and the standard achieved in the AS results in 2004 augurs well for the future. The low take-up of GCE A level physics was thoroughly analysed by the school, action was taken and now numbers in Year 12 and Year 13 are strong. The present Year 13 did not complete the AS course in Year 12 and are preparing to complete the third module in the January examination. This is an unsatisfactory distraction during the Year 13 course. Students are well equipped with textbooks and the accommodation for the subject is satisfactory, although the geographical placement of the laboratories around the school causes significant logistical problems, particularly for the hard-worked laboratory technicians.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on sociology. One Year 13 GCE A level lesson was sampled in geography. Here, students showed very good achievement, attaining standards well above average. Teaching and learning were very good and students showed very good attitudes.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good so students achieve well and standards in Year 13 are improving.
- Students' attitudes are very good and so students learn well.
- The subject is led well and students receive good support and guidance.
- There are not enough opportunities to link work in different areas of learning to extend wider knowledge and understanding of subject.
- Good strategies have been put in place to raise achievement and standards.

Commentary

181. GCE A level results were below average in 2003 and were still below in 2004, but in both years, students achieved well in relation to their starting points and their predicted grades. A 100 per cent pass rate was consistently achieved. More female students enter the course in Years 12 and 13. Results were affected by non-attendance and disaffection of some students in 2004.
182. Standards seen in Years 12 and 13 are close to average and students achieve well. Early in Year 12, students understand how to interpret statistics, analyse graphs, collect data, solve problems and confirm hypotheses. For example, students analysed graphs and statistics on marriage and divorce and there were good opportunities for research and the development of hypotheses. Students identified and understood the present-day attitudes in relation to one-parent families, the effect of delaying having children to concentrate on careers on late marriage and the increase in divorce rates since changes in legislation. Students could relate this to the different thinking of various groups of sociologists, for example, new right and feminist groups. Understanding was not fully developed to include the work of well-known sociologists and some students did not fully examine the changes in family choice when comparing modern society with recent history. Students' achievement results from the high expectations of teachers and the careful planning of the course. For example, Year 13 students are beginning to apply their good understanding in animated discussions. They organise essays well and understand the value of planning and research. Students answer questions well and research widely to support their answers but not all recognise the importance of examples and the use of correct terminology. Gifted and talented students do as well as others but there are few opportunities for further development.
183. There is good variety in teaching and much is achieved in lessons because of the rapid pace of learning engendered by challenging teaching. A very good personal understanding of the subject enables teachers to extend questioning to challenge students. For example, in a Year 13 lesson the teacher stressed the social and moral implications of foreign aid and the effect of a growing reliance of developing societies on the wealth and influence of western countries, but the implications of, for example, Marxist thinking were not introduced to extend learning further. Teaching generally extends students' thinking well through good questioning which prompts discussion. They appreciate the co-operative and testing learning environment created and value the guidance and support they receive. Students enjoy understanding how society functions and can see the subject's usefulness to future careers. Students are not kept sufficiently aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve further and

the grading of work is not consistent enough. Specialist vocabulary is strongly emphasised in all lessons but students do not always use this effectively and consistently in written work. All students feel well supported in their studies and low attaining students get one-to-one support. The very positive attitudes of most students to the subject enhance group and individual work, as well as productive discussion. However, non-attendance affects what a minority of students in Year 12 can achieve and the negative attitudes of a few male students in Year 12 mean that their progress is adversely affected.

184. A good team of teachers lead the course. There is effective sharing of good practice, and attendance on examination courses helps to keep the department and students up to date. Good systems of monitoring students' progress enable teachers to evaluate students' needs and teachers use data well to guide teaching. This enables teachers to advise students well. Specific teaching facilities enhance opportunities for display and easy use of materials but access to computer links is too low and so research possibilities are limited. Books available from the library and the department form a good base for research.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The focus of the inspection was AVCE engineering. Product design GCE A level was sampled. Teaching and learning were very good in a Year 13 product design lesson. Students are achieving very well and reaching above average standards as a result of the very experienced teacher's subject knowledge and the level of challenge in the work. The students' attitudes to the work and the subject are excellent.

AVCE Engineering

Provision for AVCE engineering is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have excellent attitudes to the subject and achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good and results in very good learning.
- The leadership and management of the head of department are very good.
- Students use ICT very effectively to enhance their learning.

Commentary

185. In 2003, in the AVCE double award engineering examination, all 19 students entered achieved grades A-E, with five per cent gaining grades A-B. All achieved well from their starting points in Year 12. All six students entered for the examination in 2004 achieved grades A-E, but none achieved the higher A/B grades.

186. In the work seen in the inspection, standards are rising and the students in Year 13 are working at levels in line with the course expectations. Their achievement is very good in relation to their starting points in Year 12. They had little experience of engineering and are exceeding the levels expected at the start of the course. Making skills are a strength for most students and they have good engineering drawing skills. Subject knowledge and its specialist vocabulary are at expected levels and students also have a good knowledge of the scientific principles that apply to much of the work in the subject. They have secure ICT skills and they use a range of software to develop and record their work effectively. In Year 12, students have made a very

good start in their first term and are achieving very well. They are making rapid gains in knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of the course.

187. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and know the standards and requirements of the syllabus to be studied. This, along with the excellent attitudes the students have towards their work, ensures very good achievement. Lessons are very well planned and teaching methods are very well matched to the content to be delivered. Very effective use is made of group work. The resources for learning are very good and the students are very well supported and encouraged by their teachers, who maintain very high expectations of them.
188. Leadership and management are very good. The head of faculty has a clear view for the further development of the subject. Five staff are involved in teaching the course and they are deployed very effectively to make use of their specialist expertise. The curriculum is challenging and the projects and tasks that are set stimulate and interest the students. Strong links with industry have been forged and these add relevance to the curriculum. Target setting is in place for all students and the assessment system is good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was on art and design and theatre studies.

Art and design

The focus of the inspection was on the AVCE course in art and design.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Standards are well above average in Year 13 as a result of very good teaching.
- Opportunities for enrichment are plentiful and have a very positive effect on learning.
- Students' skills of analysis are not as well developed as other aspects of their work.

Commentary

189. AVCE examination results in 2004 are not yet validated against national figures. However, students performed better in this course than most others and added very good value from their starting points in Year 12.
190. In the work seen in the inspection, standards in Year 13 are well above average. In both Years 12 and 13, students are achieving very well in relation to their respective starting points. Students use their skills of research to great effect in their planning and preparation, which allows them to develop their work gradually. They have a very good understanding of colour and texture and their drawing and sketching skills are well developed. Students understand very well the work of prominent artists and use this information to support and extend their coursework. Students' evaluative skills are not as well developed and are broadly average. This is often because they are unused to using appropriate subject vocabulary in their written work. There are many

opportunities for students to review their own and others' work and as a consequence students know well how to improve.

191. Teaching is very good. Students are achieving very well as a result and their learning is very good. The teaching demands much of them because it is very challenging. Teachers' expectations are set very high both with regard to behaviour and the quality of students' responses. These very high expectations have resulted in students' producing coursework that is well above average. Lessons focus appropriately on the development and improvement of technical skills. As a result, all students make very good progress, including those with special educational needs. Relationships between teachers and their students are very good, forged on trust and mutual respect and equally good relationships are engendered between students. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. This enables them to clearly and succinctly explain difficult skills and processes and as a result students learn quickly. Field trips and cultural visits encourage students to experiment with new materials and explore alternative ways of working. Because of this they are able to work independently and are unafraid to share ideas and this benefits their level and pace of learning.
192. The head of department provides very good leadership. The department is managed very well. There is a clear commitment to raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning and by encouraging both staff and students to share good practice. It now remains for the department to develop further opportunities for students to improve their writing skills.

Theatre studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and excellent commitment from students lead to very good learning.
- Students achieve very well, but standards in written work are not yet as high as in practical work.
- Excellent opportunities for extra-curricular activities give students wide appreciation of the theatre.
- Excellent leadership and management have led to a cohesive department providing very good provision for drama in the sixth form.
- Students in Year 12 are attaining standards that are well above average because they enter the course with a good background of drama in Years 7 to 11.

Commentary

193. Results in the 2003 GCE A level examinations were above average. In 2004 results improved, with a higher proportion of students gaining A or B grades. Students performed much better in their theatre studies than in their other examinations.
194. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 12 are well above average. Standards in Year 13 are average. The Year 12 group of students have benefited greatly from having had regular drama lessons in the main school, a feature not experienced by Year 13 students who enter the course from a lower base of experience and consequently lower standards. Both year groups achieve very well when account is taken of their

differing standards on entry to the course. Standards of practical work are very high, and higher than standards of written work. Students respond strongly to a variety of stimuli, resulting in convincing and powerful performances. They co-operate excellently in groups and give 100 per cent commitment to their work. Independent performances are concentrated and emotive. Many students are working at the highest levels. In written work, higher attainers write confidently and accurately, but lower attainers' work lacks specific examples and is poorly structured. Students show good knowledge of plays being analysed and a good knowledge of social and cultural contexts. Understanding of theatre practitioners such as Artaud develops very well during the course, with students successfully producing very cruel and primitive images. Male and female students do equally well.

195. Teaching is very good, with many excellent qualities, leading to very good learning. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which they use to plan varied, stimulating lessons inspiring students to think carefully about the objectives of the lesson and to produce focused pieces of theatre. For instance, Year 12 students developed depth of understanding of their characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, through a series of lively activities, delivered with great pace and verve, all excellently focused on the assessment objective of developing characterisation. Assessment is very good, both in lessons and of written work, ensuring students are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They are skilled at assessing their own work and adapting and improving it. Lots of theatre trips and performances of their own work help students to develop a wide awareness of dramatic form. Students enjoy their work tremendously and a high proportion take their studies further after leaving the school. The head of the subject department has rightly identified written work as a relative weakness and introduced measures to help students improve, but this has not fully taken effect as yet.
196. Leadership and management are excellent. The achievement of students, while very good, does not yet match this excellence because of relative weaknesses in written work. This is a tight-knit department where all pull together to improve standards. Very good monitoring occurs, often through team-teaching, and programmes of study are revised and improved on a regular basis. Excellent vision has ensured very good progress since the previous inspection, with raised standards and improved teaching in what was already a good department.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus of the inspection was physical education.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and, consequently, students achieve well.
- Relationships are excellent and students display very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Results in GCE AS and A-level examinations are above average, but below average for the proportion gaining A/B grades.

- Courses in the sixth form are well led and managed.
- There is insufficient opportunity in some lessons for all students to be fully involved in discussion.

Commentary

197. Results in the GCE A2 and AS examinations in 2003 were above average, though the proportion of students gaining A/B grades was slightly below average. In 2004, results dropped slightly.
198. Standards are varied, but are average, overall, in Year 12 AS and Year 13 A-level courses. However, this represents good achievement for these groups of students because some entered the courses not having studied GCSE, or with below average grades in that course. At this stage in the course, while standards are average, students are on target to attain the level of results of previous years. Higher attaining students are working towards grade A at AS level and students on both courses are working towards gaining A-E grades. Year 13 A level students have good knowledge of aerobic and anaerobic energy systems and the associated vocabulary. They identify psychological factors that enable individuals to optimise their performance and apply their knowledge of biomechanics well to a variety of sports. In Year 12, students, especially those attaining higher standards, have good knowledge of training principles and theories of exercise. They can identify sociological and psychological factors that impact on participation in sport.
199. The quality of teaching and learning is good. One of the main strengths is that teachers have very good knowledge and plan their work effectively to ensure that students learn effectively. The sixth form students benefit very well from being taught by different teachers for different aspects of their course. Relationships and attitudes are excellent and respect is mutual. As a result, students display excellent behaviour and work with enthusiasm and high levels of interest. In the most effective lessons, all students are fully involved in discussion with partners and share ideas with the whole group. Teachers challenge students and ask them to explain their opinions and give examples. However, this interactive approach is not consistently used to ensure that lower attaining students are always fully involved in answering questions.
200. Leadership and management are good. Teachers use assessment effectively and have good knowledge of the students' progress and achievement, but marking needs to be more consistent in informing students about how well they are doing and what they must do to improve further. The courses were not taught at the time of the last inspection so no judgement can be made about improvement. The courses were introduced in 2000 and have been very well developed and enable students to achieve well.

BUSINESS

The focus of the inspection was business studies.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Topics are taught thoroughly with students gaining a good understanding of both theory and practice in the subject.
- Courses are well planned so that students know in advance what they have to achieve and thus can check their own progress.
- The Young Enterprise scheme has a very positive impact on students' personal development.
- Choice of courses in the subject area for students entering the sixth form is too limited.
- The size of one frequently used classroom is too small and limits the ability of staff to monitor students' work.

Commentary

201. GCE A level results in 2003 were below average. In 2004 the proportion of A and B grades achieved was much higher. VCE results from a small entry were broadly average in 2003 and higher in 2004 from an even smaller entry. The VCE course has been discontinued.
202. Standards on entry to the course are average. By the end of Year 13 standards are above average representing good achievement. Standards in Year 12 are above average and students achieve well. Students in Year 12 who have studied the subject previously apply their knowledge well to the new course. All students quickly learn theoretical concepts and how to apply them to case study material. Using and applying theory also develop well in Year 13, although weaknesses in numeracy skills limit the achievement of some students, for example in the use of critical path analysis. Good literacy skills enable most students to argue convincingly in extended writing. Some students, including lower attainers, have weaknesses in developing their ideas in a coherent essay form, for example when arguing the benefits of selling on-line. Higher attainers display good evaluation skills, for example in investigating a company's potential to expand its market.
203. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' sound subject knowledge results in a thorough coverage of theory and its applications. As a result students gain confidence in their learning. They display very good attitudes. Good planning further enhances confidence. Students have a clear idea of sequences of lessons and of what has to be achieved over periods of time. Teaching provides good opportunities for students to develop their key skills, although difficulties in accessing ICT are sometimes a barrier to learning. In the most effective teaching, activities motivate and stimulate, such as competitive problem-solving group exercises. In contrast some teaching lacks pace and methods that strongly engage students' interest, with lessons taking too long to 'get started'. Although very good medium-term planning enables students to consolidate their learning over time, there are, nevertheless, lost opportunities in some lessons to push students' learning further and faster. Students' responses are mostly used well in challenging class discussion although sometimes there is an over-reliance on volunteers and this does not challenge all students sufficiently.
204. Leadership and management are good. Monitoring and evaluation are a strength with, for example, the department responding to weaknesses in an aspect of examination performance from the previous year. The curriculum is well planned although the

absence of an alternative course to advanced level restricts opportunities for some students on entry to the sixth form. Young Enterprise groups achieve very well with strong support from the department, school governors and the local business community. One teaching room is too small for staff to circulate and monitor students' work. There was no separate report on post-16 business studies at the last inspection.

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

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