

INSPECTION REPORT

Wolfreton School

Kirk Ella, East Riding of Yorkshire

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Inspection Number: 184017

Unique Reference Number: 118083

Headteacher: Roy Cooke

Reporting inspector: Clare Gillies
20597

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 798153
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	East Riding of Yorkshire
Name of chair of governors:	Kenneth Markham
Date of previous inspection:	January 1995

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Anthony Mundy Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Cedric Sanders	English and drama; Theatre Studies; Media studies.	
Brian Evans	Mathematics.	
Cyndi Millband	Science. Health and social care GNVQ;	
Michael Miller	Art.	Curriculum
Margaret Brookes	Design and technology; Psychology.	
Valerie St Johnston	History; Politics.	Staffing Sixth form
John Mitchell	Information technology.	Efficiency of the school
Richard Merryfield	Geography; Leisure and tourism GNVQ.	
Peter McKenzie	Modern foreign languages.	Assessment
John Morrell	Music.	Learning resources
Carole Smith	Physical education; Expressive Arts.	Accommodation
Roger Parry	Special educational needs; Sociology; Equal opportunities.	
Ivan Andrews	Religious education.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development; Careers.
David Gutmann	Business studies (and GNVQ); Economics.	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- . Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE are rising. Overall standards of attainment are above the national average.
- . Teaching was good or better in over 60 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 18 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection.
- . Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
- . The pastoral care provided for the pupils is good.
- . Pupils receive very good careers education and guidance.
- . The sixth form curriculum is very good with a wide range of A-level and GNVQ subjects offered.

Where the school has weaknesses

- . Although improvements are underway, the lack of computers and planning in the past means that many pupils do not have enough information and communication technology skills.
- . The quantity, range and quality of books, and the provision for information technology in the upper school library are poor. Students neither use the library enough nor have opportunities to develop research skills.
- . At present the accommodation, particularly for science, music at the lower school, design and technology and the library at the upper school, and the resources and/or technical support for some subjects, are unsatisfactory.
- . Standards are low in art at GCSE and A-level, and in music in Years 7 to 9. However, changes introduced in September 1999 are already addressing the weaknesses in these subjects.

The strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out the how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent out to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Progress since the last inspection has been good and strategies are in place for this to continue. Although some parts of the accommodation are unsatisfactory, major, and numerous minor improvements have been made, and this year four new science laboratories will be built on the lower site. The appointment of a site manager has contributed to these developments. Several initiatives have raised standards, for example, the introduction of CASE in science, changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum, and the development of more effective teaching. The improved teaching has helped to reduce the gap between girls' and boys' results. Support for pupils with special educational needs is now good. Development plans are more concise and

sharply focused, although some of the faculty targets are not stated in a way that can be measured easily. Personal and social education has been developed and is now of better quality. Although the use of tutor time and the delivery of personal and social education are variable, several form tutors and heads of year provide outstandingly strong support and guidance for pupils.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools*	<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p> <p><i>well above average</i> <i>A</i></p> <p><i>above average</i> <i>B</i></p> <p><i>Average</i> <i>C</i></p> <p><i>below average</i> <i>D</i></p> <p><i>well below average</i> <i>E</i></p>
Key Stage 3	B	E	
GCSE Examinations	A	D	
A/AS – levels	A		

* Schools that have less than five per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals

Results in the 1999 Year 9 national assessment tests were considerably higher than in 1998. 86 per cent of pupils achieved level 5 (the expected level) in English and 82 per cent in mathematics, as against 69 per cent and 73 per cent respectively in 1998. The pupils who took GCSE in 1999 entered the school with relatively lower standards than those who took GCSEs in 1998, but 55 per cent of them achieved five grades A*-C, a slight improvement on the previous year. Girls still achieve better results than boys overall, but the gap has been reduced in most subjects.

Between 1996 and 1998, GCSE results fluctuated in individual subjects. In 1999, over 60 per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C in English language and literature, drama, physical education and textiles, and compared to the previous year, results improved in business studies, history, French and all design and technology subjects. Results in art and music have not improved enough since the last inspection. In 1998 and 1999 almost 50 per cent of Year 10 pupils achieved grades A*-C in the short GCSE examination in religious education. Pupils entered for certificates of achievement and pre-vocational qualifications achieve above average results.

The average points score achieved by A-level students has been well above the national average for several years. A-level art results have declined. In 1999, 100 per cent of students were awarded grades A to E in computing, economics, the English modular course, further mathematics and German, and at least 60 per cent were awarded grades A to C in chemistry, computing, the English modular course, further mathematics, history, psychology and theatre studies. GNVQ results have improved steadily over the last few years. Between 1996 and 1998, students studying chemistry, geography, mathematics and physics made particularly good progress.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:*	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, design and technology, and religious education.	One science and one history lesson
Years 10-11	Good	Mathematics, business studies, history, music and religious education.	One science, one art, one physical education and two personal and social education lessons
Sixth form	Good	English, economics, information technology, history, psychology and sociology.	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses. * All satisfactory and at least 25 per cent very good and better.*

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons; good and better in 65 per cent of lessons, and very good in 18 per cent. The quality of teaching was particularly effective in Year 10 and the sixth form. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 2 per cent of lessons, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has worked hard to raise the quality of teaching.

At least 70 per cent of teaching was good or better in design and technology, information technology, music, physical education, support work for pupils with special educational needs and religious education. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in two mathematics, two design and technology, one Advanced GNVQ, one information technology, one physical education and two history lessons. The improvement in teaching since the last inspection has certainly contributed to improved progress in many subjects.

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. In the great majority of lessons pupils behave well. They move around the school sensibly and respect their environment.
Attendance	Good. The school encourages regular attendance and punctuality and monitors them carefully.
Ethos*	Good. Pupils know they are expected to work hard and achieve high standards and there is a purposeful atmosphere in almost all lessons. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
Leadership and management	Good. In eight terms the headteacher has moved the school forward well. He and the deputy heads and middle managers support and monitor teaching and curriculum developments effectively. All staff work hard to ensure the school's aims and policies are put into practice. Development planning has improved since the last inspection.
Curriculum	Good. New subjects, and changes to the options available, have successfully improved the relevance and breadth of the curriculum for Key Stage 4 pupils. The sixth form curriculum is very good because students choose from a wide range of A-level and GNVQ courses.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision has improved since the last inspection and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. At Key Stage 4 appropriate courses have been introduced as alternatives to some GCSEs.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, which is satisfactory, has not improved as much as that for their social and moral development, which is now good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. The hours of technical support, particularly for science, are low. Although improvements are underway, the number of computers is low. At present some parts of the accommodation, particularly for science and music at the lower school, design and technology and the library at the upper school, are unsatisfactory.
Value for money	Very good. The school receives a very low income per head compared to the national average and manages its finances very well.

*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>i. That it tells them how well pupils are doing and keeps them well informed about the school through its newsletters.</p> <p>ii. That pupils achieve good standards of work.</p>	<p>iii. A few incidents of bullying are not fully</p> <p>iv. On isolated occasions, teachers are too</p>

Approximately 10 per cent of parents returned the questionnaires and only 26 attended the parents' evening. The lay inspector met with a small group of parents during the inspection and the full team interviewed many pupils and students.

Pupils and students are fully aware of the school's policy on bullying. The senior management team acknowledge that a review of the policy, with pupil input, is due. Pupils and students understand the parents' views on bullying and poor behaviour, but they feel that the school tackles these problems well. The inspection team confirmed that the reports and newsletters keep parents well informed and that standards of work are high.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve standards further the governors and senior management team need to:

- **Persevere with all efforts to improve information technology in the school**

(Paragraphs: 27, 59, 66, 108, 214, 215, 217, 220, 221)

- *.Introduce methodical assessment of pupils' information technology experiences and skills, when they enter the school and during each year. Formally report on attainment at the end of Year 9.

- *.Monitor exactly what skills are being delivered by other subjects so that detailed schemes of work can be prepared for all years. These should link the work being done in discrete information technology lessons in Years 7 and 8 with all other subjects.

- *.Encourage and provide suitable training for all staff to use information technology more in their subjects.

- *.Increase the number of computers and access to the Internet. Be sure that the necessary software is available for all subjects.

- **Improve the upper school library**

(Paragraphs: 57, 107, 117, 273)

- *.Raise the profile of the library and consider the role of the librarians in this process. Be sure that all heads of faculties and departments review their own library stock, make it easily accessible, and negotiate developments with the librarians.

- *.Improve the number, range and quality of books in all subjects. Introduce more magazines, videos and CD-ROMs and encourage pupils and students to use the library for research.

- *.Make the whole area more attractive and liven it up with displays

- *.Monitor how often students and pupils enter the library and take out books.

- *.Increase the number of computers and access to the Internet

- **Continue with all efforts to improve the accommodation and to increase resources, especially for science. Review the hours of technician support, particularly for science.**

(Paragraphs: 110, 113, 116, 166, 177, 188, 230, 241, 263, 288)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- *.Limited activities and teaching styles (51, 53, 156, 160, 165, 175, 203)
- *.Personal and social education: teaching and timing of the lesson (62, 68, 87)
- *.Challenging work for higher attainers (144, 162, 198)
- *.Religious education in Year 11 and the sixth form (66, 250)
- *.Curriculum time for music (67, 241)
- *.Spiritual and multi-cultural development (67, 81, 85, 101, 108, 176)
- *.Daily act of collective worship (86, 108)
- *.Health and safety issues (93, 166, 188)
- *.Links between governors and pupils and students (106)

* **INTRODUCTION**

1. Wolfreton School is one of the largest 11–18 comprehensive schools in the country, with over 2100 pupils. The sixth form, with 307 students, operates as a consortium with three other East Riding schools. There are more boys in Years 8, 10, 11 and 12, but particularly in Year 8, where there are 50 more boys than girls. The two sites are a mile and a half apart, with Years 7 - 9 in the lower school.

2. Around 120 pupils (just over 5 per cent) are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language, and the percentage of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is very low compared to the national average. Over 99 per cent of pupils are white. Just over 130 pupils (6.4 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, of whom 20 (0.97 per cent) have statements. Both these figures are below the national average.

3. The majority of pupils come from the residential suburbs of Kirk Ella, Willerby and Anlaby, and wards in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Approximately one quarter come from wards in the neighbouring city of Hull. The percentage of adults who attended higher education, and the percentage of children in high social class households, are considerably above average in Kirk Ella, and above or close to the average in the other wards.

4. The percentage of pupils who stay into the sixth form at Wolfreton increased between 1997 and 1998 from 47 per cent to 52 per cent, with less than 4 per cent transferring to a sixth form college in Hull. Almost 75 per cent of Year 11 pupils continue with education, either in the sixth form or in other further education establishments, and between 10 and 20 per cent go into training, or employment. About 10 per cent of Year 12 students do not continue with education. Approximately 85 per cent of Year 13 students move into higher or further education and 10 per cent find employment.

5. The school's logo represents its quest for excellence, shown by a 'double tick' and the motto *Haulte Emprise*, translated as High Endeavour. Alongside this is the school's value statement that Wolfreton is a caring community where learning is a foundation for life. The school's aims are:

- Unity – to create a unified school community whose members share common aims and values, and to encourage enjoyment, participation, and pride in the school.
- Breadth and balance – to provide all pupils with a broad and balanced programme of education and experience, teaching them to apply knowledge rather than simply acquire it; helping them develop personal and social skill, and increasing their moral and spiritual awareness.
- Equal Value – to create a school in which all pupils are equally valued, where they can achieve their own share of recognition and success, and where there is concern to meet their various needs.

- Partnership – to provide a caring environment which encourages courtesy, a consideration for the needs of others, and a developing partnership between school, family, and community.
- Potential – to help pupils and staff fulfil their own potential, to recognise achievement in all its forms, and to build self-confidence, motivation, and commitment.
- Outside World – to keep the school in the forefront of educational development, forward-looking and responsive to the outside world, preparing its pupils to manage their own lives and play their part in society.

1. Targets set for Summer 2000 are that 58 per cent of pupils will achieve five or more GCSE grades A* to C, and 99.7 per cent will achieve one or more grades A*-G, with an average total points score of 45. These realistic figures are higher than those obtained by Wolfreton school in 1999 and higher than those set by the local education authority.

7. **Key indicators**
Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	157 (181)	180 (162)	337 (343)

7. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	126 (105)	127 (137)	120 (135)
	Girls	167 (130)	152 (114)	131 (103)
	Total	293 (235)	279 (251)	251 (238)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	86 (69)	83 (73)	74 (69)
	National	-- (65)	-- (60)	-- (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	36 (33)	60 (48)	31 (34)
	National	-- (35)	-- (36)	-- (27)

7. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	108 (115)	130 (119)	137 (143)
	Girls	148 (124)	157 (112)	164 (136)
	Total	256 (239)	287 (231)	301 (279)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	76 (70)	83 (68)	90 (82)
	National	--- (62)	--- (64)	--- (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	32 (30)	62 (45)	41 (34)
	National	--- (31)	--- (37)	--- (31)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	178 (198)	168 (149)	346 (347)

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving Standard specified	Boys	92 (91)	169 (191)	177 (195)
	Girls	96 (97)	162 (145)	165 (150)
	Total	188 (188)	331 (336)	342 (345)
Percentage achieving Standard specified	School	54.3 (54)	95.7 (97)	98.8 (99)
	National	--- (44.6)	--- (89.8)	--- (95.2)

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment in the Sixth form ³

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered:

for GCE A/AS examination in the latest reporting year

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	50 (64)	60 (67)	110 (131)

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.2 (18.0)	19.4 (20.6)	19.3 (19.4)	2.3 (2.0)	2.0 (3.3)	(2.5)
National			---- (17.6)			-- (2.8)

Number in final year of intermediate vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	per cent Success rate
School	15 (25)	73 (68)
National		--- (73)

Number in final year of advanced vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	per cent Success rate
School	23 (21)	78 (76)
National		--- (83)

³ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)	(1997/98)	per cent
Missed through absence for the Latest complete reporting year	Authorised School	6.4
	Absence National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised School	1.4
	Absence National comparative data	1.1

7.

7.

7. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	12
Permanent	1

7. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	per cent
Very good or better	18
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

7. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

7. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

7. Attainment and progress

2. In work seen during the inspection, overall standards of attainment were high in all years. When pupils enter the school their attainment is just above the national average, but it fluctuates each year. The pupils who took GCSE in 1999 entered the school with relatively lower standards of attainment. The present Years 10 and 11 pupils entered with relatively higher standards of attainment, which was reflected in their work seen during the inspection. Progress for high, average and low attainers, and pupils with special educational needs, is good in all years of the school, although a few subject reports (detailed in Part B) highlight particular groups of pupils whose progress could be improved further; for example, high attainers in mathematics in Years 10 and 11, bringing a probable increase in the percentage of A* grades, or low attainers in Year 9 science.

3. In the Year 9 national assessment tests in 1998, the percentages of pupils reaching Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were close to the national average in English, and well above it in mathematics. In science, Level 5 results were well above the national average and Level 6 results above. In comparison with national results for similar schools (measured by the percentage taking free school meals), results were well below for English and science and below in mathematics. In 1999, however, results were considerably higher than in 1998 (in brackets): 86 per cent (69 per cent) of pupils achieved Level 5 in English, 82 per cent (73 per cent) in mathematics, and 74 per cent (69 per cent) in science. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 in mathematics rose to 60 per cent, compared to the 1998 national average of 31 per cent.

4. Teachers' assessed the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 and above (a measure not used in art, music and physical education) to be above average in design and technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages and religious education at the end of Year 9 in 1998. Inspection evidence suggests that some of these assessments were generous. The school did not report standards in information technology. In Years 7 to 9, the standards of the work seen during the inspection were low in music and information technology; average in art, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and physical education; high in English, geography and religious education, and very high in mathematics and science.

5. In 1998, 54 per cent of pupils achieved five GCSE grades A* to C, well above the national average of 44 per cent, but well below the national average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving five GCSE grades A* to G is consistently well above the national average. Despite entering the school with relatively lower standards than those who entered the year before, the pupils who took GCSE in 1999 reached higher levels at the end of Year 9, and a slightly higher percentage (55 per cent) achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C. These results reflect the intensive, and most effective, monitoring and support this year group received for several years. Girls still achieve better results than boys overall, but

the gap has been reduced in most subjects, and therefore the whole-school focus on this issue has been successful; the school is wise to persevere with recent initiatives. Between 1994 and 1998, GCSE results have risen, but at a slower rate than nationally. However, in an increasing number of subjects more than 50 per cent of pupils achieve GCSE grades A* to C, and the percentage of pupils achieving grade C and above in all three core subjects (English, mathematics and science) is rising.

6. Between 1996 and 1998, GCSE results fluctuated in individual subjects. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C in 1999, (with the 1998 national figures in brackets) was 60 (53) in English, 53 (44) in mathematics and 48 (48) in science. The school's mathematics and science results were higher in 1998. Over 60 per cent of pupils achieved grades A* to C in English, literature, drama, physical education, and textiles, and, compared to the previous year, results improved in business studies, history, French and all design and technology subjects. Results in art and music have not improved enough since the last inspection. In 1998 and 1999, almost 50 per cent of Year 10 pupils (over 90 per cent of whom sat the examination) achieved grades A* to C in the short GCSE examination in religious education. In Key Stage 4 work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards were low in art, information technology and resistant materials; high in English, mathematics, science, graphics, textiles and physical education for GCSE, and average in all other subjects. Pupils entered for certificates of achievement and pre-vocational qualifications achieve above average results.

7. The average points score achieved by A-level students has been well above the national average for several years, and the trend in the pass rate at A-level has been upwards since the last inspection. In 1999 100 per cent grades A to E were awarded in computing, economics, the English modular course, further mathematics and German. At least 60 per cent grades A to C were awarded in chemistry, computing, the English modular course, further mathematics, history, psychology and theatre studies. The local authority provides statistics relating students' A-level performance to their GCSE grades. These show the particularly good progress made in chemistry, geography, mathematics and physics between 1996 and 1998.

8. Large numbers of students study computing, English language, history, mathematics and psychology. Results in general studies A-level have improved considerably since the last inspection, and in Year 12 over 100 students have chosen to take this examination. A-level art results have declined. GNVQ results have improved steadily over the last few years. In sixth form work seen during the inspection, standards were very high in computing studies and history; high in, mathematics, the three sciences, GNVQ courses, modern foreign languages, psychology, politics and sociology, and average in all other subjects apart from art, where they were low.

9. Progress in **English** is good in all years. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are high. Standards in reading have improved through the introduction of ten-minute silent reading at the start of each lesson. The lower school library supports these arrangements, but it is a wasted resource in most other subjects. This is a significant omission, given the school's objective to develop key skills. Year 9 pupils offer a personal view about their reading and higher attaining pupils are alert to aspects of style. Nearly all pupils select information from a text and higher attainers offer a critical comment. Sixth form students' reading skills are

particularly well developed through their study of challenging literature.

10. Year 9 higher attaining pupils produce some excellent creative writing. By the end of the year, handwriting is good; spelling is generally accurate, and nearly all lower attaining pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are able to write a short sequence of sentences. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils' creative writing includes powerful accounts of real and imagined experiences, although pupils attaining grades C and lower at GCSE lack the technical understanding or vocabulary to write critically about texts.

11. Good standards in literacy are well developed across a range of subjects, where there is a strong emphasis on developing the appropriate technical vocabulary. In most subjects, regular and well planned opportunities are provided for all pupils to develop their writing skills, including, for example, when writing about investigations in mathematics, in project work in history, and in a good range of assignments in religious education. These opportunities are more limited in science, where references to poetry and science fiction are rare, and in art, where written analysis and interpretation are very limited.

12. Progress in **mathematics** is good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form, and sound in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' data handling and investigation skills are very high, well supported by the recent provision of a networked suite of computers. Lower attaining pupils use a well-designed mathematics software program effectively, and Year 8 draw simple shapes effectively using LOGO. Year 7 have good understanding of mathematical shape, although some Year 8 pupils find estimation of long multiplication difficult. Year 9 pupils recognise many angles on paper and in objects, and lower attaining pupils have sound ideas for calculating the area of unusual shapes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 use trigonometry with confidence and in Year 10 use graphical calculators to explore relationships in graphs. A small percentage of pupils still over-rely on calculators, but the time given to mental mathematics has increased and standards are rising.

13. Standards of numeracy and mental number skills in mathematics are high. Pupils apply their mathematical skills well in other subjects. For example, they collect, interpret and analyse statistical data in geography, and use algebraic skills to manipulate scientific formulae. Generally, pupils of all ages respond well to a range of well-planned opportunities to develop numerical skills across a range of subjects. These extend from competent data-handling and analysis, as part of pupils' research in design and technology, to drawing accurate conclusions from a variety of sampling techniques in A-level psychology.

14. In **science**, the 'marked under-achievement in Year 9' mentioned in the last report has been addressed, and now a higher proportion of sixth formers investigate phenomena competently. Progress is good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form, and sound in Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 9, a high proportion of students carry out investigations competently, with understanding of predictions based on scientific knowledge and fair tests. The highest attainers in Year 9 record investigations to a very high standard.

15. At the end of Year 11 many pupils, especially in the upper sets, identify sources of error

and extend their conclusions from closer evaluation of results. However, much of the experimental work throughout this age-range is carefully structured and guided, and this is not balanced by enough independent investigative work. Opportunities are missed for students to suggest hypotheses, plan work and explore their own ideas. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is sound. Sixth form students draw well labelled diagrams from microslides and are more skilled at interpreting results and drawing conclusions.

16. In **art** progress is sound in Years 7 to 9. This reflects the department's determination to develop basic skills as part of its policy to improve standards. In their work on visual elements, pupils can identify key factors or provide satisfactory definitions in their own words of, for example, composition, tone and texture. Progress in Years 11 and 13 is not satisfactory. However, as a result of focused teaching, progress is sound in lessons with the new groups in Years 10 and 12. In Years 10 to 13, observational and drawing skills are under-developed and there is little evidence of colour work of any quality. Critical, analytical and evaluative skills are insecure and pupils do not have a well developed technical and artistic vocabulary.

17. In Years 7 to 11, the majority of pupils make sound progress in **design and technology**. By the end of Year 9, pupils use drawing, literacy and information technology skills well to explain their ideas for different solutions to a problem. Their practical skills are often good and pupils appreciate the importance of careful research and accurate planning. Pupils with special educational needs keep pace with others as a result of close monitoring and support. On a few occasions higher attaining students do not make as much progress as they might. By the end of Year 11, pupils have satisfactory skills in manufacturing a product. Higher attaining students show good problem analysis skills, are reflective, and modify their designs appropriately. Average and lower attaining students have a sound understanding of the manufacturing process and the cost implications of using different materials.

18. There is not enough evidence to judge progress in **drama** over time in Year 9, or in theatre studies at A-level. Progress is good in Years 10 and 11. In Year 10 pupils develop awareness of others in the group through drama warm ups which develop their basic skills and attitudes. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully integrated into the group and make very good progress. In Year 11 pupils interpret actions and reactions according to social status and use this good level of understanding, and their role play skills, to develop effective improvisations. Pupils speak with clear articulation.

19. Progress in **geography** is good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form, and sound in Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are able to use geographical terms confidently, although some lower attaining Year 8 pupils do not understand fairly simple words such as 'vale' or 'plain'. Pupils studying natural hazards describe the nature and

effects of volcanic eruptions vividly. By Year 11, pupils describe and explain the hydrological processes involved in a river profile and accurately apply terms for different types of erosion. Individually and in groups, Year 13 students collect and use data effectively to investigate human and physical issues. Pupils apply their knowledge gained on field trips particularly well.

20. Pupils make good progress in **history** in all years. In Years 7 to 9, they reinforce and extend concepts such as chronology. Those with special educational needs make comparable progress, enjoying tasks like devising a time capsule. Many pupils extend their historical vocabulary in learning the significance of terms such as democracy. In Years 10 and 11 pupils develop more complex time charts. They extend their written explanations and some develop conclusions with evaluative comment and adopt a more sceptical stance on source interpretation. Sixth form students' written work is mostly thorough, but the structure and quality of their argument varies. However, most of them do little reading beyond their textbook and do not use the library to extend their knowledge.

21. In **information technology** the limited access pupils have to computers, and the lack of discrete information technology teaching in the past, mean that a significant number of them make slow progress. By the end of Year 9, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, can use a limited range of software packages and communicate information in a few different ways: skills they master through design and technology and mathematics lessons. Progress in the new discrete information technology lessons in Years 7 and 8 is good; in Year 7, pupils now learn quickly how to interrogate a database using multiple search conditions. Lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a pre-vocational course, using information technology in a series of life-skills case studies which show excellent integration of key skills. Progress in the sixth form for those following the computer studies A-level course is good, but for others it is variable, depending on what subjects they have chosen.

22. In Years 7 to 9 pupils listen and respond well in **modern foreign language** lessons. In Year 8, pupils master a wide range of vocabulary to describe where they live. Higher attainers make good progress starting a second language in Year 9, and mastering names, numbers and the vocabulary of common items well. Lower attainers are less responsive and hesitant about using French or German. Although pupils continue to show good listening skills in Years 10 and 11, many answer questions with single words or rely on written prompts. Some lower attainers in all years do not remember vocabulary well, which holds back their progress, but the majority of pupils use dictionaries sensibly. In the sixth form, students use French and German effectively for discussion on a range of topics and have sound knowledge of tenses and vocabulary. They develop an appreciation of French and German culture. Higher attaining pupils in Years 11 to 13 write fluently and with good style. Overall progress is sound in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form.

23. After the last inspection, the head of the **music** department left the school, and his successor left last summer. The new head of department is actively addressing the department's needs and the issues raised in the last inspection. Although progress in lessons is now predominantly sound, pupils in Years 7 to 9 cannot clap a simple rhythm, sing well in two or more parts, or use symbols to write down or perform musical ideas, and their knowledge of

basic musical elements, history and instruments is insecure. GCSE pupils perform compositions well and in Year 12 they produce longer pieces. Staff are helping pupils to amend gaps in their knowledge which have occurred in past years and progress is good in Years 10 to 13.

24. In **physical education**, pupils make good progress. They have sound ball and racket skills, and talented players are emerging in volleyball, rugby, and football. They develop good tactical awareness and understand the rules, scoring systems and playing areas. Although good control and co-ordination were observed in Year 7, attainment in dance and gymnastics is less secure. Many opportunities for extra-curricular activities exist, both inside and outside the school. Pupils undertake the different roles of performer, coach and official well, and those following the GCSE course have good knowledge and understanding of strategies and tactics. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully integrated into lessons.

25. In **religious education**, pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 10. Pupils in Year 7 understand that Jesus was a Jew and that Christianity evolved after his death. Both oral and written answers show that pupils are building a good body of knowledge and understanding of religions and beliefs and practices. By Year 10, when pupils take the short GCSE, pupils give accurate, factual answers, and well over half provide extended answers supported by reasons. They understand religious terminology and learn from religion as well as about it. Many pupils give perceptive answers which show their good understanding of issues.

26. **Business studies** is a popular GCSE option and progress is good. Year 10 pupils discuss businesses by building on their local knowledge, and Year 11 pupils evaluate the world of marketing and advertising. Pupils use information technology to word process reports, and produce graphs from survey figures effectively, but do not use spreadsheets enough for financial forecasting. In **economics**, Year 11 pupils readily understand key properties of money and draw clear computer-drawn graphs and charts from local consumer surveys. In **business and economics**, A-level, students use material from local industry well and understand key micro and macro economic concepts. Written answers are well-constructed, but evaluation sometimes lacks enough depth. Progress is good, particularly in information technology; students use spreadsheets and graphics programs to analyse topical economic data and evaluate material researched from a variety of sources.

27. The majority of students on **GNVQ** courses produce bulky coursework portfolios with well-written assignments, presented using a variety of information technology software. Portfolios incorporate evidence of all the key skills. Students on the Advanced health and social care, leisure and tourism and business GNVQ courses use their work experience placements, part-time jobs and visits to write well-focused case studies. In all GNVQ subjects, work is neat and well presented, showing a satisfactory standard of reading and writing skills. Students make good use of photographs and diagrams.

28. Psychology is a popular A-level course. Students make very good progress in understanding terminology, theories and difficult concepts such as the difference between pro-social behaviour and altruism. By the end of Year 13 they have a very good grasp of research methods and the specific problems and responsibilities of carrying out socially sensitive research. In **sociology**, students make good progress and master basic concepts such as culture, socialisation, rules and norms, and understand a number of theories used to explain how society is constructed. They relate these to topical events, such as conflict theory to the tensions in East Timor. In **politics**, students discuss a wide range of political topics and link theory with current events, for example socialism and modernisation evaluated in the light of New Labour's principles.

29. At the end of Years 9 and 11, pupils with special educational needs attain in line with their targets, and most attain above them. Many pupils with special educational needs achieve a GCSE grade in some subjects, and they attain good results in GCSE certificate of achievement courses in English, mathematics, geography and history. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to agreed targets. In small literacy support groups, they practise word sounds and make good progress improving their reading skills and vocabulary.

30. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in GCSE subjects, for example in geography by recognising buildings characteristic of the different zones of a city. Pupils following other accredited courses, such as the City and Guilds profile of achievement, make good progress developing information technology skills. They develop social skills working as groups and as independent learners. In art, pupils with special educational needs tend to make progress in line with the majority of other pupils. However, in one Year 11 group, some of the best work was being undertaken by a pupil with special educational needs, who had effectively thought through the compositional and tonal contrast elements of a 3D tableau piece. One student with special educational needs is successfully following an Advanced GNVQ course.

36. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

31. Pupils at all levels of attainment maintain the positive attitudes to learning noted in the previous report. In lessons they work quietly and are keen to answer questions and join in discussions. They listen carefully and respond enthusiastically to new concepts and challenges. They co-operate well when working in groups, readily exchanging ideas and sharing materials. They discuss their work enthusiastically with visitors, and are proud of their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs listen attentively in small groups. They enjoy answering questions, learn from other pupils' answers and are strongly motivated by the individual attention received and the structure of their lessons.

32. Behaviour in classes and around the school is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. However, as pupils and students leave the upper school site at lunch time and after school, they take over the local pavements and streets and do not fully consider the local residents and drivers. Pupils with special educational needs collaborate in discussion on topics, such as agreeing a code of behaviour for a course. The number of pupils excluded from school is significantly below the average for similar schools. Most pupils conform to the school's code of conduct. No bullying was observed during the inspection. Two or three parents are concerned that poor behaviour is tolerated on isolated occasions and that a very few incidents of bullying are not fully investigated. However, pupils and students observe that incidents of bullying or aggressive behaviour are rare, and that the great majority are dealt with effectively by form tutors. Where form tutors' intervention is unsatisfactory, pupils confidently request support from senior members of staff.

33. The upper school site does not include an asphalt playground, but pupils make very good use of designated social areas in the buildings and grounds. Mature behaviour was noted in the pleasant quadrangle area, where many pupils engage in quiet conversation. When moving about the buildings, large groups of pupils wait patiently in corridors and stairways where access is restricted.

34. Most pupils are compassionate, thoughtful and respectful. They share the caring attitudes demonstrated by staff. The school's relaxed, business-like atmosphere promotes very good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults. Pupils' informal relationships with adults are very good. The personal development of pupils is good. In the absence of a formal prefect structure, opportunities are provided for pupils to accept responsibility in classrooms and throughout the school. The split site makes liaison between older and younger members of the school community difficult. Pupils and students take good care of the school buildings and equipment and of personal property.

35. Year group councils, comprising two pupils from each tutor group, are effective forums for debate and change. At each school site, a student receptionist is appointed daily to assist the school's administrative team. Although pupils capably manage a variety of duties, this commitment deprives them of a whole-day's lessons and a few of them admit to being bored. Some sixth form students voluntarily assist in teaching physical education and sports to other year groups; some participate in 'Learning to learn' courses to help develop the study skills of Year 7 pupils.

36. In all year groups, pupils perform confidently in drama and dance. Sporting achievements are celebrated, and many pupils and students achieve county and national honours. Wolfreton pupils are valued as work experience trainees, and receive many subsequent offers of part-time or full time work. These successes challenge pupils to balance work opportunities with commitments to GCSE and A-level courses.

42.

Attendance

37. Attendance is good and most pupils arrive punctually in the morning. Punctuality is less consistent after lunch, when registration periods are incorporated into the first lesson of the afternoon. All registration periods are efficient. Although subject teachers commute frequently between the school's two sites, lessons begin promptly during the day. Subject teachers are consistent in registering pupils at the start of lessons.

43.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

43. Teaching

38. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons; good and better in 65 per cent of lessons, and very good in 18 per cent. Teaching was particularly effective in Year 10 and the sixth form. Teaching was unsatisfactory in two per cent of lessons, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory in approximately 20 per cent of all lessons, and in 27 per cent of lessons in Years 7 to 9. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in two mathematics, two design and technology, two history, one Advanced GNVQ, one information technology and one physical education lesson. Teaching was unsatisfactory in seven lessons, five in Year 11.

39. At least 70 per cent of teaching was good and better in design and technology, information technology, religious education, music, physical education, and support work for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching was particularly effective (all satisfactory and at least 25 per cent very good and better) in English, design and technology and religious education in Years 7 to 9; in mathematics, business studies, history, music and religious education in Years 10 and 11, and in English, economics, history, information technology, psychology and sociology in the sixth form.

40. The improvement in teaching reflects the successful steps the school has taken to address two key issues from the previous report. These involved using 'a wider range of teaching styles so that the needs of pupils of all abilities can be met', and 'monitoring the quality of teaching to ensure consistent practice'. In a few subjects, particular groups of pupils do not receive teaching that exactly matches their needs, and teachers' use of information technology is still inconsistent. Nevertheless, many initiatives introduced during the last four years, have raised standards. Examples are: the introduction of Cognitive Acceleration in Science (CASE) in science, and of courses about thinking skills, and the determined focus on reducing the gap between boys' and girls performance.

41. Teachers' knowledge and understanding about their subjects is very good and this contributes to the improving standards of attainment. In addition, they use their expertise and experiences to make their teaching stimulating and interesting. English teachers' excellent subject knowledge helps sixth form students to develop their own insights into Shakespeare's language; geography teachers' experience as examiners, and their skills in organising field work are particular strengths; history teachers' wide-ranging knowledge allows them to use historical analogies; experienced music teachers adapt their lessons to match the interests of

individual classes; business studies teachers use their expert knowledge of industry to prepare topical case-studies; physical education teachers have a wealth of experience and high achievement in a variety of sports, thus providing excellent role models for pupils. Inspection evidence suggests that the specialist teaching of drama in Year 9 is more effective than that of non-specialists.

42. In the majority of lessons, teachers convey to pupils that they have high expectations. They start with a clear statement about objectives, so pupils know what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Many teachers use effective recapitulation to lead into new work and round off lessons with a summary of what has been studied, as well as a taste of what lies ahead. This structure is applied almost uniformly, and it certainly contributes to a sense of purpose and organisation in many lessons. The well managed silent reading at the beginning of English lessons sets a calm tone and focuses attention on the written word in all years.

43. Lesson plans and the use of time and resources are sound overall, and good in the sixth form, and are linked to the mostly well-written schemes of work. The well planned English scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 helps to match work to different levels of attainment. For example, the Year 7 plans on special places include flexibility, so that teachers can adapt materials for their individual classes. In drama, key skills are emphasised and well paced lessons give pupils opportunities to appraise and reflect, as well as to perform. In history, most lessons are well-planned, brisk and involve a variety of tasks. No time is wasted when pupils change for physical education; pupils are active for almost an hour.

44. In information technology, particularly effective and challenging teaching was seen in Year 7, where pupils had to answer an increasingly difficult series of well-prepared questions on databases. Plans for music lessons include a good blend of listening and composing. In English there is nearly always a good balance of explanation, questions, discussion, whole class and group activities, all of which proceed at a good pace. In design and technology, teachers planning means the same terms are used to explain to pupils how to design and make products. This leads to sound progress because students learn to transfer their skills across different crafts.

45. In isolated lessons, for example in English, art, mathematics and religious education, a combination of pupils with short concentration spans and teachers spending too long on one task (possibly because of the long, 70 minute lessons) results in a lack of pace and progress. In some geography lessons, whole class teaching still dominates. In art, there is a tendency to lecture pupils rather than to use open questioning to stimulate discussion and to develop pupils' critical and analytical skills. In a most successful Year 7 mathematics lesson, the teacher introduced a brief break half-way through; pupils stood up, stretched their arm and leg muscles, and took deep breaths before settling quickly back to work.

46. Teachers' organisation and selection of activities and teaching styles are good in the majority of lessons. These features, combined with good behaviour management skills, are helping to raise standards. One religious education teacher starts an exercise which relates to the previous lesson as soon as pupils enter the room and checks the register whilst they are

working, thus making full use of the time available. In a tightly structured Year 7 mathematics lesson, a brisk sequence of tasks was interspersed with excellent questions by the teacher; innovative elements included background classical music while the class were working. In many subjects, such as history and religious education, teachers maintain firm but friendly control and use humour effectively to increase attention and enjoyment.

47. Less effective teaching was only seen on a very few occasions during the inspection. Characteristics of such lessons, in addition to some points mentioned above, are: a lack of preparation so that explanations are not clear and interesting, unimaginative resources, no checking on what pupils learn and understand, pupils being allowed to chat quietly during explanations, rather than being lured into involvement and participation, and poor planning which focuses upon the organisation of an activity rather than centering on what pupils must learn. Such lessons lack drive and teaching styles are too limited.

48. Many teachers prepare their own interesting resources, for example in geography, particularly for the new certificate course, modern foreign languages, and economics A-level. Displays in the geography and religious education departments are of a high quality and make the classrooms stimulating and attractive.

49. The overall quality and use of day-to-day assessment is good in all years. In mathematics, pupils have their own profile booklets which, along with a clear marking scheme which they understand, update them on their strengths and weaknesses. In English much of the marking is excellent and helps pupils to make good progress, although objectives in plans do not define what pupils will know, understand and be able to do by the end of lessons, so assessment in class can be no more than impressionistic. Science marking is usually consistent, and comments on course-work investigations give good advice on how to improve, although they do not give enough help about classwork, especially for GCSE pupils. The focus on measuring achievement features highly in textiles and food lessons; students are helped to understand their level of achievement in the National Curriculum and encouraged to measure their own attainment against these standards.

50. Geography teachers have a strong understanding of National Curriculum levels, and the head of department is a member of the consultation board considering revisions to the geography National Curriculum. Effective record keeping in information technology highlights pupils who have difficulties and provides a good platform for focused support. GNVQ assessment is now thorough and well-organised and monitored. In history and art in Years 7 to 9, pupils are not aware of the criteria for National Curriculum levels, and there is no portfolio of work to help uniformity of assessment.

51. The quality of homework is good. On many occasions it extends understanding and makes pupils think, and the request to 'finish off' a task for homework, on its own, is rare. Teachers regularly make good use of homework in design and technology, for example to ask students to research an idea or explain what was done in a lesson. This helps students to improve their self-study skills. However, it is not easy for teachers to set research tasks in between lessons, as the poor range and quality of books in the upper school library and the limited access to the internet, make such independent work difficult.

52. Marking in history has improved since the last inspection, comments are full and constructive on content, lines of argument and grammar. However, in geography, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and in child development, marking is scant and often consists of ticks alone. Written, precise advice about how to improve work would help to raise the percentage of high GCSE grades. Marking is strong in religious education, and in sociology work is marked carefully and returned to students quickly. In economics, feedback is not consistent and some pupils do not know their potential GCSE grade. Challenging homework tasks in psychology develop independent study well and detailed marking is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' answers and to influence the content of future lessons.

53. Apart from the design and technology and mathematics departments, evidence of teachers using information technology is extremely patchy. Compared to four years ago, it is used more in business studies, economics and GNVQ courses. Computers have been purchased for the modern foreign languages and art departments, but neither is using them yet as they have not installed the appropriate software. Computers are used a little, but successfully, for the certificate course in geography, and the history department uses a couple of databases. The overall picture clearly reflects the lack of investment in information technology in the past. Now many teachers are keen to attend courses to improve their skills, and the school development plan highlights the desperate need for more hardware and software.

54. Teaching in the small classes for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan thoroughly to include a variety of well-structured activities. They share the planned work with pupils so they know what they are expected to achieve. Teachers have high expectations and distribute questions skillfully so all pupils contribute an answer. A variety of resources, such as a highly-structured phonetic reading exercises, and reading/comprehension schemes that match pupils' reading and vocabulary development, are used very well.

55. In the great majority of lessons, teachers use class support effectively, by planning with teachers' aides and class support assistants, and by developing and adapting materials and resources together. Such good practice is common in religious education, geography, mathematics, and design and technology and has improved since the previous inspection.

56. In at least two groups observed during the inspection, form tutors spent too long on administration, delaying the start of the personal and social education lessons that the well-planned material could not be delivered effectively. Although teaching has improved in personal and social education lessons, some tutors do not prepare sessions carefully and pupils become restless. During the inspection, teaching was good in 25 per cent of lessons seen, unsatisfactory in two Year 11 lessons and satisfactory in the rest. In the unsatisfactory lessons, the distinction between delivering helpful advice on time management and particular coursework requirements had not been made. Little was achieved in the 40 minute sessions.

57. Faculties are fully aware of where they need to focus improvement in the future. In many cases it relates to developing even more tasks to match pupils' individual needs. Extra thought and preparation must go into work for the highest and lower attainers in science, economics and modern foreign languages, and for the significant number of higher attainers who do not make enough progress to achieve the higher GCSE grades in mathematics, geography and business studies. Nevertheless, systematic monitoring of teaching, by the senior management team and heads of faculties and departments, has helped both to highlight whole school issues for the future and to achieve the improvement in teaching since the last inspection. The latter has certainly contributed to improved progress in many subjects. Teaching has improved significantly in mathematics, in management of practical activities in science, in history and geography in Years 7 to 9 and in economics in Years 10 and 11.

63. The curriculum and assessment

58. The curriculum is of good quality, broadly based and relevant in all years. It provides equally well for boys and girls of all standards of attainment and those with special educational needs. Further attention should be paid to the curriculum needs of higher attaining pupils in order, for example, to improve the school's percentage of A* and A grades at GCSE. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for Years 7 to 9 are met, with the exception of information technology in Year 9. Good breadth is added by the inclusion of dance, drama and a second modern foreign language in Year 9.

59. The curriculum options in Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form, exceed minimum statutory requirements, with a well-balanced range of GCSE, GNVQ, City and Guilds and A-level courses on offer. A much improved options system has just been introduced in Year 10, which has widened the 'expressive arts' choices. No longer do pupils choose art for GCSE because they can find no alternative. Before pupils enter Year 10, they are given a clear, summary course guide which helps them to make informed choices. Sixth form provision, through the East Riding South Consortium, is a strength of the school. It includes a very good range of courses, a curriculum enhancement programme and an increasingly popular voluntary A-level general studies (described in Part B). Modern foreign languages are available for all students. The development of GNVQ courses, such as business studies, health and social care and leisure and tourism, has made the curriculum particularly relevant to the world of work. Increasing numbers of staff have gained assessor qualifications and are involved in key skills work.

60. The statutory requirement for the teaching of religious education is not met in Year 11 or in the sixth form. However, there is very good provision in Years 9 and 10 where all pupils undertake the short course GCSE in religious education. Although there have been significant recent improvements in the curriculum provision for information technology in Years 7 and 8, its delivery in other years is inconsistent. Provision is variable across departments and as a result access to the full curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 9 upwards. On a rolling programme, the school is investing in the necessary computer hardware and software in order to implement statutory curriculum requirements fully by the year 2000/01.

61. Since the last inspection, improvement in the information technology curriculum has been slow and the curriculum time available for music in Year 9, where course units alternate with drama, is still below the national average. Standards in both these subjects are low in Years 7 to 9. The quality of pupils' spiritual development was also an issue in the last report. Few departments have properly considered how they may effectively provide for this through their work. Following criticism in the last report, the length of the teaching week has been increased to 24 hours. However, this is still only at the recommended national minimum. In preparation for national changes to the post-16 curriculum from September 2000, all schools in the consortium are reviewing the length and structure of the school day.

62. The senior management team and the governors' curriculum sub-committee meet and work together regularly to review and improve the curriculum. Following two major reviews, the committee has contributed positively to curriculum improvements. For example, following criticisms in the previous report, the **personal and social education programme** has been re-structured and more time allowed for this course. Adding this time onto morning registration does not give the course the status it requires. The programme includes careers, citizenship and health education. Aspects of sex education are properly shared with science, the focus in personal and social education being mainly on moral and social elements. Drugs education is delivered in the last few weeks of Year 10. It is well delivered by the religious education department in co-operation with the local authority's drugs education unit. Discussion with pupils indicates that this is a popular and effective course.

63. All curriculum areas are open to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils at stage 2 and above on the special educational needs register receive small group teaching to improve their communication and literacy skills. The school has taken advantage of recent legislation to disapply ten pupils in Year 11 and a potential twenty pupils in Year 10, from National Curriculum requirements in science, design and technology and modern foreign languages.

64. Years 10 and 11 courses which give accreditation to pupils for whom a full GCSE package is inappropriate include: City and Guilds profile of achievement; GCSE certificate of achievement courses in English, mathematics, history, geography and religious education; link courses at Bishop Burton College in GCSE rural science and City and Guilds' motor

vehicle maintenance, and NVQ level 1 hair and beauty and 'skillpower' motor vehicle maintenance/information technology at Beverley College. The special educational needs faculty provides an accredited course in life skills for pupils with statements of special educational need. Such a selection of courses provides good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to make progress.

65. Good procedures for identifying curriculum requirements for pupils with special educational needs begin through visits and discussion with primary schools. A termly review by faculty and year heads is good practice for checking pupils' progress, and the relevance of their stage of provision. Individual education plans are thoughtfully constructed by special educational needs teachers, and completed satisfactorily by subject teachers. A flexible approach is used in meeting the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs so that they retain a broad and relevant curriculum. The arrangements for annual and transitional reviews are good. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in the life of the school.

66. Overall planning for progression and continuity between years is good, and very good in the sixth form. There can be a lack of continuity in, for example, information technology and design and technology, as a few pupils repeat work they have done in their primary school. Schemes of work have yet to be finalised in art. However, since the last inspection there have been improvements in English curriculum plans for Years 7 to 9 and the mathematics and science schemes of work are now professional and consistent. Homework contributes to pupils' progress as it is integrated into curriculum plans; it is of a high quality, and set regularly.

67. Extra-curricular activities, most of which take place at lunchtime, include many sports, music and chess. School data for the last academic year indicate that provision is good and that at least half the pupils are involved in such activities. Apart from a few sports practices, no extra-curricular activities were seen during the inspection as they do not start until the third week of term. Curriculum subjects also offer pupils a wide range of trips and visits. All pupils have the opportunity for work experience. There are good links with Hull University for design and technology, and some Year 12 language students undertake work experience in Belgium.

68. Very good provision is made for **careers education and guidance** which starts in Year 8. It is a strength of the school. The improvement since the last report has been excellent and was commented on by parents. The department is excellently managed and the work experience programme very well planned, with appropriate follow up, part of which contributes to the English GCSE course for all pupils. During the week of the inspection, the school was awarded the Humberside Partnership 'Commitment to Quality' Award in recognition of its work in careers education and guidance. The careers staff are hard working, efficient, effective, and devote much personal time to organising the programmes and administering the course. They have limited time for administration and no clerical support. A review of this would be appropriate when the provision of support staff is considered. The partnership between the school and the Humberside Careers Partnership is excellent.

69. Most of the students in the sixth form move on to higher education and receive very good support. The programme includes guidance and advice for those seeking employment, but this needs to be made more explicit. Students have opportunities to attend careers fairs and conferences which cover all aspects of employment and higher education. Many pupils indicated that they value highly this aspect of personal and social education because they can see its relevance. The response to work experience is excellent. The careers library is well organised, regularly updated and open at all times to pupils and students. Computer programmes are used extensively.

70. Since the last inspection the school has moved to remedy a number of criticisms of its assessment procedures, which are now good. The new school policy, 'Assessing Attainment and Target Setting', provides detailed confidential information for staff on the school's assessment practice. The school places great emphasis on having centralised data on all pupils from Year 6 in primary school, right through their schooling at Wolfreton. The school administers tests to all pupils in the feeder primary schools and compiles baseline data on the results of these tests and any others made available by primary schools.

71. As it becomes available, assessment information is added to the database, and up-dated versions are produced for teachers at least twice a year. In this way pupils' progress is monitored throughout the school and the curriculum adjusted. Work within particular faculties, such as science and mathematics, to establish the concept of the electronic workbook, adds further to the range of data available. With the addition of regular effort grades and attendance statistics, information on pupils who took their GCSE examinations in 1999 was used to target particular pupils and provide a programme of support. This ultimately led to their achieving higher than predicted grades. Data is also provided to the local education authority for its 'added value' project, and the sixth form consortium provides regular information on how much progress students make between GCSE and A level.

72. Since the last inspection, a whole school marking policy has been established, which is in use by most departments but is not yet fully implemented in modern foreign languages and geography. The quality of marking is instrumental in raising attainment, and incentives such as stickers are popular and effective. The school has a programme of individual pupil target setting, co-ordinated by form tutors and recorded in pupil diaries. This is not consistent throughout the school and a number of pupils have not sustained target setting throughout the year. The school has sought to remedy the criticism at the last inspection, that time was not available for this work, by extending tutor time in the mornings.

73. All subjects except history use computer-generated comment banks for reports. Inspectors are confident that these provide clear information to parents on academic progress, although some of the statements could be less formal. Assessment procedures meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9 except for information and communication technology. A number of faculties have compiled a portfolio of exemplars of work at various National Curriculum levels to assist moderation, but this is not yet in place in modern foreign languages, history, art and information technology.

79. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

74. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory overall. The school has developed a policy but most departments have not completed an audit showing clearly how they will implement it. The well planned personal and social education programme is beginning to influence this area of pupil development, but implementation is inconsistent and some pupils do not appreciate how the issues covered in the programme are preparing them for life beyond Wolfreton. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of an excellent quality is an integral part of religious education lessons, but these stop at the end of Year 10 for most pupils.

75. The provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now just satisfactory. English, religious education, drama, personal and social education, some assemblies, and work with individual pupils and students are major contributors. Some other subjects provide opportunities to consider feelings and opinions but this could be developed further. One English lesson in particular very successfully allowed pupils to explore their feelings and emotions towards war as an introduction to the study of war poetry. Two assemblies observed were of high quality and included opportunities for spiritual and moral development. In one case pupils were able to explain the key message to an inspector later in the day. Little opportunity is available in form time for groups to discuss issues of importance, or for them to reflect on how they should respond to these in their own lives.

76. The provision for moral development is good. Adults in the school set a very high standard for the pupils to follow. All relevant policies are in place and fully implemented, and pupils respond well. Most pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Behaviour in and around the school is good, with a peaceful and calm atmosphere prevailing. Less positive is the way pupils leave the upper school site at lunch time and after school, with little consideration for others. Many good opportunities are available to discuss moral and environmental issues in several sixth form courses, such as sociology, psychology, general studies and politics, but these could be developed in a number of subject areas for younger pupils.

77. The provision for social development is good. Relationships at all levels are very good and this is a great strength of the school. Pupils value highly the way they are supported by the staff. Parents are rightly appreciative of the way the school encourages good social skills. Many pupils see the year councils as being helpful in bringing issues to the attention of the school and getting things done. The provision of seats around the lower school site is one example. Pupils act as receptionists for the day. Some of the tasks they are given are repetitive and become boring, but many pupils welcome the opportunity to develop confidence by taking messages to staff around school and by meeting, greeting and helping visitors.

78. Many academic and social visits occur, in England and abroad, and provide good opportunities for pupils to learn to live together and behave correctly in less formal surroundings. Last year's extra curricular programme provided many activities in which pupils developed their social skills. Sporting activities are very extensive and well supported. Support for local, national and international charities, learning about people less advantaged, is a feature of which the school is rightly proud. Small group work is included in many lessons and pupils are developing effective skills of co-operation and collaboration in preparation for adult life. Personal and social education provides opportunities for issues of citizenship to be addressed and the careers and guidance programme has many links with employers. Work experience is very important in developing personal responsibility for pupils.

79. Overall, cultural development is satisfactory. Many visits take place to theatres, museums, galleries, and places of worship. Visitors frequently attend school, enhancing understanding on particular topics. Many pupils are involved in residential visits to other countries, particularly to support their work in modern foreign languages. Well received music and drama performances occur on a regular basis. Multicultural education, however, is still a relative area of weakness, as it was in the last inspection. Religious education makes a very valuable and important contribution; one or two subjects deal with specific issues, but other subjects make little or no contribution.

80. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. No assemblies observed included an act of collective worship, although some were of a very high standard and included spiritual and moral issues. The use of form time, which is inconsistently used to provide a purposeful start to the day for the tutor groups, needs a further review.

86.

86. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

81. Provision for support, guidance and welfare is good. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and has a positive effect upon educational standards achieved by most pupils. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well and are committed to their health, safety and welfare. The senior teachers responsible for child protection have received recent training. In Years 10 and 11, the content of the programme for personal, social and health education is relevant, but some teaching is not attuned to older pupils.

82. All pupils are known as individuals by their form tutors and heads of year, who move up the school with them. The deputy headteachers, and the heads of the sixth form and upper and lower school are all accessible and reassuring. Some form tutors and heads of year provide outstandingly strong support and guidance. A very good induction programme prepares Year 9 pupils for transfer to upper school. Informal relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and pupils are mutually supportive. Those with special educational needs, and the very small number from different ethnic groups, are well integrated.

83. Good procedures are established for monitoring pupils' attainment, academic progress and personal development. These were particularly well integrated and effective for the pupils who took their GCSE examinations in 1999. Tutors' detailed records of assessment information are used effectively to plan for pupils' individual needs. Some heads of year have generated a wealth of data about the correlation between attendance, effort and performance, which they use to encourage and motivate pupils. In Year 11, the use of national record of achievement folders helps pupils to collect and display awards, certificates and their best work. In other year groups records of achievement are less formal but generally effective.

84. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and their individual education plans are sensitively implemented by all the staff. There are good links between the school and various external agencies, especially services for special educational needs support and educational psychology. Pupils who live outside the school local authority area, however, do not receive the services of the educational psychologist.

85. Systems for monitoring attendance are very good. The computerised registration system conforms with legal requirements. Registration periods are brief and efficient. Regular attendance is rewarded with merits and certificates. Annual attendance exceeding 95 per cent gains entry to a draw for attractive prizes. Unsatisfactory attendance is investigated rigorously. Wherever possible, work is sent home for pupils who are unable to attend school. Pupils returning to school after extended absences are quickly reintegrated and offered additional help to catch up with work they have missed.

86. Detailed behaviour and discipline and anti-bullying policies emphasise the importance of consistency and routines, and contain much useful advice for teachers. The code of conduct's brief written rules and effective anti-bullying statements are displayed in classrooms. Each member of the school community is aware of the expectation of good behaviour, and of the consequences of poor behaviour. The school functions well as a happy and orderly community. Most teachers are adept in using commendations, threats and sanctions to maintain good standards of behaviour. Persistent disruption is countered with isolation in a separate classroom, or a brief, informal cooling-off period at home. As pupils are rarely excluded from school, the number of exclusions is significantly below the average for similar schools.

87. School policies are implemented consistently. Very good procedures are established for child protection, and good liaison is maintained with social and educational welfare services and other agencies. The school has a very good health and safety policy, and important day-to-day aspects of the policy are effectively summarised in a small staff handbook. During the inspection a number of health and safety issues were noted in the art and food technology departments. At the upper school, in the bicycle storage area and adjacent footpath, the crumbled asphalt surface is potentially hazardous. At the lower school, some combustible materials are stored in the boiler houses. The school buildings are clean and well maintained. Both sites are free of vandalism and graffiti, and generally free of litter.

93. Partnership with parents and the community

88.Partnership with parents and the community is good and, in some areas, has improved since the previous inspection. The school is greatly valued and respected by parents and the local community. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Parents receive informative, well written monthly newsletters, although the most recent governors' annual report did not conform fully with legal requirements. Annual written reports to parents are satisfactory. Parents confirm the accuracy of teachers' observations and the clarity of their guidance about how pupils' can further improve their work. Year 9 reports are issued late in summer term, and this timing may restrict parents' opportunities to obtain clarification before the end of the school year. Annual reports are effectively supplemented by termly reports of effort grades.

89.Each year, parents are invited to a consultation evening where they discuss pupils' progress with subject teachers. The evenings are efficiently organised, and are attended by most parents. At three open evenings each year the school exhibits pupils' work, and many departments provide practical demonstrations. Parents confirm good relationships with group tutors, subject teachers and senior members of staff. They are confident of immediate and sympathetic responses if difficulties arise.

90.Parents of primary school children are very well informed about Wolfreton. A sensitive induction programme prepares children for transfer, and supports them fully until they are settled in Year 7. Parents are fully involved in the choice of subject options for Year 10 pupils and Year 12 students. In the sixth form, students are fully informed of options in higher and further education. They are not so well informed about employment options. Students benefit from close links maintained by the school with a consortium of secondary schools and colleges, and with the University of Hull.

91.Parents have satisfactory involvement in their children's learning. Parents of pupils with poor reading skills can attend workshops held to show how they can help with literacy improvement at home. Other detailed guidance is offered to parents who are concerned by specific weaknesses in their children's attainment. Good quality personal organisers are provided for all pupils. Homework assignments are recorded in the organisers and are supervised by form tutors. Parents are expected to endorse homework assignments, but many sign intermittently or not at all. Most form tutors do not consistently check signatures to verify that parents are aware of homework. Subject teachers comply with homework timetables, and pupils rarely complain that other activities are restricted by homework overload.

92.An active association of parents and friends of the school organises social and fund raising events, and contributes significantly each year to the school's budget. The association subsidises school trips, and funds numerous small gifts for the merit award system. Recent significant commitments have included the completion of the lower school sports shed and the purchase of sports equipment. The association cooperates very effectively with the school's governing body. Some families have been active on both committees.

93.The school has very good links with the community, including primary and secondary schools and colleges. A particularly close relationship is established with a special school.

Pupils of both schools benefit from participation in a variety of academic and social meetings.

94. Student teachers are welcomed each year. They receive very effective mentoring in all subject departments. Very good links are established with industry and commerce. Varied and imaginative work experience is provided for Year 10 pupils. Some parents and ex-pupils offer work experience placements. Employers confirm the abilities and commitment of pupils, and the very effective support provided by the careers department. A number of teachers have benefited from short-term placements where they have observed and contributed to the functions of major businesses.

95. The school has some good links with the local and wider communities, although multicultural and multi-ethnic links are underdeveloped. Members of the local community participate in curriculum-related discussions on topics of contemporary or historical interest. Frequent visits are arranged to galleries, museums, theatres and many places of local and national interest. Exchange links with schools in Belgium and Germany have developed to stimulate regular personal contacts between pupils. Pupils correspond by mail with a school in Uganda. Internet links are developing with schools in Canada and Japan.

96. One major charity is selected each year for whole-school support, and year groups volunteer to organise collections for their own favoured charities. The school has obtained sponsorship for the Ugandan link, and for staff development, but opportunities for regular commercial sponsorship are limited by intense competition. The school's sports facilities are used intensively by community groups, and the school site is shared with a centre for adult education. Overall, the school's links with the local and wider communities are greatly beneficial to pupils' educational attainment and personal development.

102. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

102. Leadership and management

97. All aspects of leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been in post for two years and two terms, and during that period he has turned around a budget deficit and instigated major developments, particularly in information technology. He provides strong leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. He is ably supported by two deputy heads, five senior teachers (two of whom are heads of large faculties) and a layer of middle management, consisting of heads of faculties, heads of departments and pastoral heads, the majority of whom, more than at the time of the last inspection, provide strong leadership. The special educational needs co-ordinator gives strong and clear leadership to the team of teachers and support staff.

98. Heads of faculties monitor teaching well and are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their teams. The deputy heads provide effective line management and participate in yearly faculty, pastoral and individual middle management reviews. The latter contribute to the commitment to staff development, reflected in the Investors in People award achieved in December 1997. Developments in the curriculum are assessed carefully and adjustments made to increase choice and relevance for pupils, for example the introduction of media studies within the expressive arts option block in September 1999 has proved popular and means that pupils do not choose art simply because there is nothing else they wish to study. The revised personal and social education programme is being effectively monitored by senior management, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

99. The governing body plays a more focused role in the development of the school and several members provide strong support. A curriculum committee has been set up since the last inspection and policies are reviewed regularly and discussed in some detail. In their annual report to parents the governors have an opportunity to show the success of policy as reflected in pupils' progress, and this might receive more emphasis. An active nominated governor keeps the governing body closely informed on special educational needs provision.

100. In the last two annual reports to parents, the governors included detailed information about progress with the action plan written in response to the last inspection. This progress has been good overall, and strategies are in place for it to continue. Members of the governing body do not interact with pupils often, and have not met with representatives of the school council. The school 'improvement' (development) plan is simple and clear, an improvement since the last inspection. The six main targets for 1999 to 2000 are displayed on one page and mirrored in pastoral and subject plans. In a few faculty plans, the success criteria and targets are rather broad, for example 'improved attainment', and they lack specific, measurable outcomes. The pastoral year plans, although rather general, are useful tools for year heads to plan ahead as they move up through the school with a particular group of pupils. The plan for special educational needs links with the whole school plan and is carefully budgeted.

101. The school's value statement that Wolfreton is a caring community is reflected in the high quality of pastoral care, appreciated by pupils and parents. The school strives to offer learning as a foundation for life, and although the range of vocational courses support this ideal, the present lack of information technology provision and the poor quality of the library militate against this. The school has six main aims which are broadly reflected in the daily atmosphere of the school. Some of the aims are clearly put into practice, for example the broad and balanced programme of education and experience, reflected in the well structured curriculum; the aim to help pupils and staff to fulfil their own potential, and equal opportunities for all.

102. However, it is not possible for the ideal of a unified school community to be fully realised because of the split site, although efforts are made to overcome the problems it generates. Whilst the good ethos of the school is reflected well in its commitment to high achievement and a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms, the size of the school and the split site make interaction between pupils in Years 7 to 9 and older pupils and students difficult. This, and

the lack of any strong spiritual input, mean that although pupils appreciate the support they receive from individual teachers, they do not feel a strong allegiance to the school community as a whole. In response to the key issue about collective worship in the previous report the governors set up a working party. However, statutory requirements are not met in respect of providing a daily act of collective worship, reporting Key Stage 3 levels in information technology and teaching religious education in Year 11.

108. Staffing accommodation and learning resources

103. The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff are well matched to the curriculum offered at Wolfreton. They are effectively deployed between the two sites to teach the curriculum to all pupils. The balance between experienced teachers and those more recently trained is good. The relatively large number of part-time teachers has no impact on the quality of teaching.

104. At the last inspection it was noted that the increase in non-teaching staff was beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. This has been reversed in several departments; shortage of technical or other non-teaching support staff for science, GNVQs, modern foreign languages, art and music is both making it difficult to maintain high standards and increasing the amount of work that teachers undertake.

105. Since the last inspection the monitoring of trainee teachers has become more rigorous. The Initial Teacher Training course provided by the school is valuable both to its pupils and in putting departments in touch with people at the cutting edge of curricular developments. This helps the school develop new teaching methods such as the structured reading programme. An efficient induction scheme helps newly qualified staff to integrate into the school. This mentoring is effectively reinforced by the majority of departments.

106. Although the school does not run a formal appraisal scheme, heads of faculty monitor and interview their staff annually. The good professional development of staff, using the philosophy and practices of Investors in People, is effectively managed, but the implementation of staff appraisal varies between departments. Whole school training days offer guidance on such subjects as target-setting and meeting the needs of able pupils, while staff, especially middle management, benefit from a range of relevant external courses. The impact of these upon classroom teaching is evaluated, as happens with the mathematics department's course on teaching and learning styles. Certain faculties have been involved in curricular development such as the CASE project in science and the Junior Sports Leader's Award in physical education.

107. The accommodation has improved considerably since the last inspection, when it was heavily criticised. Grants from the Lottery fund and from the Foundation for Sports and Arts have enabled the physical education facilities on both sites to be upgraded. Refurbishment includes alterations to the art department, improved seating in the theatre, disabled access to toilets in the lower school, and alterations to the upper school expressive arts areas.

Redecoration has taken place, and the quality of cleaning has improved. A site manager has been appointed. Further projects are proposed and £500,000 of capital spending has been earmarked for four new science laboratories at the lower school. Despite these improvements, the accommodation in science and art, design and technology at the upper school, and in music at the lower school, is still adversely affecting attainment in these subjects.

108. Pedestrian access to both sites has also been improved and speed restriction bumps slow down traffic along the road outside the upper school. There is still considerable congestion on the roads and entrances on both sites at the beginning and end of the day, and at lunch times at upper school. Planning permission is still awaited for further improvements. There is very little pupils' work or other display around the school or in most subject departments. The small size of the upper school library is not yet a problem, because the quality and range of its books is poor and very few pupils and students use it. Despite all the improvements, the overall standard of accommodation is still unsatisfactory.

109. The annual budget for resources is well above average. Although the school is making a considerable investment in computers, there are still departments, particularly art, music, psychology and history, which need access to meet their statutory National Curriculum requirements. This investment has already reduced the number of pupils per computer to 12 and there are plans to continue the present rate of investment to support every department. The specialist requirements of some departments are a consideration, as it is not possible to use the software on a network. Access to the Internet is limited to the sixth form only, due to the lack of telephone lines and running costs. Aspects of information technology are a key issue in this report.

110. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good, and include many made by the department. They make a significant impact on the progress of these pupils. Whilst some departments, such as psychology and English, have enough books, shortages exist in other departments, particularly music and history, where there are not enough books for pupils to take them home. Other shortages exist in science, where there is too little equipment and apparatus owing to a reduction in budget, and in art where there is a lack of resources for full delivery of the three dimensional element of the course.

111. Since the last inspection the school feels it has made progress with the libraries on both sites. A librarian and an assistant have been appointed, and old stock has been removed from shelves and replaced by new. Computerised borrowing and security systems have been installed. However there is a shortage of books in many subjects, particularly geography, history, music, art, business studies and economics. There are computer facilities in the library, but these are networked, and consequently only access word processing, spreadsheets and careers programmes. There is a copy of Encarta, but it has not yet been installed. The upper school library is not busy, and it is infrequently used for research or private study. Both libraries lack appeal, are too small for the number of pupils they should be serving. A stronger library-based culture is required.

117. **The efficiency of the school**

112. Financial planning is good. The governors' finance committee meets at least three times per term and feels that it is well-informed and well-briefed with regular financial information by the school. A well-established annual planning cycle for the school development plan is implemented by the school's executive committee, membership of which includes the finance manager. Faculty development plans and those of other budget-holders, such as the co-ordinator for special educational needs, are linked to the school plan monitored by one of the deputy headteachers. Plans are increasingly effectively costed against available budgets, and spending priorities for resources and professional development are established in relation to the school development plan. Spending on educational resources is allocated by formula. The budget for staff training is managed by a deputy head who allocates funds for training according to priorities established by faculty development plans. The senior management of the school has begun to investigate ways of evaluating the effect of spending on standards of attainment. The budget forecasts a surplus of about £36000 for the current year.

113. Income and expenditure per pupil are well below the national average, but spending on learning resources last year was kept deliberately high (at 7.6 per cent of the total budget), although it is projected to fall slightly in the current financial year. Because there are two sites, spending is also higher than average on buildings and grounds maintenance and administration staff. The cost of educational support staff is also higher than the national average. A major local authority grant of £500,000 has been negotiated to provide four much needed additional science laboratories on the lower school site. Governors have approved spending in the region of £100,000 per year for the next few years to improve the provision of information technology hardware and software and the conversion of available accommodation. In the last financial year, there was an income of about £40,000 from lettings of buildings.

114. Financial control in the school is very good. The finance manager is very efficient in administering the budget and keeping track of spending by budget-holders, who are provided with regular statements of account. Routine management and administration are efficient, and very good records are kept of all the ancillary accounts, such as those for the school fund, transport and educational visits. There is a three-year budget forecast to guide future planning.

115. The school makes satisfactory use of teaching and support staff across all faculties and good use is made of the available resources of books, equipment and other materials. In spite of inadequate provision in some subject areas, the available accommodation is used as effectively as possible for the delivery of the curriculum. Faculties are required to prioritise their spending on resources and staff training, in terms of their development plans, which in turn have to link with the school development plan. This is leading to steadily increasing efficiency in the use of resources. Good use is made of the school premises by the local community.

116. Funds available to support pupils with special educational needs are well controlled and used efficiently by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Financial resources allocated to

departments for special educational needs are monitored stringently by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the bursar. Unspent monies are used to benefit special educational needs across the curriculum, for example on computers and software. The use of special educational needs teachers and support staff is flexible to ensure that pupils' changing needs are met.

117. The school has made significant advances since the last inspection, with improved financial planning, better links between faculties and the planning cycle, and the implementation of initiatives to evaluate the effects of spending on educational standards achieved. Considering the high standards of attainment and the very low income it receives, the school offers very good value for money. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

123. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

123. English

118. In all years, the proportion of pupils attaining high standards is above the national average. Previously completed written work confirms this judgement. Since the last inspection there has been an improving trend in attainment in Years 7 to 11, although results have fluctuated. Sixth form attainment dipped in 1998 but has otherwise been steady. In the 1998 national assessment tests at the end of Year 9, 69 per cent of pupils reached level five and above, close to the national average (65 per cent), but well below that for similar schools. Over 30 per cent of pupils achieved Level 6 and above, close to the national average (34 per cent). Girls' attainment was higher than boys'. However, these results are in line with expectations based on standardised test scores on entry to the school, and were similar to those in mathematics and science (though in overall levels, science is strongest). The 1999 results were much better and higher than those in mathematics and science: 86 per cent of pupils attained level 5 and above, and 36 per cent Level 6 and above. Significant improvements in the planning, organisation and monitoring of the curriculum have contributed to these rising standards.

119. In 1998, 58 per cent of pupils, and in 1999, 60 per cent of pupils, attained grades A* to C compared with the 1998 national average (53 per cent). The proportion of higher grades, A*, A and B, has steadily improved since the last inspection. Whilst the difference between boys' and girls' levels of attainment was very great in 1998, this narrowed significantly in 1999. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-G has remained steadily above the national average since the last inspection. Nearly all pupils have been entered for GCSE English Literature for the last two years. Results in 1998 were well below the national average (58 per cent), mainly owing to the very low grades obtained by boys. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment narrowed significantly in 1999, when 64 per cent of pupils attained grades A* to C, and nearly all attained in grades A*-G. A small number of lower attaining pupils successfully completed units of the Certificate of Achievement in English. A media studies course has just been introduced in Year 10. Attainment levels varied between the teaching groups but are broadly average overall.

120. At A-level many more girls than boys continue to study the range of courses offered. The percentage of students attaining grades A-E has been consistently close to the national average since the last inspection, but less consistent within individual courses in terms of attainment in the high grades, A and B. Girls have continued to attain higher grades than boys. In 1999 the overall percentage of boys attaining the higher grades, 10 per cent, was well below the national average of the previous year, although the overall percentage was well above it.

121. Speaking and listening skills are high for pupils of all levels of attainment. The good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and are well developed across a range of subjects, where there is a strong emphasis on developing good technical vocabulary. Although the inspection occurred during the first week of the new term, pupils in Year 7 spoke to their teachers confidently, and those in Year 9 expressed clearly their first responses to 'Brother in the Land'. Pupils have many opportunities to develop speaking skills in well organised group work. Their use of Standard English is generally good. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 were able to describe three dimensional models, and the Salters' course in science provides many opportunities for discussion and debate. In history, sixth form students have the opportunity to debate issues about 17th century radicalism and in English they are able to speak critically about Shakespeare's language. Drama provides many, excellent opportunity for pupils of all abilities to develop their skills in speaking and listening. Opportunities to develop these skills are more restricted in art.

122. Most pupils' reading is of a high standard. Attainment has improved further since the last inspection through the introduction of: ten-minutes silent reading at the start of each lesson, the 'passport to reading' in Year 7, the reading Ziggurat in Year 8 and, most recently introduced, the critical reading guidance in Year 9. The lower school library is used well to support these arrangements. However, it is a wasted resource in most other subject areas and opportunities to develop research skills are missed. This is a significant omission, given the school's objective to develop key skills. Year 9 pupils can offer a personal view about their reading and higher attaining pupils are starting to be alert to aspects of style. When studying 'Of Mice and Men', higher attaining pupils confidently identify aspects of character and some recognise the use of metaphor. Nearly all pupils can select information from a text and higher attainers can offer a critical comment. Most Year 11 pupils show a sound understanding of what they read in class, and their previously completed work indicates that they read thoughtfully when preparing examination assignments. Sixth form students' reading skills are particularly well developed through their study of challenging literature.

123. Many pupils' writing skills are of a high standard. There were few occasions for pupils to undertake extended written tasks during the inspection, but their work completed before the summer indicates that many write confidently, and by the end of Year 9 higher attaining pupils produce some excellent writing. They produce a word processed newspaper report and excellent creative writing based on Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade'. Drafting occurs regularly in the preparation of assignments, but these skills still need to be developed further, particularly through the use of information technology. The finest example of writing at the end of Year 9 was a beautifully crafted letter, as if written by Wilfred Owen. Nearly all lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to write a short sequence of sentences by the end of Year 9.

124. Standards of handwriting are good by the end of Year 9 and spelling is generally accurate. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils use their well-developed reading skills to produce critical writing of a high quality within their examination course work. Their creative writing includes powerful accounts of real and imagined experiences. However, lower attaining pupils do not have the technical understanding or vocabulary to write critically about

texts, and some fail to organise their work logically, despite evidence of drafting. Planning and organisation of written assignments in the sixth form are frequently good and the most able students regularly move beyond textual analysis to develop a well argued interpretation of text.

125. There are regular, well planned opportunities for pupils of all abilities to develop their writing skills in most other subjects, for example, when writing about investigations in mathematics, in project work in history and in a good range of assignments in religious education. Opportunities, for example to include reference to science fiction in science or to develop written analysis or interpretation in art, are missed.

126. When pupils enter the school, standardised reading tests show that just over half of them are above the average score but relatively few attain at the highest levels. A comparison of national assessment test results at the end of Year 9 with standardised test scores on entry to the school indicates that pupils have made consistently good progress over time. A comparison between end of Year 9 performance in 1997 and GCSE results in 1999 similarly indicates that both boys and girls make good progress during their examination courses. Students in the sixth form make good progress, and most achieve at least a grade in line with expectations based on their performance in GCSE.

127. Progress by pupils of all abilities is good in all years. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through carefully written individual education plans which often provide for regular withdrawal to practise spelling, reading and writing skills, and also through a limited amount of support within class. Well planned teaching, particularly the variation of groupings during lessons to sustain interest and provide variety, together with a high level of pupil motivation, supports this good progress in lessons. Very good progress was seen during the inspection in over one-quarter of lessons. Progress was unsatisfactory in one lesson when pupils were studying Shakespeare; their level of interest was low and the teaching methods were unimaginative. Good progress in the sixth form is supported by questioning that probes understanding and very good subject knowledge that supports but does not dominate the students' own ideas.

128. The behaviour of nearly all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, is good. Behaviour is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, where the rather cramped conditions of some classrooms mean that a small number of pupils become restless if the teaching lacks challenge, variety and creativity. Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude towards their studies and nearly all written work is neatly presented. They are well prepared for lessons and most complete homework promptly. Much progress has been made since the last inspection to ensure that sixth form students are more ready and confident to manage their own study of texts and do not rely too heavily on the ideas of others.

129. Good attitudes were frequently evident in Years 7 to 9. Very good group work which supported progress was a recurring strong feature of many lessons. Occasionally middle and lower attaining pupils, particularly boys, lost concentration towards the end of lessons. In Years 10 and 11, some pupils lack confidence when reading Shakespeare and are occasionally distracted when they are required to complete a short assignment on their own.

130. Good teaching is a strength of the faculty. Teachers know their pupils well and, with due regard to their individual education plans, respond sensitively to those with special educational needs. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection week, although on a very small number of occasions opportunities were missed to vary the pace and style within the seventy minute lesson. Teaching was good or very good in 65 per cent of lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and very good in 25 per cent of lessons, mainly in Years 7 to 9. Teaching was very good in 50 per cent of the lessons seen in the sixth form.

131. The well managed silent reading at the outset induces a calm tone and focuses attention on the written word in all years. There is nearly always a good balance of explanation, questions, discussion, whole class and group activities, all of which proceed at a good pace. The well planned scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 helps to ensure that work is matched to different levels of attainment and consistency of expectation. This was particularly effective in Year 7, where teaching about special places followed a common plan, within which teachers were able to adapt and interpret the material for their individual classes. Similarly in Year 10, a study assignment of two short stories meant that all pupils shared a common introduction to the GCSE courses. In the best sixth form teaching observed, excellent subject knowledge combined with skilful encouragement, to enable pupils to develop their own insights into the language of Shakespeare's 'Othello', including the magical allusions and racial tensions in the opening scenes. Much of the marking is excellent and helps pupils to make good progress. Excellent progress has been made to increase awareness of the National Curriculum level descriptors within assessment arrangements.

132. Two important weaknesses remain. Objectives within lesson plans do not define what pupils will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. As a result assessment at the end of the lesson can be no more than impressionistic. Secondly, with too few computers, there are too few planned opportunities to use information technology. Improving this situation is rightly a development plan priority.

133. This is a very well managed, well resourced faculty whose aims are closely linked to those of the school. Prompt action was taken last year in response to parental concerns about inconsistencies in teaching. Teaching is regularly monitored and objectives are clear within the annual development plan. Attainment is closely monitored through regular tests and annual examinations, and the faculty now needs to evaluate more rigorously the progress being made by pupils as a result of the many successful features of its work.

139. Mathematics

134. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 9 are very high. In the 1998 national assessment tests, 73 per cent of pupils reached Level 5 and above, well above the national average (59 per cent), and 43 per cent reached Level 6 and above, well above the national average (36 per cent). These results were broadly in line with the average for pupils from similar schools. However, the 1999 results (82 per cent at Level 5 and above, and 60 per cent at level 6 and above) showed a very significant improvement over 1998. They continued the upward trend in standards for both boys and girls since the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils use a well-designed mathematics software program effectively and Year 8 draw simple shapes effectively using LOGO. Year 7 have good understanding of mathematical shape, but some Year 8 pupils find estimation of long multiplication difficult. Year 9 pupils can recognise many angles well, both on paper and in objects, and lower attaining pupils have sound ideas for calculating the area of unusual shapes.

135. Pupils attain GCSE and GCE A-level grades that are above the national average. Since the last inspection standards have risen. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE A* to C grades (56 per cent) was above the national average in 1998 (44 per cent), and the average GCSE point score per pupil has risen over the past four years. The Year 11 cohort which was entered for the 1999 GCSE examination had a lower profile of attainment on entry to the school, but nevertheless achieved a spread of GCSE results slightly better than those for the 1998 Year 11 cohort. Both year groups characteristically showed a high proportion of pupils attaining B and C grades, but a relatively low number of A* and A grades. Almost all pupils (98 per cent) achieve a GCSE grade, and average GCSE scores are rising steadily. Standards in work seen during the inspection were high.

136. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 use trigonometry with confidence, and in Year 10 they use graphical calculators to explore relationships in graphs. A small percentage of pupils still over-rely on calculators, but the time given to mental mathematics has increased and standards are rising. In the sixth form, the proportion of students gaining A-C grades at GCE A-level in 1999 was the best achieved by the school and the overall points scores for A-level candidates in the past four years were well above the national average.

137. On entry to the school, pupils' number skills are above the national average and by the end of Year 9 they are well above average. Pupils of all attainment levels make good progress in Years 7 to 9 across all aspects of mathematics. Good progress is underpinned by good teaching, by effective assessment procedures which help pupils to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and by regular, effective homework. Pupils' data handling and investigation skills are well above average and are further supported by the recent addition of a networked suite of computers. This has given pupils' better access to good quality mathematics software programs.

138. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The main concern is that a significant number of higher attainers do not make enough progress to achieve the higher GCSE grades that reflect their true potential. The increased emphases on mental work, and new texts, both commercial and school, are further contributory factors towards more pupils reaching Level 7

or higher by the end of Year 9, but they have yet to impact fully on standards in Years 10 and 11. However, in work seen, pupils' progress is enhanced by the assessment and profiling system which enables individual targets to be monitored across the years. Standards are lowered by many pupils' over-reliance on calculators and the poor access to information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11, but both these are being urgently addressed through the faculty's development plan.

139.The main strength underlying students' performance at A-level is the quality of teaching, which is based on a high level of subject expertise in both the mathematics and further mathematics A-level courses. A significant weakness is that a minority of pupils struggle to make the transition from GCSE to A-level. However, the majority of students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE and standards of work are high.

140.Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and a strength of the department. Pupils make good progress. Teachers are well supported by classroom assistants, classes are smaller than average, and though programmes of study are challenging, they are based on a good practical approach to developing understanding. Good note is taken of targets identified on individual education plans and worksheets are pitched at the right levels for pupils to read them. Low attaining groups in Years 10 and 11 are taught well; for example, with skilful guidance from the teacher, a Year 10 girl was able to explain from first principles the solution to three and a half squared. The rest of the class learnt from her explanation. An additional basic skills lesson in Year 10, for those not taking the full range of GCSE courses, is based on an effective and well-designed mathematics software program. The variation in the quality of the department's special educational needs provision that was noted in the last inspection has been addressed effectively.

141.Attitudes to learning are good at all key stages. Many pupils voluntarily attend lunchtime clinics to follow up on their lessons. Behaviour is very good. Pupils listen attentively and their concentration is good. In a few lessons, progress suffers when their concentration flags in a 70-minute period. Pupils' capacity for personal study is good and underpins their above average investigation work at all key stages. Relationships are good and enhance the quality of collaborative work in the classroom. Overall, there is a positive attitude to mathematics, which makes a significant contribution to improving attainment levels.

142.The quality of teaching is good in all key stages, representing a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching was good or better in 60 per cent of lessons, very good or better in over 25 per cent of lessons and excellent in two lessons. Teaching strengths were exemplified in a tightly structured Year 7 lesson on polyominoes, where a brisk sequence of tasks was interspersed with excellent question and answer techniques which constantly challenged pupils to extend their thinking. Lesson objectives were clear and pupils enjoyed working to achieve them. Innovative elements included: background classical music while the class were working on set tasks, and a brief break half-way through the lesson, during which pupils stood up to stretch their arm and leg muscles and take deep breaths before settling quickly back to work.

143.A characteristic strength of many GCSE lessons is the very good assessment by the

teacher of an individual pupil's progress in understanding the topic being taught. In a Year 11 lesson introducing pupils to circular functions, the pace of learning was very good because the teacher flexibly adapted her approach to pupils' levels of understanding. Pupils confidently responded to the teacher's questioning and did not worry about making mistakes. In a Year 13 A-level lesson on the language of networks, the teacher switched effectively from tutorial work with one or two individuals to whole class explanation, so that progress for any one student was maximised whilst allowing for collaborative group and paired work.

144. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good, as is their planning, which is occasionally excellent. Expectations are good generally, though high attainers in GCSE lessons are not always challenged enough to develop their mathematical skills. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on the introduction to graphical calculators, a minority of higher attainers tended to mark time whilst others in the class mastered the procedures; more challenging work was available for them to move on to in their textbooks. Teachers support pupils' progress by having a consistent approach to setting out basic work with precision. Management of pupils is good, leading to good standards of discipline and an effective use of lesson time. The use of resources, including textbooks, equipment and computer software, is good. Homework is set regularly and is an effective complement to pupils' classwork and progress. Support assistants are well briefed and work in partnership with teachers.

145. The good assessment systems have been further refined since the last inspection. Pupils have their own profile booklets which update them on their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use assessment information well in their lesson planning. Regular end-of-unit test assessments are reinforced by a clear marking scheme which pupils understand.

146. The subject is very well led and managed. A clear vision for developing the subject and good strategies for raising standards further are underpinned by good monitoring and evaluation. For example, at regular intervals the head of faculty formally monitors the classroom practice of all mathematics teachers. In subsequent discussions, a strategy is developed to meet their professional development needs. There is a good mix of experience amongst teaching staff and their innovative ideas for curriculum development are encouraged. For example, a teacher's information technology skills are being used to develop a comprehensive database for monitoring the progress of each pupil through the school. Good teamwork makes a major contribution to rising standards. The faculty now functions as a more coherent team and implements school and faculty policies more effectively than at the last inspection. Good progress has been made and effective systems are in place to ensure a further rise in standards.

147. Standards of numeracy and mental number skills in mathematics are above average. There is good liaison with feeder primary schools and a few staff teach Year 6 classes in primary schools at the end of the summer term. Year 7 pupils benefit from the continuity that this initiative provides because their programmes of study build on the numeracy skills they bring with them. Pupils apply their mathematical skills well in other subjects. For example, they collect, interpret and analyse statistical data in geography and use algebraic skills to manipulate scientific formulae. Generally, pupils of all ages respond well to a range of well-planned opportunities to develop numerical skills across a range of subjects. These extend

from competent data-handling and analysis as part of pupils' research in design and technology, to drawing accurate conclusions from a variety of sampling techniques in A-level psychology.

153. Science

148. In the 1998 national assessment tests in 1998, 69 per cent of Year 9 pupils gained Level 5 and above, well above the national average (56 per cent), and 34 per cent gained Level 6 and above, above the national average (27 per cent). Overall results were well above average in 1998 compared with all schools, but well below average in comparison with similar schools. Over the period 1996 to 1998 results were above average, with boys' and girls' results almost identical. In 1998 the average of all levels was better than those achieved in English and similar to those achieved in mathematics, although not as good at the higher levels. There has been a consistent upward trend during the past three years. 1999 results were even higher, with 74 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 and above.

149. In 1998 57 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A* to C, above the national average (48 per cent). These results were an improvement on the previous year and similar to those achieved at the time of the previous report. Boys and girls achieved almost identical results in 1998, with girls making the most significant improvement since the previous year. In 1999 only 48 per cent of pupils achieved grades A* to C. 1999 biology and chemistry A-level results were above the national average, but below it in physics. The number of students studying all three subjects has declined since 1997, by more than 50 per cent in chemistry and physics. Results have, however, improved since the last report and numbers have recently increased.

150. Standards in lessons and work seen during the inspection reflect the results of the national assessment tests: attainment of Year 9 pupils is very high and that of Year 11 pupils is average. Several students in upper sets reach very high standards when teachers have high expectations of their capabilities. In contrast, some higher and lower attaining pupils achieve lower standards than expected because tasks are set at too low a level. In addition, where there are weaknesses in teaching, in knowing how to monitor individual students' understanding, and in an awareness of true levels of concentration, some students do not clearly understand the links between practical work and the subject matter of the lesson.

151. Current standards of attainment in GCSE lessons are similar in all aspects of science. There is 'no marked under-achievement in Year 9' mentioned in the last report, and now a higher proportion of sixth formers investigate phenomena competently. Year 9 students know that an electric current passes more easily through a short wire than a long one. Higher attainers know that the relationship between length of wire and its resistance is due to the amount of molecules present, and that this relationship is known as directly proportional. In Year 11, they ably measure voltage and current in simple electric circuits and calculate resistance and power. As they move into the higher levels of the curriculum they use scientific models to explain phenomena, for instance, absorption in the small intestine. Sixth form

students consolidate their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the molecular structure of nutrients, electron structure of elements and quantum shells, and complicated laws of electromagnetic induction.

152. Number skills are well developed using mathematical apparatus. For instance, Year 7 students measure the reflection of light off shiny surfaces. While investigating the reaction of copper with sulphuric acid, higher attaining students in Year 9 use symbols and formulae to summarise what happens and lower attaining students write a word equation. Later on in the sixth form, complex mathematical formulae are used to calculate, for example, the extent to which energy is dispersed in chemical reactions. Scientific vocabulary is well developed because teachers stress technical language, but extended writing is not used enough. Speaking and listening skills are always encouraged during practical work as results are shared and discussed. Information and communication technology is now used more widely, to support both science and the development of computer skills, for example, plotting graphs and organising information to create a database.

153. By the end of Year 9, a high proportion of students carry out investigations competently, with understanding of predictions based on scientific knowledge and fair tests. Scrutiny of work shows that the highest attainers in Year 9 record investigations to a very high standard. At the end of Year 11 many pupils, especially in the upper sets, identify sources of error and extend their conclusions from closer evaluation of results. When results are deeply interrogated, good evaluations are made of patterns discovered while investigating, for example, factors that produce the fattest sultanas. Others do this work with the support of their teacher. Through the Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education project, younger students develop an understanding of problem solving and scientific methods. They learn to justify their opinions when discussing a matrix of variables, and at the same time use terms such as 'values' and 'relationships' appropriately.

154. However, much of the experimental work throughout this age-range is carefully structured and guided, and is not balanced by enough independent investigative work. Opportunities are missed for students to suggest hypotheses, plan work and explore their own ideas. Whilst plans are required for course-work investigations, too often a method is recalled and written as a recipe for the class experiments. Additionally, while the very highest attainers can quickly interpret results and draw conclusions, others have difficulty using their own knowledge of science ideas and research to explain them. There are inconsistencies in the presentation of annotated two-dimensional diagrams. Sixth Form students draw well labelled diagrams from microslides of, for instance, the trachea, and are more skilled at interpreting results and drawing conclusions where teaching emphasises what is expected of them, as 'experimental scientists'.

155. Progress is good for students in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth Form, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There are, however, instances of unsatisfactory progress. Progress is good when teachers effectively build on work done before and give students the confidence to apply this knowledge, for example extending Year 13 students' knowledge about seed dispersal towards an understanding about factors affecting germination. Progress is very good where activities are imaginative, interesting and relevant and quickly capture the interest of students as their lesson begins. In a lower attaining set in Year 11, pupils made good progress because their teacher had high expectations that they would understand new technical language and use it correctly, in this case to describe the decomposition of organic materials in the cycling of nitrogen. As students move through the school they make sophisticated observations and measurements with increasing accuracy. In Year 10, for example, they support their ideas about the impact of human activity upon the diversity of species, using appropriate evidence from practical work on habitats and environmental changes.

156. Students with special educational needs make good progress through the wise use of teaching support assistants' skills and suitable resources. However, the highest attaining students are not stimulated by probing questions often enough to make their best progress. Progress is unsatisfactory when too little attention is given to lesson planning both in terms of learning objectives and activities. It is slowed down by too much guidance by teachers, and by activities which do not become progressively challenging during a lesson.

157. Attitudes to learning science are good across the school. During practical work pupils safely share equipment and carefully listen to each other's suggestions about, for instance, altering the timing of a pendulum. Students' participation in lessons closely mirrors the degree of enthusiasm and good humour their teacher conveys, with a clear sense of enjoyment in interesting lessons. This contributes to a purposeful working atmosphere, which impacts positively on progress. Although there are too few occasions in lessons when they can ask questions students are keen to explain what they are doing to visitors.

158. Teaching was good and better in over 50 per cent of lessons and very good in ten per cent, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The majority of teachers are strikingly knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their specialist subject. Their management of practical activities, criticised in the last report, is now skilful and safe. Where teaching is good, work is made interesting and relevant by good choices of activities and fascinating demonstrations, and by the teacher understanding how to explain complicated ideas, for instance about the different boiling points of liquids contained in thick oils. In most lessons, students are rightly praised and encouraged to learn in a happy atmosphere. In the best lessons, there is speedy questioning that skilfully builds upon students' right or wrong answers, generating lively interactions. In these lessons there are high expectations of what students can do; for example, substantial links are made to a broad spectrum of ideas then competently drawn together to widen understanding about waste water treatment. Generally, however, work provided for the higher attaining students is not demanding enough.

159. During the inspection teaching was unsatisfactory in a small proportion of lessons. The main weakness is the poor quality of some daily lesson plans. A significant minority of

teachers are not well prepared so they do not provide clear imaginative explanations so that all students understand their meaning. In these lessons, resources are unimaginative and what students learn and understand is not checked. Pupils are allowed to chat quietly during explanations, rather than being lured into involvement and participation. Teaching styles are too limited. Poor planning focuses upon the organisation of an activity rather than centering on what students must learn; such lessons lack drive. Marking is usually consistent, and comments on course-work investigations give good advice on about how to improve, but do not give enough help about classwork, especially for GCSE pupils. Worthwhile homework is set regularly

160.The problems with accommodation remain, although four laboratories will be built at the lower school during the present year. Improving independent investigative work is difficult in certain rooms, as space is so limited. Not all laboratories have adequate services for effective practical work and, in addition, the lack of blinds also places unnecessary restrictions on the curriculum. Fume cupboard provision remains a matter of concern. Preparation laboratories are excessively congested, particularly at the upper school site, and are not organised to ensure maximum effectiveness. Areas for preparing lessons are very cluttered. Technicians are highly valued, but they do not work enough hours to complete all the necessary tasks. There is also a shortage of important items of equipment, and library facilities are poor.

161.The leadership of the department is clearly focused on improving standards. Major issues raised in the last inspection have mainly been effectively dealt with by good team work. A clearer long term financial plan has been developed and arrangements for the development of staff continue to improve. The department actively evaluates its performance and a strength lies in its efforts to monitor pupils' progress.

167. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

167. Art

162. The art department has not maintained pupil portfolios with representative samples of work from Year 7 to the current Year 9. Whilst sketchbooks indicate that preparation work for main pieces has been undertaken, few completed items of work have been kept and progress over the three years cannot be judged. Although teachers assessed and reported pupils' standards of work at the end of the last academic year, their record keeping was too informal and not supported by samples and evidence.

163. In lessons seen, Year 9 pupils produce work of an average standard and progress is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. This reflects the department's determination to develop basic skills at Key Stage 3 as part of its policy to improve standards. In their work on visual elements, pupils can identify key factors or provide satisfactory definitions in their own words, for example composition, tone and texture. They combine appropriate features of these visual elements in experimental collage work in their sketchbooks.

164. Following the last inspection, the percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A* to C declined significantly from 26 per cent above the national average in 1995 to nearly 30 per cent below in 1997. Over the past two years there has been an improvement. However, the 1999 results were still 16 per cent below the provisional national average. At the same time there was a steady decline in the percentage of A* and A grades. Although girls consistently perform better than boys, both under-perform at GCSE by about a grade when compared with pupils in similar schools nationally. These results must be seen in the context of many students choosing this subject rather than alternatives, not because they had any interest or aptitude for art. The percentage of A-level grades A to E (and A and B) have also declined since 1995.

165. Attainment of pupils in Year 11 is mainly low and can, on occasions, be very low. Progress is mainly unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, attainment is mainly low and progress is unsatisfactory for students at the start of Year 13. However, progress is mainly satisfactory in lessons with the new Year 12 group as a result of focused teaching. In Years 10 to 13, observational and drawing skills are under-developed and there is little evidence of colour work of any quality. Critical, analytical and evaluative skills are insecure and pupils do not have a well developed technical and artistic vocabulary.

166. Pupils with special educational needs tend to make progress in line with the majority of other pupils. However, in one Year 11 group some of the best work was being undertaken by a pupil with special educational needs, who had effectively thought through the compositional and tonal contrast elements of a three dimensional tableau piece. Potentially higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, need greater challenges in order to arrest the decline in A*-A grades at GCSE. This should be possible now that the GCSE option choices have changed, so that all pupils choosing art in Year 10 do so because they want to study this subject.

167. Response in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Work is generally carefully considered and sketchbooks well maintained, both for written and image material. This also results from the current teaching approach which is specifically aimed at developing a more positive approach to the subject with the younger pupils. Response in Years 10 and 11 is mainly satisfactory. In a few lessons it is unsatisfactory, particularly where the majority of pupils opted to study this GCSE course only because they favoured the alternatives less.

168. Response in the sixth form is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly with the new Year 12 group. However, pupils from Year 10 onwards often exhibit a conservative approach to the subject which can inhibit their creative, artistic development. Pupils often prefer to work individually at a pedestrian pace rather than benefit from stimulating group work. They are not prepared to take the imaginative risks necessary to achieve higher grades. Because their critical and analytical skills are under-developed, they often show an insecurity in their own ability to evaluate, re-draft and develop ideas.

169. Almost 40 per cent of teaching was good, particularly in Years 7 to 9, but it was unsatisfactory in one Year 11 lesson. Here, the teacher did not properly place the work in context or check that pupils understood the course requirements, so they were uncertain as to exactly what they were doing, or why, and the quality of their main pieces suffered accordingly. In the sixth form, teaching is good in almost 70 per cent of lessons. Teachers work hard and professionally to develop positive working relationships with pupils, but there are some common weaknesses. For example, there is a tendency to 'lecture' pupils rather than using open questioning to stimulate discussion and to encourage pupils to think through problems for themselves and develop their critical and analytical skills. Reviews of work are nearly always built into lessons, but they are mainly teacher led and do not involve pupil-centred evaluations. Planning needs to be more analytical and less descriptive, and identify specific objectives that can be assessed.

170. A relatively new head of department has done well in properly identifying areas for improvement to raise standards and in implementing measures to reverse the decline in public examination results. However, schemes of work fully covering all years have yet to be finalised. They do not yet include the required information technology contribution. The department has recently acquired some new computers but does not have the necessary software. The department has yet to consider its potential contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, especially as few opportunities exist for pupils to study art from other cultures. Multi-cultural and general library resources need to improve significantly to encourage independent research and learning.

171. The lack of technician support for art has an impact on standards as teaching staff lack the time to properly organise and maintain art rooms and resources. Some improvements have been made to the art rooms since the last inspection. However, the general quality of the environment is unsatisfactory and not conducive to the pupils' creative and imaginative

development. This is also affecting standards. Minor health and safety issues, such as splintering wooden chairs, were raised during the inspection. Display is minimal and, in one room at the lower school, non-existent. There is practically no artwork displayed in public areas of the school outside the department. GNVQ art was not offered in 1999 as there is currently no suitable space to teach it.

177. Design and technology

172. Students enter the school with average attainment in design and technology. They have satisfactory practical skills, but the idea of research, planning and evaluating their work systematically is new to them. Teacher assessments and work seen during the inspection indicate that students attain average standards by the end of Year 9. They use drawing, literacy and information technology skills well to explain their ideas for different solutions to a problem. Their practical skills, for example using hand tools to make a mechanical toy, or to make a CD holder from dyed and decorated material, are of at least satisfactory and often good standards. Students appreciate the importance of careful research and accurate planning to make sure their work is of this standard.

173. In Years 7 to 9 the majority of students make satisfactory progress, finding out the names of components and equipment, learning how to carry out a range of technological processes to join and shape materials in various ways, and mastering how to use drawings and writing to explain their ideas and plans. Students with special educational needs, who have experienced more difficulties in the past, make good progress. They keep pace with the other students as a result of close monitoring and support by the class teacher and the encouragement of the learning support assistants. On the few occasions that the level of challenge in the initial task is limited, the higher attaining students do not make as much progress as they might.

174. In 1998, the overall results in the full GCSE courses were close to the national average. Results in textiles were well above average, with almost 80 per cent of pupils achieving grades A* to C. Above average results were also obtained in systems and control. In resistant materials and food technology, students gained below average results. Results in child development have been above or close to the national average for several years, and several pupils achieve their highest GCSE grade in this course. The variation in results is partly linked to the proportion of boys and girls and the range of ability of students following each course. In the sixth form the A-level courses are taught through the consortium. The small number of students entering for the examination makes statistical comparison invalid, but results are weak.

175. The department has worked hard to develop strategies to raise attainment. There was a marked improvement in 1999, when overall results were above the national average of the previous year. Inspection evidence from lessons and samples of work reflects the examination results. By the end of Year 11, the majority of students attain average standards and an increasing number are attaining higher than this. Students are attaining high standards in graphics as well as textiles. In child development standards are average, and Year 11 students have a good understanding of safety and children and stages of growth. Standards observed in

lessons in resistant materials were low. Students have satisfactory skills of manufacturing a product, for example a new food aimed at a particular group of consumers.

176. Higher attaining students show good skills in the analysis of a problem, are reflective, and modify their design in the light of further information or ideas or problems they encounter. Average and lower attaining students have a sound understanding of the manufacturing process, and for example, the cost implications of using different materials. All students, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils are taught skills to design and make products using different materials that build well on the work they have done before. They make sound progress in extending their research skills, particularly in child development, and in evaluating their work as it progresses.

177. Key factors contributing to the satisfactory and often good progress include the impact of much good teaching underpinned by good curriculum plans and frequent checks on what students know and do. Students have a broad grounding because teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have a keen desire that students should achieve their best. Course booklets and the effective use of homework support the development of independent study well.

178. Throughout the school, students' attitudes to learning are good. In almost all lessons, students take pride in their work, are enthusiastic and eager to join in. Girls are particularly motivated to produce accurate work of high quality. One girl was heard to ask how she might improve her work further in order to gain an A*. A minority of boys show indifference or lack of involvement in their work. Students usually complete homework and holiday tasks as they are keen to get on with their work. In practical lessons, they respond very quickly to teachers' instructions. They share materials and tools sensibly, waiting patiently, for example when there were too few hammers for them all to begin their practical at the same time. Good relationships and behaviour help students to work well together and follow consistently the expectations for safe workshop practice.

179. Teaching was good or better in over 70 per cent of lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and very good in over 20 per cent. It was excellent in two lessons. The similar quality across the department and in aspects of the subject arises from consistent use of the department's good schemes of work, which are clear about the skills to be taught and how attainment will be assessed. This makes lessons purposeful, and ensures that the expected National Curriculum or examination syllabus requirements are covered. Teachers use the same terms to explain to pupils how to design and make products. This leads to sound progress because students learn to transfer their skills across different crafts, and know that, whoever teaches them, similar standards are expected.

180. Teachers draw on their extensive experience to give clear explanations and relevant examples to the whole class and to individual students. All lessons have clear aims which are often communicated to the students so they can judge their progress. Time is not wasted as lessons are well organised, with equipment to hand, and classroom management is good. Teachers regularly make good use of homework, for instance to ask students to research an idea or explain what was done in a lesson. This helps students to improve their self study skills.

181. The focus on measuring achievement features highly in textiles and food lessons. Students are helped to understand their level of achievement in the National Curriculum and encouraged to measure their own attainment against these standards. Teachers make good use of opportunities in lessons to check on students' progress, so that they are clear about what they do well and where they need to improve. This information is used to set targets for students and to identify those who would benefit from close monitoring or extra support.

182. The hours of technician support for the department are inadequate, and this places a heavy burden of preparation and maintenance of materials and equipment on teaching staff. Accommodation, though improved in the lower school since the last inspection, is unsatisfactory on both sites. The size and design of a number of rooms makes movement around the practical areas unsatisfactory; causes congestion; makes supervision of all areas of the room difficult, and interferes with students' progress. The use of old woodworking benches detracts from the quality of drawing. In some rooms large fixed machinery and equipment means pupils cannot see demonstrations properly. In the computer room, ventilation and natural light are poor.

183. This is a good department where clear guidance from the head of faculty means that the experienced team work well together and teachers know what is expected. The fact that staff teach across both key stages and different aspects of the subject in Years 7 to 9 is good; it both uses their specialist skills and helps them to develop expertise in other areas. In turn, this gives students very good role models for they see male and female teachers teaching different subjects. The department makes a satisfactory contribution to students' spiritual, moral and social development through, for example, referring to moral dilemmas in designing and manufacturing, investigating food and textiles from other countries, and stressing the importance of consideration and co-operation when working together. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Students' design, manufacturing and evaluation skills are now well developed. The quality of teaching has improved in Years 10 and 11. The organisation of the curriculum now provides equal access for students.

189. **Drama**

184. Drama is taught within the expressive arts faculty as a separately timetabled lesson in Year 9. GCSE drama is an option in Years 10-11 and there is a theatre studies A-level course within the sixth form consortium arrangements. GCSE results, which have fluctuated since the last inspection, have improved steadily over the last three years. 72 per cent of pupils achieved A* to C grades in 1999, above the 1998 national average of 67 per cent. Since the last inspection girls have continued to attain higher grades than boys, but the gap has narrowed. In 1999 the results in A-level theatre studies were broadly in line with the national average: 80 per cent attained grades A-E, half with the higher grades A-B.

185. As pupils had only just started drama in Year 9 at the time of the inspection, there is insufficient evidence to judge their attainment. However, attainment at the start of Year 10 indicates that it is slightly low. Improvisation and role play skills are well developed by the start of Year 11. Pupils interpret actions and reactions according to social status and use this good level of understanding and their role play skills to develop effective improvisations. Pupils' articulate speech and careful listening, their confidence and good levels of concentration, together with teaching which focuses on key skills, indicate that current standards are close to those of last year.

186. There is not enough evidence to judge progress in drama over time in Year 9 or in theatre studies at A-level. Progress is good in Years 10 and 11. In the one Year 9 lesson observed, which was taught by a non-specialist teacher, some unsatisfactory behaviour at the start of the lesson, unsatisfactory planning and too little challenge and pace held back pupils' progress. Progress is much better in Years 10 and 11 because specialist teachers, some of whom are part-time, show excellent subject knowledge and manage pupils very well.

187. In Year 10 pupils make very good progress in developing awareness of others in the group through drama warm ups at the start of the course, which develop foundation skills and attitudes. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully integrated into the group and make very good progress. Questions are used well to encourage pupils to reflect on what they are doing. Planning in Year 11 lessons is a particular strength. Pupils are encouraged to reflect within their improvisation work and to apply their previously acquired role-play skills to more challenging situations.

188. When drama is taught by specialist teachers, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs, is consistently good. In Year 10 pupils gain confidence quickly and work very well with each other. They show good levels of self-discipline and can work independently. They concentrate very well with warm up activities and in more challenging improvisations. Lively teaching frequently promotes their eager participation.

189. There is a well planned scheme of work for drama in Year 9 and satisfactory arrangements for assessment. Teaching guidance and materials are provided for non-specialists, but this was not fully understood in the one lesson observed. The specialist teaching is consistently good in Years 10 and 11. Expectations are consistently high, key skills are emphasised, and within well paced lessons pupils have opportunities to appraise and reflect as well as to perform.

190. The faculty makes good use of its limited specialist facilities and is satisfactorily resourced. Facilities within the lower school are unsatisfactory and a social area, with no specialist facilities, is used for some drama teaching in the upper school. There are regular school productions in both lower and upper schools. The part-time teachers are well integrated into the teaching team. The head of drama and the head of expressive arts faculty provide effective, shared leadership. There is a need to consider broader provision for drama in Years 7 and 8 in order to lay the foundations for work in Year 9.

196. **Geography**

191. End of Year 9 teacher assessments in 1998 recorded that approximately 75 per cent of pupils reached level 5 and above, compared to 60 per cent nationally. Attainment in work seen confirms that standards in Years 7 to 9 are high and above the national average. By 1999 the comparable figure had risen to 88 per cent, reflecting that standards have improved since the last inspection, although isolated examples exist of some underachievement in lower attaining pupils.

192. Attainment in GCSE examinations has fluctuated over the past few years and is currently in line with the national average. In 1998 60 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A* to C, compared to the national average of 50 per cent - which was the percentage of A* to C grades in 1999. The 1999 results reflect the attainment on entry of this year group and the particular pupils who chose to follow the course. Since the last inspection the department has successfully raised the performance of boys so that there is now little difference between boys' and girls' results; the average work seen during the inspection reflected this. Nevertheless, a few higher attaining boys and girls do not achieve the highest grades at GCSE. The introduction of the Certificate of Achievement course has increased motivation for lower attaining pupils and, although current numbers are small, the results are very good. In 1999, nine out of eleven pupils achieved distinction.

193. In 1999 all but one of the seventeen A-level candidates achieved grades A to E, and 53 per cent achieved grades A-C. Attainment was higher in the previous two years and significantly above the national average (56 per cent grades A to C in 1998). In the sixth form, standards in Year 12 work seen are average, but they are higher in Year 13, where there is good progress and grounds for optimism about next year's A-level prospects.

194. Progress in geography is good in Years 7 to 9 and the sixth form, and sound in Years 10

and 11. Year 7 pupils master how to identify clouds and make very good progress studying elements of weather. By the end of Year 9 most pupils are able to use geographical terms confidently, although some lower attaining Year 8 pupils do not understand fairly simple words such as 'vale' or 'plain'. Pupils studying natural hazards describe the nature and effects of volcanic eruptions vividly. Mapreading skills are satisfactory, although the department would spend more time on them if it had more lessons. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed well, for example when they collect, interpret and analyse statistical data.

195. Year 10 pupils use atlases confidently, but during the Summer holidays some of them forget basic facts, such as the names of the continents, which means that progress in some lessons is held back. By Year 11, pupils describe and explain the hydrological processes involved in a river profile and accurately apply terms for different types of erosion. Individually, and in groups, Year 12 students learn how to organise, balance and express their ideas on large topics, for example rural management. Year 13 students collect and use data to investigate the settlement hierarchy of the local area and appreciate that there is no single definition of urban. Pupils remember and apply their knowledge gained on field trips particularly well.

196. Pupils' response to teaching is good, apart from a very small minority of lower attainers in Year 11. The majority of pupils are interested in the subject and eager to ask and answer questions. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 draw neat diagrams and appreciate the importance of clear labels. Year 10 pupils put much effort into designing posters about, for example, geographical inequalities. In a few classes, pupils find it difficult to concentrate for 70 minutes, so they do not absorb enough information during the summary at the end. Sixth form students have excellent relationships with their teachers, which contributes to enjoyment and progress.

197. Teaching was good in nearly 60 per cent of lessons, and in over 70 per cent in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding, of both the subject and the needs of their pupils, are convincing, and they are generous in their use of encouragement and praise. Current events, such as weather disasters, are effectively incorporated into lessons, to make them lively and interesting. Teachers use a variety of methods, such as pair and group work and individual research, but in several lessons they talk to the whole class for too long, so that concentration and enthusiasm, particularly of lower attaining pupils, wanes. On occasions they do not give pupils time to respond to questions, or do not give them clues to the answers, so that pupils do not remember past work for themselves, but are reminded about it.

198. The department provides as many pupils as possible with experience of fieldwork. This is a strength of the department. The quality of teaching is supported by the open and collaborative nature of relationships between staff, and, in the upper school, by staff experience as examiners. In the majority of lessons planning is thorough and lesson objectives are not only explicit, but clearly communicated to pupils at the beginning of lessons.

199. Homework is planned for in the schemes of work and it effectively consolidates or extends what has been covered in class. Teachers have a strong understanding of National Curriculum levels, and the head of department is a member of the task group advising on

revisions of the geography National Curriculum. Pupils are aware of their levels of attainment. However, marking, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is scant and often consists of ticks alone. Written, precise advice about how to improve work would help to raise the percentage of high GCSE grades.

200. Consideration is given to literacy but the displays of keywords in lower school classrooms are too small to be read by seated pupils. Teachers have clearly invested considerable amounts of their own time to prepare good displays in the lower school, and produce interesting resources. A possible cause for concern is the reduction in time allocated to the subject in Years 7 to 9, where the percentage of teaching time per week in Years 8 and 9 is lower than the national average for all secondary schools. This means that skills, such as map-reading, cannot be studied in enough depth. The introduction of the Certificate course in Years 10 and 11 has been a successful initiative for lower attaining pupils and much work has gone into developing suitable resources. Through this course the department has already begun in a small way to address the issue of information technology, but much remains to be done before it is fully integrated into the curriculum.

206. **History**

201. By Year 9, attainment is above average. The teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were a little too high. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of significant aspects of the past. They can link causes and effects of events like the First World War. While a majority of higher attaining pupils can evaluate sources and balance interpretations of the past, as in work seen on Emily Davison or Dunkirk, a minority can only select and combine information from sources.

202. Since the last inspection the standard of attainment has improved at GCSE and has remained very high at A-level. In 1998 GCSE results were just above the national average with 56 per cent of pupils achieving grades A* to C. In 1999 58 per cent of pupils achieved grades A* to C. Whereas girls out-performed boys at GCSE by a margin of 26 per cent in 1998, the differential was reduced to only 3 per cent in 1999. Lower attaining pupils take the certificate of achievement and achieve average results. At A-level in 1998, 56 per cent of students achieved A and B grades, well above the national average of 30 per cent. In 1999 52 per cent of students achieved the highest grades.

203. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is high. Pupils can give full explanations of topics like the American West and produce a high standard of coursework on the local history of Hull. They make structured notes both in lessons and homework; a Year 10 class was able to categorise points in tabular form on the reliability of sources on prehistoric health. At the end of their course the attainment of most sixth form students is very high. Most students can tackle questions analytically and challenge and balance hypotheses in class discussion and in their essays.

204. Pupils make good progress in all years as a result of careful and imaginative teaching and

pupils' own attentive behaviour and willingness to participate. During Years 7 to 9, they reinforce and extend skills learnt in primary school, such as in chronology, and develop their understanding of specific events by depth studies and corporate problem solving. Those with special educational needs make comparable progress, enjoying tasks like devising a time capsule. Many extend their historical vocabulary by learning the significance of terms such as democracy, Luddites and pacifism. Pupils develop more complex time charts as on the rise of Hitler. They extend their written explanations and begin to offer developed conclusions with evaluative comment. They adopt a more sceptical stance on source interpretation.

205. Sixth form students are encouraged to adopt a more independent approach to historical study, as was seen in their class discussions on seventeenth century England, and in effective group work on the nature of protest movements. Their written work is mostly thorough but the structure and quality of argument varies. The files seen were well ordered and the information was accessible for revision. Most sixth form students, however, do little reading beyond their textbook and do not use the library to extend their knowledge. There is a small minority whose lack of motivation slows their progress.

206. Teaching was very good and better in 50 per cent of lessons. It was unsatisfactory in one Year 9 lesson and excellent in one Year 10 lesson. Since the last inspection, teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved; most teaching now challenges pupils and many teachers provide appropriate tasks for lower attainers. At all stages, teachers' thorough and wide-ranging knowledge allows them to use historical analogies and relevant anecdotes. Most lessons are well planned, brisk and involve a variety of tasks. Teachers maintain firm but friendly control of their classes.

207. The department is well managed. Although the diverse responsibilities outside the subject area of many of its staff make administration more difficult, good teamwork provides a coherent academic environment in all years. The last report commented that marking was superficial. Although this is occasionally the case on a few Years 10 and 11 books seen, teachers' comments on written work in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form are full and constructive, on content, lines of argument and grammar. The use of information technology in teaching is limited to databases for Year 10 on Hull High Street, and Year 12 on Pride's Purge. Although external visits, such as Year 11 to the Thackray Medical Museum and Years 9 and 12 to Normandy, supplement the curriculum, Years 7 and 8 no longer visit sites in Yorkshire. Pupils do not use textbooks for homework on a regular basis. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are not sufficiently aware of the criteria for National Curriculum levels, nor has the department established a portfolio of samples of pupils' work at each level to help uniformity of assessment.

213. **Information technology**

208. The range of attainment in Years 7 to 11 is very wide. Comparisons with national figures are not possible because the school has not formally assessed what pupils achieve in relation to the National Curriculum levels in Year 9 and there are no GCSE courses. At present, the limited access Years 7 to 11 pupils have had to the basic skills of information technology means a significant number of them have low attainment. By the end of Year 9, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, can use a limited range of software packages and communicate information in a few different ways. For example, they design a personal logo on screen using a mixture of text and graphics as part of a design and technology project in computer aided design and manufacture. Pupils using information technology in mathematics use LOGO to produce accurately drawn shapes and, in the new information technology lessons in Year 7, pupils of a wide range of prior attainment learn quickly how to interrogate a database using multiple search conditions.

209. Access to the information technology curriculum in Years 10 and 11 depends to some extent on subject choice. For example, there are currently no opportunities to develop information technology skills in music or art, and access to computers in some other subject areas, such as geography and history, is very limited. Year 10 pupils achieve above average attainment in using a spreadsheet in mathematics to solve quadratic equations. Lower attaining Years 10 and 11 pupils follow a pre-vocational course using information technology in a series of life skills case studies, which show excellent integration of key skills. Computers are used effectively in the presentation of coursework in design and technology, and there is some good evidence of independent learning in GCSE business studies using a recently installed computer network.

210. Attainment in information technology in the sixth form, for those students following the A-level course in computing, is well above the national average. In 1999, all students achieved at least grade E, and 45 per cent achieved grades A or B, compared with the 1998 national averages of 79 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. This pattern of very good results has been consistent for at least ten years.

211. Pupils following the new information technology course in Years 7 and 8 made good progress in work on databases, new to all pupils at the start of term, as a result of a carefully structured course and very good, well-focused teaching. As with attainment, the progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is dependent on the access they have to the curriculum and the extent to which they bring with them computer expertise developed at home. In subjects where there are enough computers, pupils make good progress as a result of their own interest and enthusiasm and the good teaching of well structured programmes of work. For example, all pupils in Year 9 design and technology lessons make good progress using computers to generate a design mixing text and graphics, which is then manufactured offsite via a video-conferencing link. Progress in the sixth form is good where students quickly develop skills in, for example, systems analysis and achieve very good results by the end of the course. Progress for other students is variable and cannot be assessed.

212. Pupils enjoy using computers, handle equipment with care and show respect for each other and for their teachers. They respond well to questions and are not afraid to ask for help when necessary. In a Year 8 lesson involving a database on birds, there was keen competition to complete the work successfully with consequent rapid progress by all. In all years, concentration is good throughout lessons and there is always a purposeful atmosphere.

213. Teaching, by both the two specialist teachers, and by some mathematics and design and technology teachers, is good in over 70 per cent of lessons. In the sixth form 33 per cent were very good. Teaching was excellent in one Year 8 lesson. All teachers are enthusiastic, have very good knowledge of the subject and are well-prepared for their lessons. Relations with pupils are uniformly good and teachers support them all, including those with special educational needs, very effectively. Some particularly challenging teaching was seen in the new information technology course in Years 7 and 8; pupils were given carefully structured work in which they had to answer a series of increasingly difficult questions involving databases. Effective record-keeping to note which pupils were having difficulty formed a good platform from which to further support pupils with low prior attainment.

214. The curriculum does not currently meet statutory requirements. Owing to lack of resources of hardware and software, it is too fragmented to be sure that each pupil has the necessary opportunities to develop basic skills. The day-to-day management is effective, but assessment and the management across the curriculum are unsatisfactory, and there is no co-ordination of the effective work delivered by some departments. No assessment is made against National Curriculum criteria. This compares unfavourably with the situation at the time of the last inspection. It also means that pupils and teachers have no satisfactory baseline information on attainment from which to track progress and set targets. The urgent need to develop a coherent assessment programme has been started this term by the introduction in Years 7 and 8 of a very good basic skills programme in which assessment is built in to the scheme of work.

215. A start has also been made to improve the provision of hardware, software and appropriate rooms but this will take some years to complete and present resources are inadequate. Several subjects, for example music and religious education, have little or very limited access to information technology facilities; others, such as art, have the hardware but no suitable programs yet. The poor level of resources allotted to the department over the last few years means that the department has made little progress since the last inspection, although the three year growth of this subject is now a high priority in the school development plan. Technical support in the department is excellent; on two separate sites two technicians, one of whom is very experienced, maintain several complex networks of hardware and software, including a wide variety of equipment of varying age and condition.

221. **Modern foreign languages**

216. French or German is taught to all pupils from Year 7 as the first modern foreign language. The other language is introduced to all classes in Year 9. Pupils study at least one modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11, and both languages are available at A level. Other languages are offered as part of the Year 12 curriculum enrichment programme.

217. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards have improved over the last three years. Average standards of work seen during the inspection suggest that teacher assessments are slightly too high. Girls' attainment in Years 7 to 11 is significantly higher than boys'. Attainment at GCSE, recorded as above national averages at the last inspection, has been variable. In three of the last four years, results in French have been above the national averages for the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C and A* to G. In 1997, 57 per cent of pupils achieved grades A* to C, compared to the 1998 national average of 43 per cent. Results in German have been below the national average since 1997. In 1999, 35 per cent of pupils achieved grades A* to C, compared to the 1998 national average of 51 per cent. Standards are average in Years 10 and 11.

218. Attainment at A-level is variable. In French it has been consistently below the national average for A-E grades, as at the last inspection, but it was improving steadily until it fell back in 1999. In German, attainment has been below the national average for grades A-E in two of the last four years and above it in the other two. In both languages, A-C attainment over time has been broadly in line with the national average, but the number of students achieving high grades has been disappointing and has affected the size of groups studying A-level. Attainment in lessons seen was high in the sixth form

219. In Years 7 to 9, pupils listen and respond well in modern foreign language lessons. In Year 8, pupils master a wide range of vocabulary to describe where they live. Higher attainers make good progress starting a second language in Year 9, mastering names, numbers and the vocabulary of common items well. Lower attainers are less responsive, and are unenthusiastic about using French or German. Although pupils continue to show good listening skills in Years 10 and 11, many become more hesitant and answer questions with single words or rely on written prompts, which reduce their fluency and quality of accent. Some lower attainers in all years do not remember vocabulary well, which holds back their progress, but the majority of pupils use dictionaries sensibly. In the sixth form, students use French and German effectively for discussion on a range of topics and have sound knowledge of tenses and vocabulary. They develop an appreciation of French and German culture. Higher attaining pupils in Years 11 to 13 write fluently and with good style.

220. Progress is good in all sixth form lessons and sound in all other years. All lessons begin with exercises designed to consolidate previous learning, often by checking tasks set for homework. Teachers' insistence on the use of the target languages, and their creation of a variety of opportunities for individual and group language practice, make an important contribution to good progress in some lessons. The faculty is making strenuous efforts to raise the standard of boys' work and ensure that all pupils make equal progress, regardless of

gender and ethnic origins, which is successful in lessons observed. When classroom support is present, or pupils are withdrawn for help with key concepts, pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. As at the last inspection, however, in many classes with a wide range of attainment, where there is no support the highest- and lowest-attaining pupils do not make satisfactory progress.

221. Pupils are good at listening and responding verbally and non-verbally to questions and instructions in French and German, but do not speak the languages often enough for general conversation and communication. When progress is good, pupils demonstrate concentration and enthusiasm and work well co-operatively to practise the language.

222. Teaching was good in over 50 per cent of lessons and always satisfactory. Planning is good in most respects. Teachers plan and prepare a sequence of activities designed to include the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. They make use of a range of good school-produced materials to complement activities in textbooks. Planning does not always include consideration of materials matched to individual pupils' needs, particularly necessary for classes which have a wide range of attainment. Teachers always speak French or German and insist on pupils' trying to do so as well. In the best lessons, targets are shared with pupils and evaluated at the end of the lesson. Teaching styles vary considerably but they are consistently based on commitment, energy and good relationships with pupils.

223. The faculty has good textbooks which are supplemented by a wide range of interesting resources produced by the teachers. The faculty is addressing the lack of use of information and communication technology, reported at the last inspection, but although a suite of computers has been installed on both sites, it was not used during the inspection week. All classrooms are well equipped with overhead projector and cassette player and teachers can easily use television and video.

224. The wide variety of experience and language qualifications of the language teachers is a strength of the faculty. The school does not employ foreign language assistants, other than those for sixth form students from within the consortium. Access to more native speakers could be a major factor in improving the results of higher attainers at GCSE. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection and is in two suites of rooms, one on each site. Both are in good decorative order and well-furnished. Some rooms, especially in upper school, are small for large groups and, without carpets, the acoustics of the lower school rooms are not good. The quality of displays continues to be variable, as rooms in the upper school have no pupils' work on show. The displays in the corridors and classrooms in the lower school create a good atmosphere for language learning.

225. Not all marking complies with the school policy, which has been adopted by the faculty, although work is fully and carefully marked and guides pupils on how to improve their work. The faculty continues to offer a wide range of visits abroad, with a language-learning theme, and runs a language club as part of its plan to narrow the attainment gap between girls and boys. The faculty is well led. Members of the team work effectively together as a professional group whose work has ensured progress since the last inspection.

231. Music

226. After the last inspection, the head of department left the school, and his successor left last summer after three years. The present head of department, who had been in post for only a few days before the inspection started, is actively addressing the department's needs and the issues raised in the last inspection. The 1999 teacher assessments of standards in Key Stage 3 were too high, and unrealistic.

227. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 is low. Pupils enter the school with a mixture of musical skills and experiences, the majority of them being below expected standards for the end of primary school. They cannot use information technology to explore and record sounds; cannot sing well in two or more parts, or improvise on either a melodic or rhythmic idea. Year 8 pupils' knowledge of the basic musical elements is insecure, and they cannot use symbols to write down or perform musical ideas. They have difficulty clapping a simple rhythm in time to a given pulse. Pupils in Year 9 cannot define accurately the basic elements of music, their recognition of instruments is insecure, and they rarely relate music to its historical context.

228. In 1999 52 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A* to C. This was below the 1998 national average of 62 per cent. and a drop in achievement on previous years. There were no A-level students in 1999. Present standards in Years 10 and 11 are average. There are no pupils studying A-level in Year 12, but the attainment of students in Year 13 is well in line with that expected by the examining board.

229. Although attainment at the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory and progress in the past has been unsatisfactory, progress in lessons now is predominantly sound. This is the result of logically planned lessons using well-established concepts as a basis for extending knowledge and musical experience. Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes and the tasks set are achievable by all of them. Pupils in Year 7 sing a sea shanty, and discuss the difference between rhythm and melody. They then revise the English names of rhythmic notation, and learn the European/American names, which are based on fractions and relate more easily to time signatures. Pupils in Year 8 return to the basic elements of music, and revise their understanding of the elements' individual functions. Pupils in Year 9 explore some of the techniques used in writing music for television advertisements and incorporate them in compositions of their own, to suit a forty five second television advertisement.

230. Progress in the GCSE classes is good. Pupils are gaining confidence when answering questions and using musical vocabulary. They perform their compositions well and discover how the melodic shape improves when it has a clear direction and a sense of belonging to a key. Pupils in Year 11 learn to use the knowledge acquired over the past five years to identify the periods and style of pieces of previously unheard music; to develop their composing skills to produce longer, more coherent pieces, and to prepare their chosen pieces for performance. Both staff and pupils are striving to amend gaps in their knowledge which have occurred in past years.

231. Progress in Year 13 is good. Students have already gained experience in playing in

public, and are able to discuss their performances, accept positive criticism, and incorporate the results of their discussion in their playing. Their written work shows steady improvement over the two-year course and an understanding of the requirements of A-level essay writing.

232. Pupils' attitudes to and behaviour in music lessons are sound overall but good in Year 7. In all lessons relationships with the teacher are good. No instances of discourteous behaviour were observed and even in the less interested classes the teachers were addressed with respect. Pupils work well in groups, forwarding their own views, but at the same time listening to those of others and negotiating a final outcome. Where they are required to give out materials or instruments, they do so carefully.

233. Teaching was good and better in over 70 per cent of lessons and particularly effective in the GCSE and A-level groups. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and they have the experience and confidence to adapt their plans to reflect the progress of individual classes. Teachers' expectations are appropriate for the beginning of the school year and the lesson plans indicate that higher attaining pupils will be challenged well in the future. Resources are well prepared and good use is made of time and pace. Most lessons have a variety of activities, with both listening and composing addressed. Standards of expected behaviour in the department are clearly understood, and the few erring pupils are quickly and efficiently brought back into line. Tasks are thoroughly explained, and every encouragement is given to help those who wish to succeed to achieve. Teachers evaluate work during lessons and appropriate praise being given to successful pupils. However no pupil evaluation was observed, either of other pupils' performances or compositions, or the music of other composers.

234. The musical life of the school is supported by the teaching of six instrumental teachers from the East Riding music service. They and the class teachers willingly give up their time to encourage the pupils to participate in seasonal concerts, informal music evenings and an annual large-scale production. During the inspection, no extra-curricular activities had started so it is not possible to comment on their quality.

235. Until September 1999 little had been done to address the issues raised in the previous inspection report. There is still no use of computers in Years 7 to 9, a legal requirement, and Year 9 pupils still do not spend the recommended percentage of lesson time on music, which contributes to the low standards. The accommodation is not conducive to good music making; there are no computers, CD-ROMs, videos, or multi-cultural instruments; tuned percussion is limited; untuned percussion lacking in quality, and there is a shortage of basics such as stands and books. The present head of department has begun to address these issues diligently, with results which are already raising standards in all years.

241.

Physical education

236. By the end of Year 9, pupils achieve average standards. They have sound ball and racket skills and talented players are emerging in volleyball, rugby, and football. The majority of pupils know how and when to perform a particular skill. They develop good tactical awareness and understand the rules, scoring systems and playing areas. Although good control and co-ordination were observed in Year 7, attainment in dance and gymnastics is less secure, and pupils have a limited range of skills from which to build a sequence. Pupils evaluate their own work and the work of others and they are able to appreciate strengths and limitations in performance.

237. In 1999, 77 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A* to C, much higher than the 1998 national average of 49 per cent. In Year 11, pupils' theory work indicates a good understanding of the topics covered. Their practical assessments are also good. The practical work observed in rounders was of a sound standard. Attainment in non-GCSE lessons is average. There is a considerable range of ability and the more able have opportunities to extend their skills in extra-curricular activities both inside and outside the school. Pupils have good understanding of tactics and can undertake the different roles of performer, coach and official. They are able to evaluate their own performance and the performance of others.

238. Pupils make good progress in the majority of lessons in all years. In Years 7 to 9, pupils have many opportunities to practise and improve their skills individually, in pairs and in small-sided games. They are encouraged to think and respond to questions which increase their knowledge and understanding of strategies and tactics. In gymnastics and dance, pupils refine and develop individual and paired sequences. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported and fully integrated into lessons.

239. Books with different levels of work have helped to further improve the progress of all pupils taking the GCSE course. In practical lessons pupils consolidate the skills they have acquired in Years 7 to 9, and improve these skills in more complex situations. They also improve their knowledge and understanding of tactics and rules.

240. Pupils have very positive attitudes and there are few non-participants. They are keen, enthusiastic and willing to learn. They enjoy the subject and work very hard. They are polite, well behaved and have very good relationships with their teachers and with each other. They collaborate on tasks but also have strong competitive instincts. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility and develop as independent learners. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative by leading the warm up and stretching exercises and good examples of this were seen in Year 9 and in the majority of lessons in Years 10 and 11. The Junior Sports Leader Award helps Years 10 and 11 pupils to develop their leadership skills, organising ability and self esteem. Pupils in the sixth form have the opportunity to take the Community Sports Leader's Award.

241. The quality of teaching was good or better in 70 per cent of the lessons seen, particularly

in Years 10 and 11, although it was unsatisfactory in one Year 11 GCSE class. Teachers are confident, have good subject knowledge, and obviously enjoy working with the pupils. They teach with energy and commitment and have high expectations of behaviour and performance. They use a range of teaching styles and make very good use of questions to improve the pupils' understanding. Teachers are encouraging and give good feedback to the whole class and to individuals. Pupils change quickly so that lessons start promptly; the pace is good and resources are used effectively. Relationships are constructive; class control is excellent, and the pupils work in a safe and harmonious atmosphere.

242. The curriculum is broad, balanced and extremely well planned. Schemes of work are up to date and regularly revised. Assessment procedures are effective and pupils are graded for attainment and effort at the end of each half term unit of work. Assessments are moderated at the end of Year 9. The department has devised its own certificates for outstanding effort or achievement, and for Year 12 and 13 students who have assisted regularly with lessons at the lower school. A very good range of extra-curricular activities includes fitness sessions, open access clubs, teams, fixtures with other schools and regional and national competitions. The department held a successful presentation evening at the Ionians Rugby Club at the end of the summer term and plan to make this an annual event.

243. The department is extremely well led, organised and managed. The head of department is very well supported by the experienced members of staff. The newly qualified teachers have settled in well and are making a valuable contribution. This is a very good department which makes a strong contribution to the school's social and moral provision and to the overall ethos of the school. The school was awarded the English Sports Council's Sportsmark award. It has received Lottery funding and a grant from the Foundation for Sports and Arts to upgrade facilities and provide additional equipment, including the fitness suite.

249. **Religious education**

244. Preparation for the GCSE short examination in religious education, taken by the great majority of pupils at the end of Year 10, starts at the beginning of Year 9. Religious education is not part of the curriculum in Year 11 or post 16 and therefore the school is not fulfilling statutory requirements. Attainment is high at the end of Year 9, above the level expected by the Agreed Syllabus, because over half the students are working well towards a high grade in the examination course. Attainment in Years 7 and 8 is also high. Pupils in Year 7 understand that Jesus was a Jew and that Christianity was not formed until after his death. Both oral and written answers to questions show that pupils are building a good body of knowledge and understanding of religions and beliefs.

245. In the newly introduced short course examination in 1998, including a course work element, 52 per cent achieved A* to C grades, compared to the national average of 45 per cent, and 94 per cent achieved grades A* to G, also above the national average. Results in 1999 were similar, although 73 students obtained A* and A grades compared to 46 in 1998. These results are a remarkable achievement considering that over 92 per cent of the cohort of 341 students took the examination - one year early. There is a significant difference between girls'

and boys' results which the department is beginning to address.

246. Students give accurate, factual answers, and well over half provide extended answers supported by reasons. They understand religious terminology and learn from religion as well as about it. Attainment at the end of Year 10 is average, with about half the students expected to achieve A* to C grades in the short course. Students are confident with religious ideas and have a good understanding of the issues involved. Those with special educational needs know enough facts to tackle the examination, but the school now also offers the alternative Certificate of Achievement for those who feel more comfortable with this examination. A small group in Year 11 follow the full GCSE course. Most of this group are producing work of a high standard.

247. Good progress is made in Years 7 to 10. All pupils are expected to participate in lessons, develop discussion and debating skills and practise speaking and reading aloud. Many give perceptive answers which show their good understanding of issues. Pupils build on each other's ideas. On a number of occasions, long lists developed as one idea sparked off two or three more. Many students give extended answers which explain clearly the concepts involved. The department is making a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs staff to develop tasks suitable for pupils of different levels of attainment. They also use good questioning techniques and a variety of teaching styles so that these pupils make the same good progress as other pupils. Using individual education plans to determine specific targets for religious education lessons will focus even more closely on needs.

248. Most students have a good attitude towards the subject and want to do well. They volunteer answers to questions and want to be involved in the lesson. Many spend far more time on homework than is expected because they want to achieve high grades. At the end of Year 10, students enter the short course examination motivated by a desire to obtain the best possible grade and gain practice in taking an external examination. The level of concentration is generally good, though those with short concentration spans find the seventy minute lesson very long unless activities are changed regularly. On rare occasions a small number of students stopped working and began to chatter in the final ten minutes.

249. On the whole, students behave extremely well and some noisy chatter is caused by excitement and interest in the task. In most lessons a good, lively, working 'buzz' can be heard. Sharing personal beliefs and opinions is a central part of most lessons and allows pupils to explore feelings in a safe and secure environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a very important feature of every lesson. Laughter in lessons is not unusual. Teachers realise that humour and fun, in the right context, is a good way of learning. Pupils are developing in confidence. After appropriate encouragement, one quiet girl answered a question correctly in front of the whole class, gained the praise she deserved and changed her facial expression; later in the lesson she volunteered to answer questions.

250. Teaching, which is most effective in all years, was good in over 90 per cent of lessons and very good in over 40 per cent. Expectations are very high, illustrated by the good results achieved in the short course. Teachers use their extensive subject knowledge to give clear

explanations to pupils, which link religious ideas to relevant events, so that students consolidate what they know before receiving new information. Very good relationships are established, students knowing exactly what is expected of them, leading to a productive working environment. Planning is thorough and objectives are clearly thought out, but not always shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson.

251. Lessons usually begin with an exercise which relates to the previous lesson and sets the focus. One teacher starts this as soon as the students enter the room and checks the register whilst they are working, thus making full use of the time available. All lessons have a controlled ending with a short exercise to check that the aims have been met. Outside visits and visitors in the classroom add to the quality of the lessons and widen pupils' understanding of the different religions studied. Homework is very well used and extends, enriches and consolidates the issues covered in the lesson. Tasks allow pupils to use initiative and develop research and independent learning skills. Teacher comments in exercise books help future work to improve. Displays of work are good within the very limited space available in the barely satisfactory huddled accommodation. Teachers and support staff plan lessons together to make productive use of the time available.

252. The department is very well managed. All the staff advise, help and support each other. This great strength is particularly valuable as three of the four main religious education teachers are new, or comparatively new, to the school. The department's development plan rightly recognises the need to develop the use of information technology within the subject. The strengths recognised in the previous report remain, and are being further developed. The weaknesses, with the exception of the breach of regulations, have been addressed.

258. **Other GCSE courses**

Business Studies

253. By the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils achieve high standards. Both boys' and girls' results show a considerable improvement in comparison to 1998, and the gap between their attainments has narrowed significantly. In 1999, 58 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A* to C, above both school and national averages (1998 48 per cent nationally), reflecting a steadily-rising trend since the last inspection. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils worked well in groups to match cards of business names with descriptions, building on their local knowledge. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils watched a video on marketing a new chocolate bar and evaluated each others' views on the bars' market potential before eating them!

254. Coursework folders are neat, well-presented and generally well written. They show the effective use of information technology to word process reports and produce graphs from survey figures. Spreadsheets are not used enough for financial forecasting, such as cash flow. A minority of boys in Year 10 do not redraft their written answers to correct errors. Pupils' examination results sometimes exceed their attainment levels at the beginning of the course. Pupils with special educational needs can explain simple business concepts such as sole proprietor and capital.

255. Business studies is a popular option in Years 10 and 11 with six classes now running. Pupils make good progress. They improve speaking and listening skills through group and class discussion and develop their information technology skills increasingly well now access to computers has improved. Their progress is well supported by regular assessment and target setting. Pupils enjoy their work and behave very well and help each other. The majority are well motivated to succeed and many progress on to A-level or GNVQ business courses in the sixth form.

256. Teaching is consistently good and very good in a third of lessons. Teachers make very good use of expert subject knowledge and industry contacts to plan lessons carefully and use topical case studies. Teachers support individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, very well. Coursework assignments supplied by the examination board have been rewritten so they can be more easily understood by lower attaining pupils, which has improved motivation and results. Case studies are well designed to improve key skills of information technology, number and communications. Teachers are beginning to use task-monitoring sheets to set targets for pupils to improve. Homework is set and marked regularly, although extension activities for higher attaining pupils are rarely used.

257. Business studies courses are well structured, well managed and ably led. Teachers work as a committed and mutually supportive team. Although in most classes the number of boys exceeds girls, there is no adverse effect on the progress of either group. Teaching rooms are big enough for the majority of classes, but nearly a quarter of classes are cramped in the allocated room. In line with school policy, development plans have successfully focused on improving assessment; increasing pupils' access to computers, and raising achievement. Teachers make very good use of local business links through visits and speakers. Staff have created an ethos that encourages pupils to enjoy their learning and achieve good results.

Economics

258. More boys than girls choose to study economics. Attainment by the end of Year 11 continues to be variable, falling to 30 per cent of pupils achieving GCSE grades A* to C in 1999 from the 81 per cent in 1998, which was well above the national average. Results reflect the attainment levels of pupils when they started the course. However, the overall trend since the last inspection is upwards. Results are expected to be higher in 2000, reflecting the new option structure; more boys in the current Year 10 have made a positive choice for economics.

In Year 11 pupils readily understand key properties of money and how exchange rates affect their holiday money. Their coursework folders are generally well presented, with higher attaining pupils producing clear, well-drawn supply and demand graphs.

259. Progress of the majority of pupils in lessons seen and over time is sound. About a quarter of pupils, mostly girls, make particularly good progress in developing key skills of information technology and number, handling economic data well and producing computer-drawn graphs and charts from local consumer surveys. Pupils' listening skills are generally well developed, but progress is more erratic where lessons do not adequately address the needs of all pupils, or where the minority of boys who did not choose to study economics fail to contribute to lessons. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In lessons seen they behave well and take a keen interest. They concentrate well, without being over-dependent on the teacher, and co-operate with each other and the teacher. Some room allocations make it difficult for pupils to work well in groups or have access to all the materials they need.

260. Teaching is satisfactory and good in equal measure, representing an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers now use a wider range of teaching methods and make more use of information technology to develop pupils' research skills and ability to work on their own. They plan topics carefully and generally manage and support pupils well. However, they do not always provide enough additional activities for higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils receive little extra support in class. Teachers have reasonably high expectations and set homework regularly, but their marking and feedback to pupils can be inconsistent. Consequently, pupils do not always have an accurate indication of the GCSE grade level at which they are working. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are encouraged to incorporate a variety of topical material from newspapers and local industry. Increasingly good use of videos and of industry contacts brings the subject to life. The range and quality of books for economics in the school library are poor, and the department does not have a suitable room for classes. Pupils have good opportunities to progress to the A-level economics/business (Nuffield) and GNVQ business and finance courses.

266. Sixth form: an overview, other A-level subjects and GNVQs

261. The sixth form has 347 students and is part of the well established East Riding Southpo Consortium of four schools, Cottingham, Hessle, South Hunsley and Wolfreton, which jointly have about 900 students in the sixth form. Students study from a very wide range of 28 subjects for A and AS-level, GCSE and Advanced and Intermediate GNVQs in one or two year programmes. Most students are taught at Wolfreton, but subjects including physical education, business studies for A-level, media studies, religious education, philosophy and graphic communication are only available at other consortium schools. Few Wolfreton

students follow these courses, which are not described below. Students can choose any appropriate combination of subject, except for further mathematics with art. Plans are already in hand for closer synchronisation of time-tables and syllabuses within the consortium in readiness for the September 2000 changes in the post-16 curriculum. In a recent survey, students saw the greater range of A-levels offered as the single most important benefit of the Consortium.

262. In the same survey students identified two disadvantages of the consortium, these being problems with transport and lack of contact time with teachers. Students at Wolfreton confirmed that the buses are occasionally delayed, and that asking a teacher for advice outside teaching time can be difficult. The extension of computer networks and video conferencing is being considered to help linked learning between the consortium schools

263. In Year 12 a **curriculum enhancement programme**, linked to a course written by the University of Liverpool, is not considered to be worthwhile by the majority of students. Nevertheless, several students complete individual projects for which they receive a certificate. The course is weakened by poor planning, weak monitoring and low student commitment. Students' individual timetables determine whether they can participate on the course, and a significant number of those who could attend do not do so.

264. The **general studies** A-level course in Year 13 provides a valuable broadening of the curriculum for those students who can take it, but it is an unfortunate feature of the timetable that several students cannot attend classes. As results have improved, explained by the course being made optional and by more focused teaching, the number of students taking the A-level has increased. In 1999, 78 per cent of students who took the examination achieved grades A to E and 44 per cent grades A and B, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Students sit a mock examination at the end of Year 12 so they can decide whether they wish to take this extra A-level; 100 students have chosen to follow the course in Year 13. Taught courses include topics such as GM food, music, plays, art works, philosophy, ethics and languages. At the same time students' research skills and powers of critical thought are developed. The course is very well organised and directed by a member of the history department. It is delivered effectively by about ten teachers from a range of faculties.

265. In addition to the curriculum enhancement programme and the general studies course, sports facilities are available for those students who wish to participate. On the other hand the usual range of sixth form clubs and activities does not exist. Opportunities for organised music have declined in the past, but the new head of department plans to rekindle activities and to use these as a means of bringing lower school pupils and upper school students together.

266. Target-setting in the sixth form has been introduced and is effectively helping students and their tutors to monitor academic progress. Students enjoy the sixth form and most are committed to their studies. About 10 per cent of students drop out during the first year, and a few repeat their Year 12 courses. Good pastoral care is provided in the sixth form through tutor groups. Students receive valuable academic and personal guidance through tutor interviews, but those students seeking employment rather than a university place feel that less emphasis is given to their needs. Advice on careers, job information and the opportunity of a careers interview are available.

267. The sixth form council organises social events which raise money for the refurbishment of the sixth form centre. They contribute to school charity collections. The split site means that students in the sixth form are less involved in lower school activities, but several sixth formers follow a course on, and then teach learning skills to Year 7, and help with lower school sport. They also visit the school's feeder primary schools.

268. The sixth form centre provides good accommodation and affords a valued sense of community. The teaching rooms are satisfactory for classes up to 18 students but are sometimes too small for tutor groups. The large common room is well used but there is no separate area for quiet study. Students rarely use the school library, and during the inspection only a few were seen there, mainly using it as a place for quiet conversation. Although some departments keep reference books for students, access to them is limited; this would improve if they were moved to the library.

274. **Economics and business studies (Nuffield combined syllabus)**

269. In 1999, the first year that students were entered for this combined A-level syllabus, 100 per cent achieved grades A to E, above the school average and an improvement on results in 1998. Attainment at grades A to C is below the national average and lower than in 1998, reflecting the students' attainment on entry to the course. Students' grades have been predicted accurately. Coursework folders for Year 12 contain well-presented notes and well-drawn supply and demand curves. Students use material from local industry well and understand key micro and macro economic concepts. Written answers are well-constructed but evaluation sometimes lacks enough depth. No Year 13 portfolios were available during the inspection.

270. Progress of students in lessons and over time is good for all levels of attainment. It is very good in information technology; students use spreadsheets and graphics programs to analyse topical economic data and evaluate material researched from a variety of sources. In a stimulating Year 12 lesson, students co-operated very well, when divided into groups of 'shipwrecked sailors', to play a survival game about the allocation of scarce resources on a desert island. Students discussed economic concepts in a mature way, were not over-dependent on their teacher, and carried out a series of timed tasks.

271. Teaching is always good. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection when methods and style were limited. Teachers encourage students to think critically about economic concepts through group and class discussion, role play and research from textbooks, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Handouts are topical and relevant and allow students to write answers in enough depth. Communication skills involving formal individual and group presentations are less well developed. More frequent use of action planning and self-evaluation would help students not to rely too much on their teachers and allow higher attainers to achieve higher grades.

272. The combined syllabus is popular. Forthcoming changes for post-16 education provide an opportunity for the school to review the subjects offered and the way they are managed, to minimise duplication. Teachers work hard as a committed team and use topical, up-to-date resources. They make good use of local industry links and are exploring ways of increasing the number of visits to local firms.

278. GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualifications)

273. GNVQ courses are currently run in the sixth form at Advanced level in business, leisure and tourism and health and social care over two years, and at Intermediate level in business and leisure and tourism (taught jointly) over one year. GNVQ courses complement the extensive A-level programme in the school and other consortium schools and provide a well-recognised pathway to university and employment.

274. By the age of 17, students on the Intermediate business course attain standards which are well above the national average. In 1999 the completion rate was 100 per cent, boys' results showing significant improvement from 1998. Students on the leisure and tourism course attain at slightly below the national average, with boys performing better than girls. Results show a fairly static trend but are in line with students' attainment at the beginning of the course. The majority of students on Intermediate courses produce bulky coursework portfolios with well-written assignments presented using a variety of information technology software. Portfolios incorporate communications key skill evidence from class presentations about new products and customer service techniques. Students' graphs analyse figures from local consumer surveys.

275. By the age of 19, students on the Advanced health and social care course attain standards well above the national average. In an excellent lesson, students who had only just started the course used a variety of information technology software to produce eye-catching posters. Students evaluated their group survey of disability access in local shops, and presented their conclusions for group assessment.

276. Students on the well-established Advanced business course attain standards well above the national average. Completion rates have improved over the last three years. In 1999 boys performed better than girls. The percentage of students with merit and distinction grades is at least as high as similar schools. Students on the course make proposals for new electronic communications systems based on their work experience placements and part-time jobs.

Students improve key skills of information technology, number and communications during a graduate recruitment day hosted by a large multinational business; they undertake group problem-solving tasks, rewrite CVs and experience job interviews which they later evaluate.

277. Students on the recently-introduced Advanced leisure and tourism course attain standards below the national averages for boys and girls, but 1999 completion rates show considerable improvement from 1998. In coursework portfolios, students demonstrate a sound understanding of the wide range of local leisure facilities and integrate material from a wide range of visits, work placements and part-time jobs. Information technology is used well to draw graphs, for example of overseas visitors, although there is little evidence of the use of spreadsheets to set up alternative viewpoints when analysing figures.

278. In all subject areas, GNVQ work is neat and well presented, showing a satisfactory standard of reading and writing skills. Students make good use of photographs and diagrams. Action plans are monitored in detail, although evaluations in the work seen are seldom in enough depth, particularly where valuable alternatives need to be described. About a quarter of all work seen is at merit level, reflecting grades finally awarded.

279. Progress on all GNVQ courses is good, particularly in the key skills of communication, number and information technology. The majority of students have some difficulty tracking their own progress in the key skills, particularly in numeracy, but this is being addressed through regular tutorials staffed by specialist teachers. Through the regular assessment, feedback and target setting process, the majority of students are fully aware of what they need to do to obtain merit and distinction grades for their course work.

280. Students generally approach GNVQ lessons with enthusiasm and interest and are well motivated to succeed. They enjoy working in groups to discuss projects. They concentrate fully on their tasks and appreciate their relevance to the working world. Students use material from work experience and part-time jobs in their coursework assignments. In the majority of GNVQ lessons students demonstrate research skills from a variety of sources, including the Internet, and are not over-dependent on teachers for ideas.

281. The quality of GNVQ teaching is always good, and in 20 per cent of lessons it is very good or excellent. Teachers have suitably high expectations of students and lessons invariably have a practical, industry focus based on a good range of textbooks, worksheets, computer software and material from local industry contacts. Advanced business students join a graduate recruitment day run by a multinational company. Leisure and tourism and health and social care students carry out projects in leisure and health centres. Teachers' planning, delivery and feedback to individual students is thorough and students feel well-supported. One student with special educational needs has progressed to the Advanced leisure and tourism course. Time in lessons is used well and homework deadlines are appropriate, with short and longer-term targets. This has led to an overall improvement in student completion rates since the last inspection.

282. Since the last inspection the school has developed a greater range of vocational courses

and is actively considering extending GNVQ into Years 10 and 11 in the light of national 14-19 curriculum changes from September 2000. Courses, including key skills lessons, are well managed and have a high profile within the school. Course teams, involving teachers from several subject areas, are committed, well co-ordinated and meet regularly to evaluate students' progress. Each vocational area is building a stock of resources although central library provision and technician support is inadequate to meet students' needs..

283. Courses are well monitored internally; staff expertise in assessment, including key skills, has grown steadily through the careful use of external funds for training. Development plan targets for improving the range of links with industry, particularly in leisure and tourism and health and social care, are being well met, and access to information technology has significantly improved. The school is well supported by the local TEC and local business partnership. There is a high-quality initial teacher training link with Sheffield Hallam university. The school is well placed to move forward to meet new challenges in the changing national post-16 curriculum.

289. **Politics**

284. This consortium subject is taught at Wolfreton school. A-level results have been very good over the last three years. In 1997 and 1998, all Wolfreton students achieved A or B grades. In 1999, 54 per cent of the eleven Wolfreton students achieved A or B grades. Numbers taking the subject are growing. Teaching, based on broad knowledge, is very stimulating and encourages lively class debates. Although very committed and attentive in class, some students do not read newspapers or watch news programmes regularly, although several intend to study politics at university. Students discuss a wide range of political topics and link theory with current events, for example socialism and modernisation evaluated in the light of New Labour's principles.

290. **Psychology**

285. Psychology is a popular A-level course. Results in 1998 were well above the national average; all students achieved grades A-E and 44 per cent achieved grades A or B. The results in 1999 were not quite so good overall as the previous year, partly because of the departure of the head of department part way through the year. However, a similar percentage of students achieved A or B grades. Students make very good progress in understanding terminology, theories and difficult concepts such as the difference between pro-social behaviour and altruism. By the end of Year 13 they have a very good grasp of research methods and the specific problems and responsibilities of carrying out socially sensitive research. Factors in teaching which contribute significantly to this very good progress include the expertise and enthusiasm of staff; they plan interesting and stimulating lessons and have high expectations of students. Of equal importance is the students' own very positive attitude to study, including homework and holiday work.

286. Students concentrate very well in class and most complete tasks and research conscientiously, which contributes to the efficient use of lesson times. They operate at a good pace and produce an impressive amount of work. Students' very good relationships with the teacher and with each other are manifest in the way in which they help each other and show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.

287. The quality of teaching is predominantly good and very good in 40 per cent of lessons. The effective communication of teachers' accurate knowledge and love of their subject motivates and inspires students and helps them to believe that they can achieve high standards. Through very probing questioning, misconceptions are identified and students acquire a deep insight into topics they study. The well-planned lessons contain a good variety of tasks which break down students' attention span into manageable periods of time. Very challenging work develops students' critical and analytical thinking very well and stimulates them to develop their own perspective, which they know they must substantiate convincingly. Independent study is developed very well through challenging tasks which extend work in class, test students' understanding and develop their research and numeracy skills. Results of very regular and detailed assessment and marking of students' work are used both to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and to influence the content of future lessons.

288. The department makes a very good contribution to the development of students' literacy skills through oral discussion and debate, and extended writing, and to the development of their numeracy skills through data collection, analysis and interpretation. The emphasis on ethical and moral issues, and a study of the effect of social and cultural differences in child rearing practices on child socialisation are examples of the way in which the department also contributes significantly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

289. The curriculum is reviewed regularly but no classroom observation has yet been undertaken by the recently appointed head of department. Students have access to a reasonable range of resources but little use is made of information and communications technology to support research, and the school library does not have enough relevant books. During the week of the inspection classes observed were too large for the size of room.

295.

Sociology

290. Sociology is a sixth form consortium subject. Students study a GCSE course in Year 12 and an A-level course in Year 13. Currently all students are girls. In 1998 attainment was well above the national average for GCSE, when 88 per cent gained A* to C grades. At A-level, 29 per cent achieved grades A or B compared with the national average of 35 per cent for girls. All students gained grades A-E: the national average is 85 per cent. In 1999 attainment improved with 100 per cent A* to C grades at GCSE, and 50 per cent A or B grades at A-level. The trend shows rising attainment.

291. When students start the course they are familiar with some elements of the subject, such as family, and they understand terms used to describe different family structures, such as

polygamy. Through discussion they relate basic concepts such as culture, socialisation, rules and norms to their experience and knowledge, for example from schools. Students understand a number of theories used to explain how society is constructed and they relate these to topical events, such as conflict theory to the tensions in East Timor.

292. Students make good progress. They quickly learn the language and terms of sociology. Skills of rapid and analytical reading are developed. Their reading and lessons develop understanding of how sociologists gather evidence to support explanations of institutions and actions. Students apply this learning to their own investigations using interviews, questionnaires and statistical analysis. They learn to sift through many sources of evidence to produce a balanced conclusion to the hypotheses they set.

293. Response in lessons and written work is very good overall. Students concentrate very well, and show thought and precision with their answers. Although students are based in four schools they relate amicably and share the good humour of the lessons. They enjoy the stimulating questions of the teacher, and applying their learning to everyday events.

294. Teaching quality is good overall, and one lesson was very good. Subject knowledge is very good and used effectively to advance students' learning through probing questions. Lessons are thoughtfully planned to include a variety of activities, relevant resources and occasional visits. The teacher has high expectations, and students are set improvement targets related to their attainment. Attention to the needs of higher attaining students is given by appropriate challenges. Work is carefully and quickly marked, and students are clear about how to achieve better answers. Classes are managed skilfully so learning is achieved by active student participation. Students' written course evaluation comments are used to adjust the content and delivery of the course. Sociology is a popular subject in the consortium schools. The experienced part-time teacher works hard to contribute to the students' success, and manages the subject efficiently.

300. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

300. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

1. Before the inspection the registered inspector held a meeting attended by 26 parents and the team considered the responses of 184 parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

2. Sixteen inspectors spent the equivalent of 67 days in the school, gathering first-hand evidence. 327 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Approximately 40 further observations were made of form periods, registration times, assemblies, and a limited range of extra-curricular activities, as the majority had not started so near the beginning of term.

3. Discussions were held with pupils in all classes during the course of lessons, and separate discussions were arranged with some pupils in order that they could talk about aspects of their work or involvement in school activities..

4. All teachers were seen teaching once and several were seen on a number of occasions. Subject inspectors held planned discussions with all members of middle management. Interviews also took place with the governors, the headteacher, deputy heads and teachers with particular responsibilities. At a luncheon arranged by the school, members of the team met with representatives of organisations involved in the life of the school.

5. Inspectors analysed the work of high, average and low-attainers and students with special educational needs, from each year group.

6. The previous OFSTED report, action plan, policy documents, schemes of work, development and financial plans and further documentation provided by the school were scrutinised both before, during and after the inspection.

7. Attendance registers, records kept on pupils, particularly in relation to their attainment on entry and their progress, and the teachers' planning were inspected.

308. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

308. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
199	2045	20	132	105
9/0				
0				

308. **Teachers and classes**

308. **Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

113.4
18.2

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

308. **Education support staff (Y7 - Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:

23
572

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

79.8 per cent

Average teaching group size:

KS3	26
KS4	22

308. **Financial data**

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	4247946.00
Total Expenditure	4275378.00
Expenditure per pupil	2071.40
Balance brought forward from previous year	63958.00
Balance carried forward to next year	36526.00

308.

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

1600

Number of questionnaires returned:

184

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	14	55	20	9	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	36	51	7	6	0.5
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	48	22	6	3.4
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	56	17	13	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	26	57	6	8	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	56	8	7	0.5
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	25	53	16	7	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	59	9	12	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	20	55	18	4	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	15	52	21	8	5
My child(ren) like(s) school	22	58	10	9	0.5

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