

INSPECTION REPORT

FRIESLAND SCHOOL

Sandiacre - Nottingham

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112994

Headteacher: Mr M G Ruhmund

Reporting inspector: Mr J Paddick
10308

Dates of inspection:

Inspection number: 189186

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Comprehensive |
| School category: | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils: | 11-18 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Nursery Avenue Sandiacre Nottingham |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr J H Richards |
| Date of previous inspection: | 23 September 1996 |

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REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 6 |
| Information about the school | |
| How good the school is | |
| What the school does well | |
| What could be improved | |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection | |
| Standards | |
| Pupils' attitudes and values | |
| Teaching and learning | |
| Other aspects of the school | |
| How well the school is led and managed | |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school | |
| ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM | |
| PART B: COMMENTARY | |
| WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL | 13 |
| WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED | 16 |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 17 |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 18 |
| PART D: THE SIXTH FORM | 23 |
| RESULTS AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS | 23 |
| STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT | 23 |
| TEACHING AND LEARNING | 24 |
| CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS | 24 |
| THE SCHOOL'S CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS | 25 |
| THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN THE SIXTH FORM | 27 |
| PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM | 28 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Friesland School is a mixed comprehensive catering for pupils in the age range 11-18. There are 1250 pupils on roll, of whom 150 are sixth formers. Most pupils come from Sandiacre, Long Eaton, Borrowash, Draycott and Risley. These areas are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged but below average numbers of pupils claim free school meals. Most pupils are white but there are 20 pupils from ethnic minority families, mainly Indian, Chinese and Black Caribbean. There are 15 pupils with English as an additional language but none is at an early stage of its acquisition. The school has grown considerably in size since the sixth form started in 1998.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. However, there are fewer pupils on the special educational needs register than is normal for the size of school, and also fewer pupils with statements of special educational need. Most of the special educational needs relate to dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, and emotional and behavioural problems.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective. Standards are rising quickly. GCSE results are well above the national average and improving faster than the national trend. Current standards in class are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. Teaching is good overall. Leadership and management are very good. The school has successfully introduced a sixth form where standards have risen to average in a short time. All this has been achieved despite the effects of a devastating fire in December 1999. Unit costs are well below average so the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- GCSE results are well above average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their work.
- The pastoral care programme is of good quality.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

What could be improved

- Provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 does not meet statutory requirements.
- Some aspects of teaching and learning can still be improved.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Improvement has been very good. Since 1996, standards have risen quickly, especially at GCSE. Standards in modern languages have improved greatly. The sixth form has grown successfully to 150 students from small beginnings in 1998. Teaching has improved. The accommodation has been improved immensely following the fire of 1999. The school's work is now monitored systematically, and there is a better match of work to the abilities of the pupils.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | Compared with | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | All schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| GCSE examinations | A | A | A | B |
| A-levels/AS-levels | N/A | N/A | N/A | |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| Well above average | A |
| Above average | B |
| average | C |
| Below average | D |
| Well below average | E |

The school's Year 9 national test results in English were average in 1997 and 1999, and above average in 1998 and 2000. Results in 2001 were similar to those of 1999. Results in mathematics were well above average from 1998 to 2000. In 2001, results were similar to those of 2000. In science, results were above average from 1998 to 2000. In 2001, results were similar to those of 2000. Taken as a whole, the results in 2000 were well above average compared to all schools nationally. They were above average for schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls did better than boys in English but boys did better than girls in mathematics and science. The school's results have followed the national trend for point score between 1997 and 2000, but in 2000, governors' very challenging targets were only met in science. In the current Year 9, standards in subjects in the school curriculum are above average overall. This represents good achievement from pupils' average starting points on entry to the school.

The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE results in the range A*-C has improved greatly since the previous inspection. In 2000, GCSE results for five A*-C grades, five A*-G grades and one A*-G grade were well above the national average. They represented good progress from the end of Year 9. The results were above average for schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds. The improvement in GCSE results since the previous inspection has been more rapid than the national trend, culminating in a further rise in 2001. Girls do better at GCSE than boys, as is the case nationally. Governors' very challenging targets for GCSE were almost all met or exceeded in 2001. The GCSE results are reflected in the current work of Year 11, which is well above average overall. This represents good achievement from the end of Year 9.

In 2000, the first A-level results, from the very small sixth form, were below average but they represented satisfactory progress from the beginning of Year 12. In 2001, far more students were entered, and the A-level results improved considerably. In most subjects they were as expected from students' GCSE results. However, governors' very challenging targets for A-level were not met in 2001. Current standards in Year 13 in A-level and AVCE courses are broadly average overall. This represents satisfactory achievement from students' GCSE starting point. However, standards in English and mathematics are below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' attitudes to the school and their work are good. They strongly support learning. Pupils are happy at school and are keen to do well. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour in class and around school is very good. Exclusions are quite rare. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils develop mature attitudes as they move through the school. They relate very well to each other and to adults. |
| Attendance | Attendance in Years 7 to 11 is above average. Sixth form attendance is satisfactory. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Years 7 – 9 | Years 10 – 11 | Years 12 – 13 |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good | Satisfactory |

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching and learning in Years 7 -11 have improved since the previous inspection; they are good overall. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7-11 in English, mathematics and science. Teaching in these three core subjects is almost always good and meets the needs of most pupils well. It makes suitably challenging demands on the pupils and enables them to gain ever more advanced knowledge and greater skills as they are taken relatively quickly through the levels of the National Curriculum. Usually there is plenty of opportunity for pupils to develop and consolidate their understanding. However, in Years 7-9, there is evidence that some pupils with special educational needs are not coping. Their work shows that they are experiencing topics in class but not mastering them, examples being multiplication and division of whole numbers and decimals.

Most of the teaching in Years 7-11 is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers plan their lessons well and split the work up into activities that maintain pupils' interest. Questioning of pupils is good because it establishes their level of understanding and allows teachers to decide whether to proceed or consolidate. Teachers usually make suitable demands on their pupils but occasionally the pace of lessons is too sedate. Marking is of variable quality. The best practice indicates clearly how pupils have done, and tells them what they need to do to improve. However, too often marking is too infrequent to be useful. This affects pupils with special educational needs whose work needs very regular correction. Teachers manage and organise their classes well so that there is an air of industry and concentration throughout the school.

Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory. It enables students to reach standards in Year 13 that are consistent with satisfactory progress in A-level and AVCE courses over two years. Teaching is good in A-level geography and AVCE information and communications technology (ICT). No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection and there was much to commend. However, in some subjects such as English and art, the pace of lessons is sometimes rather slow. Teachers in some subjects such as ICT are ensuring that students know how to extend their learning through private study but, in other subjects, although students work well in class, their independent learning skills are still relatively weak.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 or in the sixth form. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Generally satisfactory. These pupils do well at GCSE. However, they should have more attention in some lessons in Years 7-9. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The provision is good. These pupils enjoy harmonious relationships with the staff and other pupils and make the same good progress as other pupils in Years 7-11. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory overall but requirements for collective worship are not fully met. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good, and for their moral and social development it is very good |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Arrangements for pupils' welfare are very good. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and attendance are very good. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher's leadership is very good. Senior management is very good. Middle management is good. The school has improved greatly since the previous inspection and the sixth form has been introduced successfully. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors generally fulfil their responsibilities well. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for collective worship or for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school evaluates its examination performance very well. Managers monitor teaching regularly and evaluate its quality. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school operates on well below average funding. Governors and staff plan very carefully so that they can run the school successfully on a tight budget. The school applies the principles of best value very well. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. • Their children are making good progress. • Behaviour is good. • There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like the school to work more closely with parents. • They would like better information about how their children are getting on. |

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The team does not agree with some parents' rather negative views about the school not working sufficiently closely with them or knowing how their children are getting on. For example, school reports are of very good quality and meetings for parents to discuss their children's progress are attended well.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form was established in 1998 with nine students studying for A-level. Since then it has increased in size to 150 students. There are now more male students than females, and very few from ethnic minority backgrounds. Most of the sixth formers transferred from the school's Year 11 following a successful experience with GCSE. Entry qualifications are five GCSE passes at grade C. Higher grades are expected for some subjects. The intakes to the sixth form from 1998 to 2000 were below average in attainment. There was an average intake in 2001. The provision now consists of a good range of AS and A-level courses with AVCE available in art and design, information and communications technology, and business studies.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is cost-effective. Leadership and management are good. Standards have improved quickly as the quality and size of the intake have improved. Standards are now broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. The sixth form meets the needs of its students, and retention rates are very good. There is a considerable amount of good teaching. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

Strengths

- The school offers a wide range of vocational and academic courses.
- Standards are improving quickly.
- The teaching in geography and information and communications technology is good.
- A-level results in drama, art, geography and sports studies were strong in 2001.
- The enrichment programme is of good quality.
- Students' personal development is generally good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics at A-level are not yet high enough.
- The pace and rigour of some of the teaching could be improved.
- Some students have not developed independent learning skills sufficiently.
- The use of target setting for individual students could be improved.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education.
- There is no development plan specifically for the sixth form.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

| Curriculum area | Overall judgement about provision, with comment |
|----------------------------|---|
| Mathematics AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Standards are below average but are satisfactory in relation to students' attainment at the beginning of their courses. Teaching is satisfactory. However, several students are struggling because they are unsuited to mathematics at this level. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Biology AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. Teaching is satisfactory with good features. Students have very good attitudes and learning is satisfactory. There should be more use of ICT. |
| Business Studies AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students' attitudes are good but they need more opportunities to develop independent learning skills. There should be more use of ICT. |
| Information and Communication Technology AS VCE and AVCE | Good. Standards are a little above average and students achieve well because they are keen and interested. The teaching is good and the subject is very well organised and managed. |
| Art & Design AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Results are improving. Standards are average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students have a positive attitude to the subject but need to develop better independent learning skills. |
| Music AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Standards are average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students have good attitudes. There should be more use of ICT. |
| Geography AS and A-level | Good. Results have improved considerably. Standards are above average and achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. |
| Psychology AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Standards and results are improving as a result of the determination of the teacher. Students need more opportunities for experimental work. |
| English AS and A-level | Satisfactory. Results are below average, but students make satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students have a positive attitude to the subject but need to develop better independent learning skills |

Most other courses in the sixth form were sampled. Teaching and learning were always at least satisfactory and often good. Students' attitudes to their work were always good. There was very good teaching in A-level sports studies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| How well students are guided and supported | The quality of help and guidance from the induction programme to the end of Year 13 is good. Staff always make themselves available when necessary and students are supported well. Information about further and higher education is good. However, more emphasis needs to be placed on the development of students' independent study skills. |
| Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form | The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The school has successfully developed the sixth form from nine students to 150 over a short period, and standards in Year 13 are now broadly average. However, development planning needs to be improved. Students' A-level results are scrutinised carefully to determine whether standards are as high as they should be. More could still be done, by setting targets for students and subjects in Year 12 and monitoring progress towards them frequently. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. |

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

| What students like about the sixth form | What they feel could be improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are good induction arrangements. • They value the quality of teaching. • They find that teachers are readily available to provide help, guidance and support. • There is good information about the next stage in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students would like more information about employment and positions in industry. • They would also like more opportunities for experiences abroad. |

| | |
|------------|--|
| education. | |
|------------|--|

- The sixth form is friendly and welcoming.

Inspectors agree with the students' positive views. They also agree with students' views about suggestions for further development.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

GCSE results are well above average and pupils achieve well.

1. The school prepares its pupils very well for GCSE. Results are well above average for all schools nationally, and above average for schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds. This represents good achievement for the school's pupils over five years because the intakes to Year 7 have only average levels of attainment. Parents are very happy with the school's standards, and justifiably so.
2. Results have improved more quickly than the national trend. In 2000, the proportion of pupils, 64 per cent of Year 11, with five results in the range A*-C was well above the national average, as was the proportion with five results in the range A*-G and one A*-G. The average pupils' point score was also well above the national average. Ninety nine per cent of pupils gained five GCSE results in the range A*-G so pupils with special educational needs did well too. These results represented good progress from the end of Year 9 for pupils of all ranges of attainment.
3. In 2001, results improved again compared with 2000. Sixty nine per cent of pupils gained five GCSE results in the range A*-C. Girls did better than boys, following the pattern of the previous year, and national trends. In individual subjects, all results were at least comparable with the national averages of the year before. Some results were particularly good. For example, those in German, mathematics, design and technology, physical education, religious education and dual award science were very high. Results in English, French and geography were well above the national average for 2000. GNVQ results in art, business, and information technology showed high percentages of higher grades.
4. Standards of work currently evident in Year 11 are well above average, and are reflected in the very good GCSE results of previous years. These standards represent good achievement since Year 9.

Teaching and learning are good in Years 7-11

5. The school provides its pupils in Years 7-11 with a good overall quality of teaching which promotes good rates of learning over five years. During the inspection, 85 per cent of lessons observed were at least good, and in around 25 per cent of cases very good. One excellent lesson was observed. All teaching was at least satisfactory. Parents are happy with the quality of teaching, and justifiably so.
6. Teaching and learning in Years 7 -11 have improved since the previous inspection. They are good in English, mathematics and science. Teaching in these three core subjects is of an almost invariably good quality and meets the needs of most pupils well. It makes suitably challenging demands on the pupils and enables them to gain ever more advanced knowledge and greater skills as they are taken relatively quickly through the levels of the National Curriculum. Usually there is plenty of opportunity for pupils to develop and consolidate their understanding.
7. There is some inspirational teaching in mathematics, which leads to rapid gains in knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on factors and multiples, there was a sense of expectation from the pupils. They were not disappointed, and were kept in rapt attention by the teacher's explanations, use of humour, questions, and involvement of pupils at the board to change the focus. The lesson was so successful because the teacher constantly consolidated the pupils' understanding of mathematics in an invigorating fashion, at the same time as challenging them all to think carefully. He constantly moved their boundaries of understanding to more difficult concepts in a relatively short space of time. All this was achieved with a topic that is often taught in schools in a rather drab fashion.
8. Teachers manage and organise their classes well so that there is an air of industry and concentration throughout the school during lesson time. Lesson planning is good and teachers split the work up into

interesting activities. Questioning of pupils is good because it establishes their level of understanding and allows teachers to decide whether to proceed or consolidate.

Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their work

9. The school promotes good attitudes amongst its pupils. These good attitudes strongly support learning and help to generate the calm atmosphere of industry that is plain to see on visiting the classrooms. Pupils work well, are motivated and organise their work, including homework, efficiently. Their attendance is good, they like school, and value the opportunities it offers. Around the school, pupils are friendly, helpful and present as developing into mature sensible young people.

10. Behaviour is very good in lessons and at breaks and lunchtime. Very few pupils have recently been excluded for inappropriate conduct, largely because the school's codes of conduct and expectations are understood well, valued and supported. Bullying is relatively rare, and pupils say that they feel completely safe, at ease and ready to learn. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils collaborate effectively in lessons, and show respect and concern for others. Sixth formers say that the friendliness of the school generally was a major reason for choosing to continue their education here.

The pastoral care programme is of good quality

11. The school provides a very good programme to support the welfare of its pupils in Years 7-11. Teachers know the pupils well and show concern for them when they need help or guidance. Procedures for the promotion of appropriate conduct are very good, and pupils are confident that the teachers would eliminate any bullying effectively. Sixth form students act as 'buddies' for the younger children to help them sort out any problems. The pupils enjoy school, feel safe, and are able to learn in a good atmosphere of industry in the classroom. The success of the school's welfare programme is reflected in the very small number of exclusions for inappropriate conduct.

12. Induction arrangements are good, and provide the incoming Year 7 with confidence in their new school. Heads of year and their teams of form tutors are very effective in monitoring welfare issues connected with their pupils. The success of the programme is rooted in a common approach from all members of staff, whether in lessons or on duty at breaks and lunchtimes. Teachers are respectful towards the pupils yet firm and approachable. Relationships are good, largely because pupils have good role models in the staff in terms of social skills. Pupils' attendance at school is monitored very well and maintained effectively at an above average level. There is a clear expectation that they will arrive at school and at lessons on time. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and managed well.

13. Form tutors know the pupils in their registration groups very well. They monitor their academic and personal development well as they move through the school, and teach them personal, social and health education. The annual reviews with form tutors are valued by the pupils, as is the mentoring provided for pupils in Year 11 in the run up to GCSE.

The provision of extra curricular activities is very good

14. The school provides far more for its pupils than the lessons on the weekly timetable. Parents and pupils are very happy with the large range of extra-curricular activities that the school offers. These include large-scale theatrical productions, many sports teams and activities, general interest clubs and visits. The provision is so good because most of the teachers are involved in the programme, either at lunchtime, after school, in the evenings, at weekends or in holiday time. The school has been awarded the Sportsmark Award and the Education Extra Merit Award for its commitment to after-school activities and its association with local clubs.

15. Parents and pupils thoroughly enjoy the school's two major theatrical productions each year. The events run over three nights and are always sold out. The annual Christmas and summer concerts are also sold out. The school PTA, in collaboration with the staff at the school, puts on a cabaret night and a fashion show using the pupils as models. The latter is so popular that it runs for three sessions. These activities provide a good opportunity for large numbers of pupils to perform in public.

16. There is a wide range of sporting activities for pupils of all ages. Some of these are purely recreational but others involve serious competition with other schools, often to a high level. For example, the Year 10 netball team reached the county finals last year, as did the Year 8 football team. The school athletics team normally wins the local area competition, and the cricket teams play to a good standard. These activities involve large numbers of pupils and provide them well with interests outside their normal lessons.

17. Each year, the incoming Year 7 pupils have a day trip to France, Year 8 pupils go for five days, and every two years there is a visit to Florida. Year 9 pupils benefit from an exchange visit to Germany each year. In addition, there are visits to museums, exhibitions and the theatre. These visits enable pupils to link their work well to the world outside school.

18. Apart from drama, music, sport and visits, there is a very good range of general interest clubs for pupils to join. Aerobics, science club, computer club, mathematics club, and charity work are examples. These clubs and those catering for music, drama and sport enable pupils to meet with others sharing the same interest, socialise, and meet with their teachers in a far less formal setting than the lessons in the classroom.

Leadership and management are very good

19. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. He delegates real responsibilities very well to the active and very effective senior management team. Middle management is good overall. The results of the good quality of leadership and management at all levels are reflected in the school's academic standards, the quality of teaching, and the ability of the school to overcome the potentially debilitating effects of the large fire in 1999 without compromising results at GCSE.

20. Since the previous inspection, standards at GCSE have risen at a quicker rate than the national trend. Pupils' GCSE results are well above average for the country as a whole, and much better than might be anticipated from an average intake. This success results from high expectations, challenging targets, good teaching and a good quality of management at all levels, ensuring consistency of provision. The weaknesses in modern languages at the time of the previous inspection have been thoroughly eliminated.

21. Teaching has improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection, and is now good overall. There are now no major weaknesses because the school's senior and middle managers have rigorously monitored its quality. This is reflected in the rising trend of results at GCSE for pupils of all levels of ability.

22. The school has given considerable attention to the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection. Action planning and the monitoring of progress towards targets have ensured that this work has strengthened the provision. Particular care has been taken to gain the maximum benefit from the rebuilding programme.

23. In 1998, the school introduced a sixth form for a group of nine students. Numbers of students have grown rapidly, as the quality of the provision has become evident to the pupils in Years 10 and 11 and their parents. There are now 150 students in the sixth form and numbers are still rising. Academic standards have risen quickly, and are now average in most A-level and AVCE subjects in Year 13. Standards are even higher in Year 12. The sixth form has been marketed well and managed carefully to enable students to follow the courses that they need as a basis for the next stage in their education. The school has ensured that only teachers, who are confident in their subjects to A-level and AVCE, work with classes at

this level. Accommodation and resources for sixth form work are good. However, improvements can still be made in the sixth form provision. The school has the capacity to be just as successful as it is at GCSE.

24. The school provides very good value for money, and is very popular amongst parents. They recognise that the quality of its work is unusually good. It is the good quality leadership and management, both financial and academic, that enables the school to function as successfully as it does. Governors, the headteacher, senior managers, heads of department, heads of year, and financial managers all work extremely well as a strong team, which constantly seeks success and improvement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 does not meet statutory requirements

25. The school's current arrangements for teaching religious education in Years 10 and 11 do not meet statutory requirements. Pupils choosing to study religious education for GCSE do receive their entitlement in accordance with requirements. However, although the other pupils receive some religious education as part of their GCSE history and geography courses, the amount of time devoted to it does not allow for proper coverage of the locally agreed syllabus.

Some aspects of teaching and learning can still be improved

26. Most lessons are characterised by a brisk pace and good rates of progress by pupils. However, in a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is only just satisfactory. Teachers often cover the same material as in better lessons but less is actually achieved. In most lessons, teachers energetically check pupils' understanding of previous work as they proceed with new concepts, and much is done throughout the lesson. Through good presentational skills, they explain new work well, question pupils thoroughly and set challenging but achievable time targets for written work. In some of the weaker but nevertheless satisfactory lessons, explanations of new work are competent rather than compelling, and the pace and quality of concentration slacken when pupils start to chatter.

27. The quality of teachers' marking varies from very good to unsatisfactory. In very many instances, teachers mark pupils' work regularly, frequently and thoroughly. Often, pupils are left in no doubt about the quality of their work and how to improve it. However, at the other end of the scale, work is not marked at all and pupils feel aggrieved that, having spent so much time on homework, on occasion it is not even acknowledged. This practice is prevalent, for example, in some mathematics classes, where neither pupils nor the teacher marks the work. The consequence of this is that mathematics exercise books can become nothing more than rough practice books, with imprecision, poor presentation and weak use of the subject's language going unchecked. Pupils' bad habits of this type are bound to affect the study of mathematics at a higher level. A similar situation exists in science, especially in Years 7-9. Although much of the marking in science is good, there are pupils whose diagrams and written work are not corrected at all. This particularly affects pupils with low levels of attainment. They need very frequent marking to support their development in science and literacy. Currently, some of them are not having the support that they need.

28. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in the school. The evidence for this is seen in the GCSE results each year. Very few pupils leave without some GCSE success. However, in Years 7-9, in science and mathematics particularly, some of the lower attaining pupils are not mastering topics at all. Mathematics exercise books show that pupils have often experienced a large number of topics without much success. For example, they are provided with opportunities to try subtraction, long multiplication and division of whole numbers but there does not appear to be a programme designed to ensure that they master these topics. In science, diagrams can be crudely drawn, and written work can be untidy and of poor quality. Where the teacher does not mark and correct the work, the pupils fail to learn quickly enough because they continue to produce poor quality responses.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. In order to improve further the quality of educational provision and standards achieved in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Ensure that the arrangements for teaching religious education in Years 10 and 11 meet statutory requirements.
 - Provide religious education in a form that meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- (2) Improve the quality of teaching and learning in a minority of classes where they are satisfactory overall rather than good.
 - Increase the pace of learning in some of the satisfactory lessons by improving the quality of presentation and eliminating chatter.
 - Provide the pupils with a consistently good quality of frequent marking.
 - Ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given proper opportunities to master basic skills.

Sixth form

- (1) Raise standards of attainment in A-level classes in English and mathematics.
 - Provide clear advice to students on how to improve their standards of written English.
 - Ensure that students enrolling for A-level mathematics are suitably qualified to have a realistic chance of success with the course.
 - Eliminate the poorly presented inaccurate work in mathematics through rigorous monitoring.
- (2) Increase the pace of some of the teaching and learning in A-level lessons.
 - Increase the current rate of working in art and design, business studies, English and psychology by setting suitable time targets in class.
- (3) Improve students' independent learning skills.
 - Set structured work for reading around topics and making notes before and after lessons.
 - Direct students to information and communications technology programmes to increase their knowledge and understanding of topics to be covered.
 - Ensure that mathematics students practise basic manipulations until they are confident and fluent.
 - Widen the use of sketchbooks in art to include much more material.
- (4) Set targets for individual students and subjects.
 - Using students' GCSE results as a baseline, set suitable AS and A-level targets for individuals and subjects at the beginning of Year 12.
- (5) Provide religious education in accordance with statutory requirements.
 - Ensure that all sixth formers receive religious education in accordance with the specifications of the locally agreed syllabus.
- (6) Start to use development plans for sixth form subjects.
 - Link all subject development plans together to identify targets for recruitment, standards, student retention, educational development and resources for the sixth form as a whole.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | | |
|--|--------------|----|
| Number of lessons observed | Years 7 – 11 | 46 |
| | Sixth form | 45 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | | 30 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Years 7 – 11 | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1 | 9 | 29 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2% | 20% | 63% | 15% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Sixth form | | | | | | | |
| Number | 0 | 2 | 26 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0% | 4% | 58% | 38% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number observed in either the main school or the sixth form is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for [enter Years [] – [] and/or the sixth form here] as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100 in both, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 1100 | 150 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | | |

| Special educational needs | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 24 | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 135 | 2 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 15 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 21 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 12 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data | 93.2 |
| National comparative data | 91.0 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.6 |
| National comparative data | 1.1 |

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

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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | 2000 | 91 | 124 | 215 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 60 | 79 | 69 |
| | Girls | 105 | 103 | 87 |
| | Total | 165 | 182 | 156 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above | School | 77 (66) | 86 (76) | 73 (68) |
| | National | 63 (63) | 65 (62) | 59 (55) |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 6 or above | School | 33 (23) | 57 (55) | 29 (28) |
| | National | 28 (28) | 42 (38) | 30 (23) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 58 | 76 | 75 |
| | Girls | 102 | 101 | 105 |
| | Total | 160 | 177 | 180 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above | School | 75 (68) | 83 (81) | 84 (80) |
| | National | 64 (64) | 66 (64) | 62 (60) |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 6 or above | School | 29 (35) | 58 (55) | 47 (32) |
| | National | 31 (31) | 39 (37) | 29 (28) |

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

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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | 2000 | 93 | 75 | 168 |

| GCSE results | | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|--|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified | Boys | 55 | 91 | 91 |
| | Girls | 51 | 75 | 75 |
| | Total | 106 | 166 | 166 |
| Percentage of pupils achieving | School | 64 (62) | 99 (98) | 99 (98) |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| The standard specified | National | 47.4 (46.6) | 90.6 (90.9) | 95.6 (95.8) |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|

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

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 45.5 (41.7) |
| | National | 38.4 (38.0) |

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

| Vocational qualifications | Number | % success rate |
|--|----------|----------------|
| Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and The percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied | School | 0 |
| | National | N/A |

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

| Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year Who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2000 | 3 | 6 |

| 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 | 10.7 | 14.5 | 13.2 (N/A) | N/A | N/A | N/A (N/A) |
| National | 17.7 | 18.6 | 18.2 (17.9) | 2.6 | 2.9 | 2.7 (2.8) |

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

| Vocational qualifications | Number | % success rate |
|---|----------|----------------|
| Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or Units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied | School | N/A |
| | National | N/A |

| International Baccalaureate | Number | % success rate |
|---|----------|----------------|
| Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the Percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied | School | N/A |
| | National | N/A |

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 4 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | 11 |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | 4 |
| White | 1141 |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | | |
| Black – African heritage | | |
| Black – other | | |
| Indian | | |
| Pakistani | | |
| Bangladeshi | | |
| Chinese | | |
| White | 14 | 1 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Any other minority ethnic group | |
|---------------------------------|--|

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Other minority ethnic groups | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 62.9 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 18.5 |

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 14.0 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 377 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 80.9 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 2 | N/A |
| Key Stage 3 | 24.6 |
| Key Stage 4 | 23.2 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000-2001 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 3 131 895 |
| Total expenditure | 3 018 075 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2598 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 124 423 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 238 243 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|------|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 14.0 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 18.5 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 1161 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 532 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 60.0 | 29.9 | 7.7 | 2.0 | 0.4 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 44.3 | 48.8 | 2.2 | 0.8 | 3.9 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 35.2 | 55.0 | 4.1 | 1.2 | 4.5 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 28.5 | 58.7 | 8.1 | 3.3 | 1.4 |
| The teaching is good. | 40.2 | 51.1 | 2.4 | 0.2 | 6.1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 20.3 | 48.8 | 18.9 | 5.1 | 6.9 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 49.4 | 36.8 | 7.7 | 3.3 | 2.8 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 50.2 | 49.4 | 0 | 0 | 0.4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 26.4 | 49.4 | 15.2 | 3.5 | 5.5 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 50.4 | 42.3 | 2.2 | 0.4 | 4.7 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 43.7 | 46.5 | 4.7 | 1.0 | 4.1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 41.9 | 44.5 | 3.7 | 0.8 | 9.1 |

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

30. In 1998, when the sixth form started with nine students, attainment in Year 12, measured on the basis of GCSE grades, was below average. As the sixth form became firmly established, the attainment on entry rose until it became broadly average in Year 12 in September 2001. The school insists on five C grade passes at GCSE as a basic entry qualification to the sixth form, and for some subjects higher grades are necessary.

31. All nine of the first intake of students continued with their studies through to the A-level examinations. That the overall quality of their results was below average was to be expected. All subjects produced below or well below average results from their small groups, apart from sociology where the results were above average.

32. In 2001, 35 students were entered for A-level. The completion rate for these courses was very good. Results improved considerably to the extent that the students' average point score was only just below the national average for the year before. Boys did better than girls. Results were strongest in art, drama, sports studies, and geography. Many students improved their individual point scores with good results in general studies, an examination which 29 of the 33 candidates passed.

33. Year 12 AS level results in 2001 showed a further improvement in standards. Girls did better than boys. Strong results were obtained in biology, drama, history, geography, sports studies, music, and business studies. There were relatively few failures, apart from the 14 students who did not pass in mathematics. These Year 12 students have now moved into Year 13, where standards in class have risen to average overall. Achievement is satisfactory overall as students are reaching the standards that would be expected from their GCSE results.

34. In the nine focus courses in the inspection, standards are above average in A-level geography, just above average in AVCE information and communications technology, and broadly average in the A-level courses in art, business studies, music, psychology, and biology. Standards are below average in English and mathematics. Overall, the standards being achieved adequately equip students to move into further or higher education.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

35. Personal development and attitudes to the school are good. Students are right to speak positively about their school and the sixth form. They value their experiences in school and appreciate the advice and guidance that they receive from their tutors. Most students are well motivated but a few make only nominal efforts, particularly where they find that they have selected an inappropriate course. Many students use their time well, for example in private study, and take advantage of the choice of extra curricular facilities that the school provides when their commitment to academic study permits. However, many students need to develop further skills in the structured study of their chosen subjects outside the classroom. Students have appropriate regard for their tutors and the younger pupils of the school. Their behaviour in lessons and about the school is almost always very good. Relationships between students are particularly good and are characterised by a sense of community, co-operation, mutual support and respect for each other's views and contributions.

36. By the time they leave the sixth form, students reach a good level of maturity. Through the programme for personal, social and health education, careers advice, the sixth form council, involvement in enrichment activities and particularly community service, they learn to manage themselves and become responsible young citizens. They participate in a Young Enterprise scheme, support charities, produce and present musical and dramatic performances and assist teachers in the lower school or primary schools.

Students run a bank for the whole school and, through a buddy scheme, provide a counselling service mainly for younger pupils who need confidential guidance or support. However, their confidence to make decisions about their future and their awareness of the wider community need further development; they have too few opportunities to learn at first hand about opportunities in the world of work and to experience personally the lifestyles of other countries.

37. Attendance is satisfactory. Students attend school for approximately 80 per cent of the available time and some further nine per cent is accounted for by authorised absence for study at home.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

38. Teaching was evaluated during the inspection from a combination of lesson observation and scrutiny of students' previously completed work. Teaching is satisfactory with good features. Consequently, students' learning is satisfactory overall but in some subjects it is good. Learning is at least satisfactory in all of the nine focus courses inspected, and good in information and communications technology (ICT) and geography.

39. In all of the courses inspected, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching. They make their requests of students clearly and explain topics at a level that they can understand. Students are almost invariably attentive and consequently increase their knowledge and understanding of the topics being discussed. In business education, the fact that the teacher is an external examiner provides the students with a detailed insight into the requirements of the A-level examination. Preparation of lessons is effective in all courses and class management is good, enabling students to learn in a good working atmosphere.

40. In ICT, the teacher questions the students thoroughly to ensure that they understand the work, and provides them with good advice on how to extend and develop their studies outside the classroom. This they do successfully in this subject. However, in AS and A-level English, art, and business studies students' independent learning skills are not sufficiently developed. As a consequence, in art for example, students' sketchbooks do not contain sufficient practice or developmental material. In other subjects, some students do not spend enough time reading around topics, making notes and fully familiarising themselves with their work.

41. ICT is insufficiently used in teaching in the sixth form, particularly in music, biology and business studies. Consequently, students are not utilising its potential for independent research and study. This applies particularly to business studies, where students will need to operate competently in an ICT-rich environment in the next phase of education or the world of work. The teaching of the key skill of communication is satisfactory overall, but there is good practice in geography. The teaching of numerical skills is satisfactory overall. However, more attention needs to be given to the development of mental agility in algebra and trigonometry to enable students of A-level mathematics and physics to work more quickly.

42. Teaching in geography is good. It is characterised by high expectations of the students, very good class management, clear objectives, and a good quality of marking related closely to examination requirements. However, in mathematics, marking is a weakness because there is far too much careless and inaccurate work that is going unchecked. Hence, although students are learning new techniques, their work often lacks adequate standards of presentation and precision. Marking needs to be related more to A-level grades in music and needs to indicate how to improve standards of written work in English.

43. Most of the teaching in the sixth form is paced correctly for the students in the class. However, in English, art, business studies and psychology there is sometimes a tendency to allow students to work at a rather leisurely pace, with the result that the acquisition of skills and understanding can be quite slow.

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

44. The school provides a good range of AS and A-level courses together with vocational courses leading to GNVQ and AVCE qualifications. Good forward planning has resulted in a relatively smooth expansion of sixth form provision since its modest inception in 1998 with 9 students, to its current position where around 150 students are following advanced academic and vocational courses. The school's sensitive understanding of, and response to, local demand is confirmed in this rapid increase in the numbers of students who choose to continue their studies at Friesland after they reach the end of their compulsory schooling. Nevertheless, some problems have occurred. For example, some students were allowed to follow courses in mathematics for which they were not well suited and they consequently failed to gain pass grades in the AS examination. These problems have now been resolved and students are now better advised about subject choice. Subject teachers have managed the introduction of the specifications for new courses effectively. In addition to their other courses, students are provided with the opportunity to prepare for A-level general studies. There is satisfactory provision for the development of key skills.

45. The provision for students' personal development is good. Students benefit from a good programme for personal, social and health education, which includes dealing with themes relevant to young adults, such as careers, driving awareness, living away from home, and alcohol abuse. There is a reasonable balance between taught lessons and private study, and the time spent by individual students in the resource centre is monitored. Many students make good use of the facilities for private study.

46. The school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education or collective worship in the sixth form. Nevertheless some assemblies and experiences provided in form time do provide well for students' spiritual development together with their moral and social development. Some students, with the support of their teachers, provide thought-provoking and interesting assemblies for younger pupils in the school.

47. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The vast majority of students participate in some form of community service, for example by participating in reading programmes in local primary schools. Some represent the interests of their fellow students and pupils' as members of the school council and are responsible for organising their own social functions. Many are involved in fund-raising for a range of charitable causes. One of these recently concerned the improvement of their own area, which suffered as a result of fire damage. There is no timetabled provision for recreational sport but good numbers of students participate in team games in competition against other schools. Others use the school gymnasium and Friesland Sports Centre for more recreational activities such as badminton. Art makes a very good contribution to cultural development through visits to galleries, and there are good opportunities to take part in school productions and musical performances. However, more could be done to provide students with first hand information about the world of work and opportunities for foreign travel.

48. The activities of the business studies department provide good links with employers and the business community. Students visit a variety of local businesses and run the school bank. Links with local universities are productive and expanding. Students and academic staff provide information and guidance for sixth formers on course choice and other aspects of their future involvement in higher education. Initiatives include raising awareness of pupils in Year 9 to future participation in higher education. Careers advice is also provided regularly through the local careers advisory service and is valued by students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

49. Assessment is regular, accurate and informative. Students value it because it usually informs them how well they are doing and how to improve. Teachers maintain records of the progress students make on their courses through regular and accurate marking that usually relates closely to examination standards. However, as yet there is no system to monitor the quality of marking across all subjects. The result is that

marking is neither eliminating all of the careless and inaccurate work in mathematics, nor relating closely enough to A-level grades in music or English.

50. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. The new 'scanning' procedure, devised to monitor and support students' academic progress, is good. It collates useful information on effort and attendance. Its impact on improving standards, however, is limited because it uses general rather than subject specific targets. These general targets are not included until two terms of the AS course in Year 12 have elapsed, and the rigour of using subject specific targets is not yet in place. For example, students GCSE grades are not used to predict AS and A-level grades. Where assessment identifies a cause for concern, support networks are established to help individual students. These are usually effective. The school makes the results of the 'scanning' available to students and their parents. Annual written reports in all subjects are detailed and very informative.

51. The use of assessment to change the curriculum in the best interests of the students is satisfactory. Examination courses have been changed, course structure has been altered to improve curricular planning and topics have been revised where learning has been insecure.

Advice, support and guidance

52. The school's provision for students' welfare, personal support and guidance is good, and parents and students are pleased with it.

53. The procedures for health, safety and child-protection are very effective. The school provides very good pastoral care for students, and relationships between adults and students are friendly, respectful and constructive. Students are trusted to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Attendance is closely monitored, and students are effectively encouraged to come to school regularly.

54. Students are right to value highly the very accessible help, guidance and support they receive from their tutors in all aspects of their sixth form life. The school provides students with very good information, advice and guidance about subject choices, courses in the sixth form and beyond, careers education and preparation for higher education from Year 9 onwards and throughout the sixth form. A well-prepared prospectus and meetings and interviews that include careers advisors and parents inform students very well and help them to make decisions about their future studies. Taster days and opportunities to question existing sixth formers are arranged for them. Consequently, the vast majority of students enrol for courses that are suitable for their studies after GCSE. However, the school has not been rigorous enough in ensuring that students enrolling for AS and A-level mathematics have suitable levels of knowledge and understanding to be successful. A one and a half day's induction course provides training in the application of key skills, study skills and time management. This training is appropriate at the time but is not reinforced often enough afterwards to consolidate and develop further students' competence in independent learning.

55. Students are very well informed about and prepared for higher education. Visits to and from relevant institutions are most effective. Under the auspices of a compact scheme, representatives from universities and UCAS provide very helpful guidance to students, for example about applications for university places. Students have almost unlimited opportunities to consult with careers officers but have insufficient opportunities for direct contact with employers in order to develop first hand awareness of the world of work in industry and public services.

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

56. Parents are pleased with the quality of education in the sixth form. Inspectors agree with their positive views because standards are rising and attainment levels are now broadly average compared to the country as a whole.

57. Students value the quality of the teaching and the help and guidance offered by tutors. They enjoy the friendliness of the sixth form and are appreciative of the amount of time their tutors are prepared to give

them outside lessons. They are grateful for the sixth form induction programme, which they found to be informative and useful. They also value the information on higher education, and guidance and preparation for the next stage in their education. Inspectors agree with these positive views but also agree with the students that there should be more information from employers about positions in industry and more opportunities for experiences abroad.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

58. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. In 1998, nine students were recruited for the first A-level courses to be offered at the school. Three years later, there is now a thriving community of 150 students. The growing numbers of pupils staying on after GCSE bear testimony to the regard in which the sixth form is held. The prospectus is clear and of very good quality. The aims and objectives of the sixth form are clear. Induction procedures for new students are very good and very few leave their courses before completing the full two years. At subject level, management is good overall. Standards in subjects are rising and students are working at levels that would be expected from their GCSE results. However, improvements can still be made, especially in terms of target setting for individual students and subjects.

59. The school checks its sixth form examination results carefully each year to determine whether the students have reached their potential. Teaching is regularly checked for quality. Where underachievement occurs, the reason for it is sought and the cause is eliminated efficiently. An example of this was the necessary tightening of entry qualifications for A-level mathematics, and the reorganisation of the course to maximise students' opportunity.

60. Governors set challenging targets for A-level results. These sought to achieve above average point scores in 2001 from a below average intake. Although this level of achievement has been evident in Year 11 for some time, it has not yet materialised in the sixth form. Sixth form managers currently operate a good assessment system which draws information from all subjects and which then enables them to identify any perceived underachievement and rectify it. This system would be more effective if it were to begin with the students' GCSE results as a starting point for the setting of targets in terms of A-level grades for individuals and subjects.

61. Development planning, in terms of increasing the size of the sixth form to 200 students by 2002, is good, but the subjects which make up the sixth form curriculum do not have their own development plans linking with the overall school plan. This is a weakness.

62. The school does not meet statutory requirements for a sixth form in respect of the provision of religious education and collective worship.

Resources

63. Financial planning and control are very good. The principles of best value are very well applied. The school operates with low unit costs so the establishment of the sixth form has had to be planned with precision. The sixth form currently takes slightly more out of the school budget than it draws in through funding for its students. This is to be expected in the developmental phase. The effects are felt particularly in Years 10 and 11 where classes are often quite large but nevertheless successful. The new courses have been thoroughly researched, marketed and put into operation with confidence. Good planning has ensured that there is a very good match between expertise of the teachers and the requirements of the subjects being offered at AS and A-level and AVCE. Courses have been provided with good accommodation and good resources for learning, particularly so in biology, ICT and mathematics.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2000, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

GCE AS level courses - examination in 2000

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| General Studies | 1 | 100 | 72 | 0 | 19 | 1.0 | 1.9 |

GCE A level courses - examination in 2000

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Art and Design | 1 | 100 | 95 | 0 | 45 | 2.0 | 6.6 |
| Biology | 3 | 67 | 88 | 0 | 33 | 2.7 | 5.3 |
| Chemistry | 2 | 50 | 90 | 0 | 42 | 3.0 | 5.9 |
| Communication Studies | 1 | 0 | 94 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 5.4 |
| English Literature | 5 | 80 | 96 | 20 | 36 | 3.2 | 5.9 |
| General Studies | 8 | 87 | 85 | 26 | 28 | 4.3 | 4.9 |
| Geography | 2 | 100 | 93 | 0 | 28 | 3.0 | 5.7 |
| German | 1 | 100 | 93 | 0 | 41 | 6.0 | 5.9 |
| History | 2 | 0 | 89 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 5.4 |
| Mathematics | 2 | 50 | 90 | 0 | 35 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| Sociology | 6 | 100 | 88 | 50 | 37 | 6.3 | 5.5 |
| Sports/PE Studies | 1 | 0 | 91 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 5.0 |

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

64. The focus was on mathematics and biology at AS and A-level, but physics and chemistry were also sampled. In physics, two lessons were observed. Teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. There were no physics A-level candidates in the Year 2000. The five candidates in 2001 all passed with grades in the range A-D. In chemistry, two good lessons were observed. Two candidates were entered for A-level in 2000. One gained grade C but the other failed. In 2001, all four candidates passed in the range B-E.

Mathematics

65. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

The best work is done in statistics.

The teachers have good subject knowledge.

Students enjoy the subject.

Areas for improvement

Examination results need to be improved.

Many students have had an inadequate preparation for entry to A-level courses.

Some of the written work in pure mathematics is careless and inaccurate.

The marking of written work needs to be improved.

66. The examination results have been unsatisfactory over each of the two years 2000 and 2001. In 2000, only two candidates took mathematics at A-level and one of them passed with grade E. In 2001, there were 12 candidates: seven of them passed the A-level examination with a range of grades from A to E, but five failed. Analysis of the situation shows that a number of students were accepted onto courses that were too difficult for them. On the basis of the students' GCSE performance, these results would have been predicted. In 2001, 19 Year 12 students took AS level in mathematics, and 14 of them failed the examination. This was because, as the school recognises and the students themselves say, the great majority of them were not ready for the second pure mathematics examination.

67. Standards in Year 12 are below average. In relation to the students' attainment at GCSE on entry to the course, their achievement is, however, satisfactory and is much as would be predicted. Some of these students did not study for the higher tier GCSE examination in Years 10 and 11, which is a serious disadvantage. Weaknesses in basic algebra and graphical methods are apparent in the students' work and in lessons; a good deal of the first half of the term has been spent on elementary foundation work, such as the equations of straight lines.

68. Standards in Year 13 are also below average but show that the students are making satisfactory overall progress. Their predicted A-level grades are in the range B-E. Few of these students achieved better than grade B at GCSE mathematics and, in relation to that, their achievement is satisfactory. Standards are higher than the recent A-level results indicate and nearly all are expected to pass. This is because the teachers are becoming more confident in their teaching at this level and in their ability to assess the students' progress. Standards are below average in statistics but better than in pure mathematics and mechanics. With good teaching, students have made good progress in their understanding of key topics in statistics, such as sampling and significance testing. However, their ability to apply the pure mathematics that they know, especially elementary trigonometry, in their work in mechanics, shows weaknesses, for example, in elementary resolution of forces.

69. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory and meets the needs of most of the students reasonably well. In lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was more often good than satisfactory and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. As a result of the teachers' gains in experience at teaching advanced mathematics, the students are now making satisfactory progress. The strengths of the teaching are the teachers' good knowledge of the subject, careful pacing of the work to ensure that the students can keep abreast of it, and

their good knowledge of the individual students. There are some weaknesses in the marking of students' written work, some of which is careless and shows obvious errors that have not been corrected.

70. The students enjoy the subject and mostly have good attitudes. Their learning is often good in lessons but is satisfactory overall. Although they are interested in their work and concentrate on it when they can cope with it, there are occasions when they lose concentration and are inclined to chatter when they meet difficulties.

71. A wide range of courses is provided, covering pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics, which allows for a degree of specialism. Courses are well organised and the advanced work is shared suitably amongst the teachers. The management of the subject is improving and is now satisfactory: the school is learning from its early mistakes. However, a fresh look is needed to ensure that only students who can cope with the demands of advanced courses are accepted for study. Assessment is a good feature and students are aware of their own progress.

Biology

72. Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **satisfactory**

Strengths

Standards are improving.

The teaching is satisfactory with many good features.

Resources for learning are very good.

Areas for improvement

There is insufficient use of target setting.

Information and communications technology is insufficiently used.

There is insufficient time allocated for teachers to co-ordinate their work.

73. In 2000 there were three A-level candidates. Two students gained grade D but the other failed. In 2001, two candidates again gained grade D and one failed. These results are well below average. The 2001 AS level results were better. The four candidates' results were in the range B-D. These students have continued into Year 13 to study for the full A-level qualification.

74. Standards in Year 13 are average and improving. Achievement is satisfactory. Students are adept at dissection work, using instruments with care and paying heed to health and safety issues. They can isolate various parts of a mammalian eye and correctly describe their functions. They can discuss the role of the liver and explain its importance in the human body. In Year 12, students are building on work covered at GCSE and show good knowledge and understanding of basic biological concepts such as cell structure. They can describe the functions of various organelles within cells, such as mitochondria and ribosomes. In one lesson, several students gave competent presentations on different methods of fixation of nitrogen by plants and animals, giving clear descriptions of the processes involved.

75. Teaching is satisfactory with several good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of biology so they are able to give clear explanations of facts. Learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Lessons are well planned with aims clearly stated at the outset so students know what they are going to learn. Students are encouraged to share ideas and help each other; this is facilitated by their small group sizes. However, insufficient use is made of information and communications technology (ICT) for research work and experiments. The written work carried out by students is a good preparation for A-level examinations. It consists of note-taking, structured questions, essay writing, past examination questions and experimental write-ups. The marking of students' work is thorough and appropriately annotated giving clear guidance to them on areas for improvement. Assessment takes place on a regular basis through end of unit tests and practice examination papers, enabling students to check their levels of understanding. However, insufficient use is made of target setting. Students are encouraged to develop

independent learning skills through personal research work, which often forms a basis for their homework. The teachers take particular care to help two students with special educational needs and as a result these students make good progress.

76. Students' learning is satisfactory overall and often good, partly because they are so well motivated, especially in Year 13. They respond well to question and answer sessions and class discussions. They work co-operatively together, help each other and share ideas in a mature and sensible way. Their practical skills are well developed and they handle apparatus and chemicals with care and respect. Their notes are well organised and their extended writing shows a depth and clarity of thought. Diagrams are accurately drawn and neatly presented.

77. Management is satisfactory. Although there is no head of biology, the department is competently run by two subject teachers, who have a clear focus on direction and a commitment to improving examination results. However, there is no time allocated for them to meet together to discuss the co-ordination of their work. The subject has very good resources and good technical support.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

78. There was no focus subject in this curriculum area, but A-level design and technology was sampled. This course is in its first year, and students are only a little way into their studies. Two lessons were seen, and teaching and learning were satisfactory in both. Strengths of the teaching include the good subject knowledge of the teachers, good teacher-student relationships and good individual advice. These were balanced by a lack of pace, which was steady, rather than brisk. In one of the lessons, students were designing toys for pupils with special educational needs; they had visited the pupils in their school, and were involving them in testing their ideas. This gave the work a real sense of purpose, and made a good contribution to students' social and moral development.

BUSINESS

79. The focus was on AS and A-level in business studies, but the AVCE and the GNVQ Intermediate courses were also sampled. In these courses, standards are broadly average. In two out of three lessons seen, teaching was good. Students in the AVCE and GNVQ Intermediate are making satisfactory progress and are developing their key skills effectively.

Business Studies AS and A-level

80. Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

The vocational teachers are well qualified.
Students' attitudes to the subject are good.
There is good monitoring of students' performance.
There are good up to date resources.

Areas for improvement

Teaching and learning methods should include more student centred approaches.
Students' study and research skills need to be developed further.
There is insufficient use of ICT.
There should be more challenge to students to increase their work rate.

81. There were no students entered for business studies A-level in 2000. A-level results in 2001 were below expectations from students' GCSE results. Boys did much better than girls. In 2001, AS level results were as expected because student selection methods had improved over the previous year.

Consequently, those students, now in Year 13, are achieving satisfactory grades and show signs of further improvement.

82. Standards in Year 13 are average, and achievement is satisfactory. Students are able to understand business concepts and can use appropriate vocabulary in their oral responses. They can work co-operatively to solve problems. For example, they are able to work collaboratively to write effective job descriptions from good topical advertisements. They can present their work to the rest of the class and adopt a mature attitude to formal presentation. Students' folders show that they are able to use graphs and tables of figures, drawing suitable conclusions from them. However, they are not always challenged sufficiently, tasks are not always complex enough, and they need to be required to work more independently. Students are not yet required to use enough information and communications technology (ICT), and their rate of working in both class work and homework could be increased.

83. Students in Year 12 are making satisfactory progress. Higher ability students produce good quality written work. Students have formed a sound understanding of basic concepts and literacy standards are good, but there is very little use of ICT for research or for written work. They are very co-operative in class and are good at absorbing points given to them by the teacher, but have not moved on yet to exploring issues and expanding their ideas further in their own time.

84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and at times good. Teachers have up to date business knowledge and are experienced in sixth form teaching. They also benefit from acting as examiners for A-level as this enables them to interpret the new specifications well. This helps students considerably because teachers are clear about course requirements. Teachers are always well prepared and use good resources, such as relevant case studies. Teaching methods are satisfactory, but would be improved by challenging the students to make more oral response and to increase their rate of working and output. Assessment is effective. The students value the prediction of grades and the monitoring of their progress towards them.

85. Students reveal good attitudes to the subject, are co-operative and feel they have made a good choice. Few leave the course and almost all progress from AS to A-level, as they wish to pursue the subject in their careers. They indicate satisfaction with the way they are taught and assessed. They are also positive about the sixth form, citing its social and educational benefits and excellent facilities.

86. The course makes a good contribution to the students' key skills. They make frequent oral presentations and written work is good, although it could include more extended writing. They are able to use statistics, draw graphs, interpret balance sheets and work out share values, but are not yet using ICT as a tool to assist them in presenting data and in research. The subject makes a good contribution to their awareness of social and moral issues such as the ethics of advertising and in the activities of global businesses.

87. Management of the subject is satisfactory. It is well organised, well resourced and well staffed, with performance management in place. Standards are rising but there is still room for improvement in terms of the use of ICT, student work rates and the development of independent learning skills. There is no subject development plan linking improvements to the raising of standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

88. The school provides courses at AS VCE and AVCE in information and communication technology. These courses are evaluated in detail below.

Information and Communication Technology AS VCE and AVCE

89. Overall, the quality of provision for information and communications technology is **good**.

Strengths

Standards in systems analysis are good.
The teachers have good subject expertise.
Facilities for studying the subject are very good.
Students are enthusiastic and they have the ability to learn independently.
The courses are growing in popularity.

Areas for improvement

The written work in a small minority of folders is untidy and careless

90. This is a demanding subject. It is becoming increasingly popular, especially amongst those who have experienced GNVQ courses in Years 10 and 11, which have provided them with a good foundation for a similar style of working in the sixth form. The students said that the courses linked particularly well with business studies and ICT vocational courses in Years 10 and 11, and that they enjoyed their assignment work and were confident of success.

91. There were no examination entries before 2001, when a number of students took and passed AS VCE. A 'value-added' analysis of the results shows that students achieved results which would have been predicted for them on the basis of their earlier attainment at GCSE. There was very little underachievement and some students did well.

92. Year 12 and Year 13 students often study the same course modules, in the same class. Current overall standards are a little above average in both Years 12 and 13 and students achieve well overall. Because the teachers are experienced and know their subject and how to teach it well, students make good progress in lessons, and nearly all are expected to pass their examinations. In the lessons seen, topics were mostly related to systems analysis; for example, students learn how management information systems benefit organisations. This appears to be a strong feature of the students' work: the students enjoy it and it is particularly well taught. In Year 12 and Year 13 classes, students were learning to analyse, at different levels, complex commercial organisations, such as hotels.

93. Folders of work and discussions with students also showed that they have a sound overall knowledge of computer hardware and construction, and of software applications. They produced good work designing a hardware system for a sole trader. Students' work on spreadsheet design, in relation to a practical assignment, was good. Students' written work shows a sound understanding of the topics covered in both Year 12 and Year 13. Some work is very promising: it is excellent in quality and is exceptionally well presented and well written. However, some other work seen in folders is untidy and careless.

94. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers with extensive experience of teaching examination classes in ICT teach all of the lessons. Their knowledge of the subject specifications is good and they respond with confidence and authority to students' questions. Teachers also use questions skilfully to guide the students' learning and ensure that they are actively involved in whole-class lessons, for example, by asking them to lead the class from the white-board. This practice keeps the students alert and involved and sets them up well for their own private study. Students become independent learners and learn to solve their own problems, both when working individually at their workstations and in their out-of-class research. However, as the students said themselves, they can get advice from a teacher very quickly when they need it.

95. The subject is very well organised and managed and some of the course material, produced by teachers for Year 12 students is particularly useful. The range of courses provides good opportunities for students to specialise as appropriate for their needs and aspirations.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

96. The school provides AS and A-level courses in sports studies. In 2001, five students were entered for A-level, all gaining grades B and C. The nine students who took AS level all gained grades in the range B to D. These results, taken as whole, are better than might be expected from the students' results at GCSE. One Year 13 lesson was sampled during the inspection. The teaching was very good.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

97. The school does not provide courses in this curriculum area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

98. The focus was on AS and A-level art and music but drama was also sampled. In drama, A-level results in 2001 showed good progression from students' GCSE results. A lesson and a rehearsal for the school production were observed. Teaching in drama was good and successfully used a variety of strategies to exemplify and analyse the theories and techniques used in the works of Brecht. Emphasis on the improvise-rehearse-perform process allowed students to fully explore ideas and gain secure understanding.

Music AS and A-level

99. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

The subject is well led and has mainly adequate resources.

The growing appeal of the subject has increased the number of students opting for the course.

The department places suitable emphasis on key terms and technical language.

Areas for improvement

Computers are little used, especially in relation to composition.

Students do not always have clear targets for improvement or a secure knowledge of their attainment in relation to A-level requirements.

The development of extended critical analysis is limited.

There are too few opportunities for solo public performance within the context of school.

100. AS and A-level music results in 2001 were broadly in line with expectation and represent satisfactory progress in relation to candidates' attainment in GCSE. However, the small number of A-Level candidates lessens the viability of statistical comparisons.

101. Standards in Year 13 are average overall and represent satisfactory achievement. Standards in performance and composition are often above average. Compositions display the variety and developmental aspects that often lead to higher grades at examination. Performance standards are mainly secure with students performing suitable music with some fluency. Standards are more variable in appraisal work and in aspects of extended writing. In comparison with performing and composing, standards in aural analysis and appraisal are less good, with a lack of discursive argument applied to the significant aspects of musical texts. Relative standards are similar in Year 12 but with some reluctance amongst students to develop argument and respond fully to questioning. Instrumental skills are more variable in Year 12, but in both years they are used well in supporting composition.

102. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but with significant elements of good practice. Work is usually well matched to students' abilities. Teaching embodies good preparation, suitable teaching styles, interesting work, satisfactory pace, and thorough organisation. Students are helped to consolidate their vocabulary; teachers routinely re-enforce technical terms and language. This helps to improve students'

ability to apply appropriate language to the analysis of music. Teaching skilfully promotes composition using students' skills and interests as a starting point. Structure and developmental aspects in composition are emphasised. Teachers make sure that students have opportunities to develop most necessary musical skills. However, computer work is underused and this means that some student potential, particularly in the area of computer-generated composition, is left untapped. Teaching stresses the need to develop analytical thinking, though students sometimes find such skills hard to develop and tend to focus on the factual elements in learning. Marking of students' work has a propensity to be positive; whilst this helps to encourage students it occasionally gives them an overoptimistic personal view of their standards. The department has already noted analytical work as an area for development.

103. Visiting instrumental teachers make a valued contribution to the post-16 curriculum and their work is carefully managed and integrated into the work of the department. Students have the opportunity to take grade examinations on a variety of instruments and have good record of success.

104. Students' attitudes in music lessons are diligent. They respond well to challenging work. Just occasionally their response to questioning is a little diffident and they are reluctant to give more than a word or two in answer. Their response to the performance and compositional elements of the course is often more enthusiastic, with appropriate levels of interest, endeavour and commitment. Overall sixth-form students have a solid approach to learning and are hard working.

105. The department is managed well and organisation is good. There is suitable awareness of students' potential but insufficient use is made of target setting. The long-term monitoring, assessing and recording of students' work are satisfactory but students are not always fully aware of what areas they need to develop in order to attain the grades to which they aspire. The overall use of assessment is not used sufficiently to inform teaching. The department has good instrumental stocks but poor information technology resources. There is a variety of extra-curricular activity in music but only modest involvement amongst sixth-form music students. Opportunities for students to take part in public solo performances promoted by the school are limited.

Art and Design - AS and A-Level

106. Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

Standards are improving.

In 2001, results at A-level were good.

Students' attitudes in class are good.

Areas for improvement

There is a lack of pace in some lessons.

Students' research skills are weak.

Large-scale painting lacks confidence and a sense of excitement.

107. One student entered for A-level in 2000, and gained a grade E. The A-level results in 2001 showed a marked improvement on this, and students did better than might have been expected from their GCSE grades. Three of the seven students gained A or B grades and the remainder were C and D. In the 2001 AS level examination, students did not do as well as expected because there was some poor attendance coupled with weak research skills.

108. Standards are currently average in Year 13 and achievement is satisfactory. Students show a good grasp of three-dimensional work, and they produce some interesting constructions in card, showing vigorous surface decoration. They also draw with confidence from observation of natural forms and everyday objects, for example, pieces of fruit and tree bark. However, their research skills are weak, and their sketchbooks do not contain enough work. In addition, their large-scale painting lacks confidence and excitement.

109. In Year 12, standards are above average, and although students are only a little way into their course, they show a good level of engagement with the materials and an adventurous approach to developing ideas. Their work in textiles is strong, and they produce some interesting silk paintings, showing a sensitive use of line and colour. They use a wide range of materials with confidence and enjoyment. Lower attaining students on the AS level course are doing better than expected, and their ideas for paintings are ambitious.

110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A strong component of the teaching is the provision of a good range of materials that enables students to experiment with several processes. This results in high levels of interest, and was evident in a Year 12 lesson, where students could choose to paint in oils and acrylics, draw in pencil and coloured pencil, or make large constructions in card. The high level of personal interest in the work and good application led to good development of skills. Other strengths of the teaching are the good teacher student relationships, and the good quality of advice, which is given on an individual basis. Students know how they are doing in relation to the requirements of A-level examinations. However, in some of the lessons there is a lack of pace, and students work without a sense of urgency. In these situations, students develop their skills rather slowly and learning is only satisfactory.

111. Leadership and management are good. Results showed a marked improvement in 2001 at A-level, and students in the current Year 12 show greater confidence and engagement with materials. Students' views of the subject are positive. They now have better facilities for independent work, and are beginning to make use of the room provided by putting up displays and organising their workspaces. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' cultural development, with a strong programme of gallery visits, work with artists in residence, and the establishment of classes in life drawing and in information and communications technology in local colleges. These improvements have not yet had time to have a significant impact on A and AS level results.

HUMANITIES

112. Within this cluster of subjects, the inspection concentrated on geography and psychology. Teaching was sampled in history and sociology.

113. In history, the results in 2001 were much improved on those in 2000 when both students failed the examination. All eight students passed the A-level examination with grades in the range C to E. The results at AS level were even better; four students passed with grades A or B. Teaching was good in the two lessons observed with a focus on examination technique and the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of sources. These enabled the students to examine the failure of democracy and rise of Nazism in Germany.

114. Sociology was the most successful A-level subject in 2000. The results were above average; all six students passed with three achieving grades A or B. In 2001, the results at AS and A-level were as expected from students' GCSE results; most of them passed. Generally, the girls have obtained the higher grades. Teaching was good in both lessons seen. One began with a brisk and effective consolidation session. This enabled students to improve their knowledge and understanding of the influence of religion on society in the seventeenth century. Their learning quickly developed into a detailed consideration of how Calvinist attitudes could encourage the growth of capitalism.

Geography

115. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

Results are improving.

Standards are above average and the students achieve well.

Teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

There is insufficient use of target grades to monitor students' progress.

More use of fieldwork would widen students' learning experiences.

There is currently no subject development plan.

116. Geography is one of the most successful subjects in the sixth form. Results have improved considerably. In 2000, both students passed the A-level examination with low grades. In 2001, six boys took the A-level examination. All of them passed and two obtained B grades. At AS level all but one of the 13 students passed and eight achieved A or B grades. Boys and girls did equally well. At AS and A-level these results were higher than expected in relation to students' attainment at the start of the course. The course completion rates have been high.

117. The observation of students in lessons and an analysis of samples of their work confirm that standards in Year 13 are above average. In relation to their average levels of GCSE attainment these standards represent good achievement. In a case study on urbanization, higher attaining students were able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of this process in Mexico City. They analysed its social, economic, political and environmental effects. Lower attaining students used the nearest neighbour analysis to describe settlement patterns and apply statistical techniques to consider the orientation of cirques in Snowdonia with a basic understanding.

118. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into the AS course, and standards overall are already above average. In relation to their average levels of GCSE attainment these standards represent good achievement. Students are developing a detailed knowledge and understanding of energy budgets as part of work on weather and climate. Lower attaining students describe weather symbols on a synoptic chart, but do not interpret the weather pattern in relation to warm and cold fronts across the British Isles. Higher attaining students use technical language very competently when explaining the movement of water in drainage basins and its effect on river discharge.

119. Overall, teaching is good, and as a result, the students learn well. During the inspection, teaching was very good in one lesson and good in the rest. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and plan lessons well to structure students' learning. They have high expectations and challenge students appropriately. Marking judges quality accurately and informs students how to improve their work. Where teaching was very good, resources of many varieties were used to develop students' map-reading and sketch map skills. An example was the interpretation of an ordnance survey map of Langdale at the same time as students were developing their learning on glaciation in a detailed case study. Teaching has a clear focus on examination technique. Past questions are used well for homework to consolidate students' learning and frequently their work is compared with model answers. These not only secure their examination technique but also develop the learning of the topics covered. Very good class management and relationships ensure that the students' learning is good. However, in some of the long double lessons the pace of teaching and learning slackens. Fieldwork is not used sufficiently to develop students' investigative and analytical skills.

120. Students are interested and talk enthusiastically about their work in geography. They appreciate the support and guidance they receive and they respond very positively to the enthusiasm of their teachers. Their work is very well organised and presented. In collaborative work, for example on tourism in Blackpool, they prepare work of good quality for each other. The subject's main contribution to key skills is in communication when students make presentations to the class. However, opportunities to develop students' skills in information and communications technology and the application of number are missed.

121. The subject is led and managed well. A-level results have improved. The new courses have been thoroughly planned and effectively introduced. These courses are supported with good learning resources. Planning and resources contribute significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. Specific subject target grades are not set for students and there is no plan against which to monitor the development of the subject. However, there is a commitment to build on students' previous knowledge, understanding and skills and an expectation to improve standards and results further.

Psychology

122. Overall, the quality of the provision in psychology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

Standards and results are improving.

The teaching has many good features.

The teacher is determined to improve standards.

Areas for improvement

The teaching should include more opportunity for experiments.

Target grades are insufficiently used to monitor the progress of individuals.

There is no subject development plan.

123. Psychology was introduced into the sixth form in 1999 and the first results were in 2001. Six students with low average GCSE attainment began the course. Two boys passed the A-level examination, both obtaining a grade D. The other four students failed. At AS level in 2001 at the end of Year 12, the results were much improved. Ten of the 12 students passed and gained the grades expected in relation to their GCSE results. There was no significant difference between males and females. Most students enjoy the challenge of learning a new subject and very few fail to complete the course.

124. Standards in Year 13 are currently average. Set against students' levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form, these standards represent satisfactory achievement. In a section of work in social psychology, higher attaining students and students with special educational needs effectively summarise theories and describe and evaluate research on the maintenance and dissolution of relationships. They extend their knowledge and understanding by comparing western and non-western cultures in terms of marriage, love and sexual jealousy. Lower attaining students complete their notes in less detail and do not always prepare fully for lessons. For example, they only have a vague understanding of the evidence to support Darwin's theory of evolution.

125. Standards in Year 12 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to students' overall average GCSE scores at the start of the course. Students are beginning to understand the methods of research and the difference between qualitative and quantitative data. As yet, they have not applied these in small-scale practical exercises to develop their knowledge of the problems and limitations of experimental techniques. Higher attaining students complete their notes and essays in detail. In consequence their knowledge and understanding of, for example, human memory are developing well. Weaker responses from lower attaining students indicate that their independent learning skills are less secure.

126. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Of the three lessons observed, one was good and two were satisfactory. The main features of the teaching are clear objectives, high expectations, a variety of approaches, good use of homework and very good class management. In a good lesson on human memory, the students were challenged to note the main points on a 'mind map'. Learning developed as they shared and amended their maps. Short practical activities enabled the students to test the research of Jacobs and Miller. Lessons are less effective, but satisfactory, when the teacher does not respond quickly enough to adapt the planned work to meet the students' needs. An example is when their prior learning is weak because they have not completed their homework. These lessons lose pace and the rate of learning slackens. However, the focus on examination technique, use of past questions and model answers is good and ensures satisfactory learning. Marking is satisfactory but students do not have a subject target grade against which their progress can be monitored.

127. Students' response to learning in lessons is good. They are interested in psychology. However, some do not prepare well enough for lessons and this has an adverse effect on their learning. The files of completed work are impressive tomes and well organised.

128. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is a popular choice. The teacher is gradually developing her experience of teaching psychology at this level. She rigorously evaluates the effect of her teaching and amends the course and her teaching methods appropriately. As a result standards and results are improving. There is no detailed subject development plan with a focus on continual improvement against which the provision can be evaluated.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

129. The focus was on AS and A-Level English, but modern foreign languages were also sampled. There were no candidates for A-level French in 2000; the one in German achieved a pass grade. There are now more students for modern foreign languages but classes for Years 12 and 13 have to be combined sometimes because of low numbers. Three lessons were observed. Teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other two. Students' attitudes were positive. Good teaching was also seen in the class for students retaking GCSE English, although the standards seen were below average.

English

130. Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

Standards are rising.
Some of the teaching is good.
Students have positive attitudes to their work.
Management of the subject is good.

Areas for improvement

Examination results need to be improved.
Some lessons need more pace and rigour.
Students need more help on how to study independently.
There should be higher expectations of students.

131. The A-level examination results for 2000 were below average, although there were only five entries in this first year that the school entered candidates. The results in 2001 were broadly similar, with the same number of candidates. Fifteen candidates were entered for the AS level papers in 2001, and all but one secured pass grades.

132. The standard of work of current Year 13 students is below average, although their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Students' writing styles are becoming more mature, and they use technical language competently as they discuss both literary and non-literary texts. However, some students are still not working at the depth required to secure high grades. Their written work is often too brief and lacking in fluency and accuracy. The majority can discuss and write effectively, whether about Shakespeare, contemporary drama or non-literary texts.

133. Although Year 12 students are not far into their course, they are already reaching standards that are at least average. They can discuss texts, including speech transcripts and adverts, and comment on them using some appropriate technical vocabulary. A few still make elementary errors in their own English, which often go uncorrected, but they have already progressed significantly from the standards they reached at GCSE and are becoming more aware of the demands of the AS level course.

134. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Four of the six lessons observed during the inspection were good and the other two were satisfactory. In

the satisfactory lessons, the pace of teaching and learning could have been improved. The better lessons are well planned and employ methods appropriate to the learning needs of the students. Students learn effectively through group work, which is used well in most lessons: a Year 13 class was able to annotate scenes from *Antony and Cleopatra* very effectively as a result of working in small groups. Year 12 students were able to critique sample examination answers to a question about advertising by working productively together.

135. Teachers provide ample notes for their students, and are eager to give them information about the courses and the assessment objectives that need to be met, but they are insufficiently secure on how best to help students raise the standard of their answers. They also need to help students become better at learning independently, by giving them the structures and timescales in which to study on their own. Students also need more advice on their choice of coursework topics. Marking is satisfactory overall but assessment could be improved by giving the students more information on how they are doing in relation to A-level grades. Targets for students are not clear enough, and, in general, more could be expected from them.

136. Students have positive attitudes to their work, and say that the course is more interesting and relevant to their lives than they had expected it to be. They respond well to their teachers and work well together. This has a positive effect on their learning. Some do not yet realise how much study time is needed outside lessons, and need more guidance on this. They need help, too, with organising their notes.

137. Management of the subject is good overall and standards are rising. The subject is becoming more popular, with two examination groups now operating in Year 12.