

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CROSSLEY HEATH SCHOOL

Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107575

Headteacher: Miss H J Gaunt

Reporting inspector: Ms J McKenna
2485

Dates of inspection: 24th - 28th September 2001

Inspection number: 189457

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Savile Park Halifax West Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Tidswell
Date of previous inspection:	30/09/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
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18676	R Meakin	Team inspector	Mathematics	Assessment.
4366	F Earle	Team inspector	Religious Education	Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
4492	J Ashton	Team inspector Co-ordinator of the inspection of the sixth-form	Chemistry	The school's results and students' achievements. How well students are taught. Leadership and management.
27893	M Sewell	Team inspector	English language English literature	
31008	P Rourke	Team inspector	Geography	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to students are.
30794	G Murray	Team inspector	History	Advice, support and guidance.
12985	S Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education	Social inclusion. Special educational needs.
1682	E Godman	Team inspector	Psychology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Crossley Heath School is a mixed, foundation grammar school with 984 pupils and students on roll aged from 11 to 18. There are 214 students in the sixth form. The school does not yet have a complete set of figures indicating the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for those who speak English as an additional language for the current year, as a small number of forms containing this information have not been returned by parents. There are usually around six percent in each group, the largest minority ethnic group being Pakistani, and with no pupils at early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the proportion with statements, is well below the national average. Those with the most severe need have physical disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The area surrounding the school is relatively prosperous, but the school draws from a very wide geographical area and some pupils travel long distances to school. Pupils are selected for admission based on their performance in tests administered by the school, and the attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 is very high. The attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is well above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which enables pupils to maintain very high standards and to achieve well. The quality of teaching is good, resulting in successful learning. A clear educational direction is being provided for staff, pupils and students, and good value for money is achieved. There is scope for improvement, however, and the ways in which the school could be more effective are outlined in this report.

What the school does well

- The school enables pupils and students to achieve well. Pupils and students maintain very high standards overall.
- Teaching is of a good quality. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they use to set high expectations for pupils and students and to challenge them to perform well.
- Pupils and students have very serious and positive attitudes towards their work. They establish very good relationships and behave extremely well.
- The new headteacher has diagnosed the school's strengths and areas for development very accurately, and is providing a clear educational direction.
- The provision for the moral development of pupils and students is very good.

What could be improved

- The assessment of pupils' and students' attainment, the analysis of their performance, and the use made of the information gained.
- The action taken within the school to bring about improvement, for example in relation to the key issues identified at the previous inspection.
- The pastoral support and guidance provided for pupils and students.
- How closely the school is perceived to work with parents.
- The meeting of outstanding statutory requirements.

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 September 1996. Since then, it has maintained the very high standards attained by pupils at the age of 16, and has improved the standards attained by students in the sixth form. The quality of teaching has improved. Of the seven key issues for action identified, however, only one, relating to child protection procedures, has been fully

met. The others have only been partially met at best. Given that some of these areas remain issues within the school, improvement since the last inspection overall is unsatisfactory. Action taken recently, however, and especially that initiated by the new headteacher, indicates an increasing rate of improvement.

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*	D
A-levels/AS-levels	A*	A*	A*	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Very high standards are attained by pupils at all stages of their schooling. In National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 14, GCSE examinations taken at the age of 16 and GCE A levels taken at the age 18, results are consistently in the top five percent of schools nationally. Results in individual subjects are also on the whole considerably above the national average.

In 2000, pupils' overall results in the National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 were well above those of other grammar schools. In 2001, overall results improved in mathematics and science, but were a little lower in English.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE in 2000 was 98 percent, and this was in line with the results from other selective schools. The average points score per pupil, whilst very high in relation to the national average, was below that of other selective schools. A factor contributing to this is that the school has traditionally only entered pupils for a maximum of nine and a half GCSEs, a policy currently being reviewed. There are some differences in subject performance. The results in all subjects taken at GCSE in 2000 were considerably above the national figures for the subject, and those in which pupils usually perform very well, often with results above those from other selective schools, include religious education, geography, history, mathematics and food technology. Results in other subjects, although sometimes very good, are less consistently so and results in graphic design tend to be considerably lower than in other subjects. The average points scored by pupils at GCSE is increasing at a faster rate than nationally. In 2001, the overall GCSE results increased slightly so that 99 percent of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades and the average points scores increased by one point. The school's targets for pupil attainment were met.

The attainment of students who were entered for two or more GCSE A level examinations in 2000 was very high, in the top five percent of schools nationally. The average points score for the 96 students taking at least two A levels was 27.4 against a national average for all maintained schools of 18.2 points, and an average for mixed selective schools of 23.4 points. There was a dip in results in 2001.

As the inspection was early in the academic year, pupils were obviously at early stages in their courses. Standards of work seen were well above average, including in English, mathematics and science, although not as high as examination results would suggest in all cases. However, it is evident that the school prepares pupils extremely well for public examinations and tests, and the thorough preparation and revision that take place closer to the examination period account for this difference.

The standards outlined represent good levels of achievement for both girls and boys throughout the school. The school enables them to achieve the very high standards they are capable of and to attain very good examination and test results. This includes pupils and students with special educational needs and most of those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). There is scope for standards to be even higher in some subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils and students have very positive attitudes indeed. They are proud to have gained a place at the school, and work hard to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classes and around the school is very good. Pupils and students are punctual to lessons and settle quickly to their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils and students from all ethnic groups form good relationships, and are self-confident and forthcoming when talking with others. They respond very well to opportunities to exercise responsibility.
Attendance	Very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, and it is a key contributor to the academic success of all pupils and students. Good or better teaching was observed in all subjects, except for graphics, and there was also some very good teaching in most subjects.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use it to ensure that pupils and students acquire a good level of knowledge and to provide a high degree of challenge which promotes very good understanding. Teachers have very high expectations; they fully expect pupils and students to cope with the intellectual challenges being posed. Pupils and students respond very well and push themselves extremely hard to do what teachers are asking. Teachers' delivery is generally confident and purposeful and they ensure a fast and productive pace to lessons. They use questioning well to extend pupils' and students' understanding. There is good attention to promoting and using literacy and numeracy skills across subjects. In the very best lessons, great enthusiasm is shown by the teachers and tasks are used that demand and enable very active involvement on the part of pupils and students. This motivates and inspires them and the increased degree of involvement results in even better learning than usual.

In the smaller proportion of lessons where the teaching is satisfactory rather than better, the pace of learning tends to be more pedestrian, with fewer opportunities for pupils to be actively involved.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound, except for the limited range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment activities for students, and insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Religious education is not provided for all sixth formers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Whilst some aspects of provision are sound, individual education plans are not in place for all who should have them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Almost all pupils and students with EAL can speak English fluently and no formal additional provision is made. A small number of students who come into the sixth form from other schools experience difficulties with the language demands of some courses. Some departments provide informal support for these students.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral development is particularly strong. Provision for cultural development, whilst satisfactory, is weaker than other areas. The school provides an act of collective worship on four days of the week, but does not do so on all.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Assessment of pupils' and students' attainment and analysis of their performance are unsatisfactory. Some pastoral support is good, but form tutors do not have enough time to spend with their pupils, and careers guidance is limited. Health and safety risk assessments are not carried out in all appropriate departments.

Statutory requirements for RE in the sixth form, a daily act of collective worship, individual education plans for all who should have them, and risk assessments within departments are not complied with in full.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is a state of transition, with a new headteacher in post from April 2001. She has quickly and accurately diagnosed strengths and areas for development and planned action to tackle them. This has resulted in a clear educational direction for the school, which is supported by others on the leadership team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very knowledgeable and have a good range of expertise. They are very committed and work very hard for the school. They have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Quality of teaching is now monitored, including through the statutory performance management arrangements. There is insufficient analysis of performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and of individual departments.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The budget has been carefully used for the benefit of the pupils and students. The school provides good value for money.

The school applies the principles of best value in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects pupils and students to work hard. • Their children like school. • Teaching is good. • Their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities. • How closely the school works with parents. • How well the school informs parents about their children's progress. • How comfortable they feel approaching the school. • The amount of homework set.

The inspection findings support parents' positive views. Pupils and students are expected to work hard and they do make good progress. Behaviour is very good, and the teaching is good. Most pupils like school, although some older pupils and students are less positive about some aspects. Teachers take homework very seriously and it is set regularly, in accordance with the homework timetable. Inspection findings also support some of the concerns raised by parents. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited. There have been problems with access to teachers at parents' meetings, but organisation is now being improved. There is little further direct evidence on relationships between the school and parents, but the fact that a significant minority of those responding to the questionnaire expressed these concerns indicate there is an issue to be addressed. The school wishes to work more closely with parents and steps are being taken to achieve this. Over 300 parents attended a recent meeting on target setting, monitoring and assessment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this mixed 11-18 selective school has 214 students. This includes a small number of minority ethnic students, mainly of Asian heritage, almost all of whom speak English well. It provides a reasonably wide range of traditional subjects in the sixth form but no vocational courses. The proportion of students from Year 11 who continue into the sixth form varies from year to year – in 2001 it was slightly over 55 per cent - and just over 20 students joined from other schools. GCSE examination results are very high, and most students embark upon two-year programmes leading to the new GCE A2 level via advanced supplementary (AS) level. This is a school sixth form which prides itself upon offering opportunities for students to work with younger pupils as well as with the local community, one where students' attitudes and appearance are also taken seriously in addition to the emphasis on academic achievement. Entry requirements to sixth form courses include at least GCSE grade B in the subjects being studied, and the attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is well above average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is both successful and cost-effective. Students learn well and achieve good results in most subjects. Academically, it caters appropriately for its students, but there is room for more enrichment activities to bring about their wider personal development. Teaching is good overall and none is unsatisfactory. There is some excellent teaching in English, geography, geology and physical education, and some very good teaching in English, mathematics, religious studies, music, French, chemistry, geography, geology and psychology. The main strengths and areas that could be improved in the sixth form are:

Strengths

- Students achieve good examination results overall, and do particularly well in geography, religious studies and geology.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very warm.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their work.
- Teaching is good overall; teachers have very good command of their subjects.
- Aspects of the leadership and management of the sixth form have a beneficial effect upon students, with their focus on encouraging young people to show respect for the school community and to work hard to make the most of their abilities and academic opportunities.

What could be improved

- Assessment of each individual student's work, especially its use as a basis for monitoring their progress and setting them challenging learning targets.
- Departmental planning, so that it focuses more upon improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The careers and guidance, general studies and key skills programmes, which are presently in a state of transition.
- Induction into the sixth form, especially for those new to the school.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons.
- Some statutory requirements need attending to (religious education and individual education plans for students with special educational needs).

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
<i>Mathematics</i>	Satisfactory. Results are above those from all schools nationally, but lower than those for selective schools. Most students achieve in line with their potential, but some under-achieve. Teachers have good subject command but not all involve students actively enough in lessons. There is not a sharp enough focus on improving standards within departmental planning.
<i>Biology</i>	Good. Results are usually above the national average, often above the average for selective schools, and students achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they ensure the course is well covered. Planning for improvement and assessment are areas for development.
<i>Chemistry</i>	Good. Results in 2000 match the national average for selective schools. Students achieve well, as a result of effective and demanding teaching. Assessment and development planning are not yet strong enough.
<i>Physics</i>	Satisfactory. Results are below the national average. Some pupils achieve satisfactorily but some under-achieve. Teaching is satisfactory; not all teachers engage students or give clear enough explanations. Arrangements for monitoring and planning for improvement within the department are not sufficiently formalised.
<i>Economics and Business Studies</i>	Good. Results are above the national average for selective schools and students achieve well. Teaching is good and a range of resources is used to meet students' needs. Monitoring student progress and aspects of departmental leadership need to be improved.
<i>Information Technology</i>	Satisfactory. Results at A level are generally well above the national average, but fall short of the average for selective schools. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall, but could be better. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good handouts and marking, but lesson planning is not focussed enough on the needs of individual students. Improving lesson planning and aspects of departmental practice are the main areas for development.
<i>Physical Education</i>	Good. A level results in 2000 were well above the national average. Students on the A level course are achieving satisfactorily, and some high standards are being attained in extra-curricular activities. Teaching is good. The marking and monitoring of written work, and departmental planning are key areas for improvement.

<i>Geography</i>	Very good. A level results are excellent. Work is of a very high standard and students achieve very well. The best teaching shows outstanding subject knowledge and the use of highly effective strategies. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Assessment of students' work and monitoring of practice are areas for development.
<i>History</i>	Good. Results are generally at least comparable to the national average and are sometimes better. Current standards are above average and students are achieving well. Teaching is good, energetic and knowledgeable. Assessment arrangements and departmental documentation require improvement.
<i>Religious Studies</i>	Very good. Results are well above the national average and student achievement is good. Teaching is good with imaginative approaches used. The course is well planned. The subject is very well managed. Assessment and target setting are areas for development.
<i>Psychology</i>	Very good. Results are consistently above the national average. Teaching and learning are very good, and students are able to apply their knowledge well. Marking, target setting and opportunities for students to assess their own progress are areas for improvement.
<i>English Language</i>	Good. Pass rates are above the national average, but higher grades are not. Students have a sound grasp of linguistics and language development but they need to undertake more personal research. Teaching and learning are good. Aspects of planning and assessment require improvement.
<i>English Literature</i>	Good. Pass rates are above the national average, but higher grades are not. Students have a sound grasp of literary criticism, but some need to extend their reading beyond prescribed texts. Teaching and learning are good. Planning and assessment are areas for development.

In other subjects, work was sampled. Teaching was at least satisfactory; a lesson in which teaching was excellent was seen in geology and there was a very good lesson in music.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Information for students about sixth-form courses is good. The sixth form handbook for students is clear and helpful. Opportunities for evaluation of students' learning and its use to improve their own learning are at an early stage of development and there are weaknesses in assessment.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Aspects of the leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The sixth form managers are friendly and accessible and they know students well as individuals. There is, however, insufficient focus upon the systematic mentoring and evaluation of students' individual learning needs and progress.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

<i>What students like about the sixth form</i>	<i>What they feel could be improved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clear and accurate information about courses in the sixth form. • Being helped to settle into the sixth and sixth form work. • Being encouraged to study and research topics independently. • The accessibility of their teachers when difficulties arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers advice on what to do after school. • The range of enrichment courses. • The extent to which the school listens and responds to the views of students. • They feel they could be treated as more responsible young adults.

The strengths identified by students are well-founded, as are some of the areas for improvement. Careers advice is very limited in the sixth form and enrichment of the post-16 curriculum is needed. The school has recently consulted students on its sixth form dress code and the proper use of the common room. A significant proportion of students are also given substantial responsibilities as prefects, some aspects of which are excellent preparation for positions of responsibility after their time at school.

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

The school enables pupils and students to achieve well. Pupils and students maintain very high standards overall.

1. The Crossley Heath School is selective, and the attainment of pupils on entry at age 11 is very high. Very high standards continue to be attained by pupils and students at all stages of their schooling. In National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 14, GCSE examinations taken at the age of 16 and GCE A levels taken at the age 18, results are consistently in the top five percent of schools nationally. Results in individual subjects are also on the whole considerably above the national average.
2. In 2000, the average points scored by pupils in English and science and overall, in the National Curriculum tests at the age of 14, were well above those from other selective schools. In mathematics, results were above such schools. Whilst the proportion gaining level 6 and above in the tests was well above other selective schools in all three subjects, the proportion at level 7 and above was similar to other selective schools in mathematics and above such schools in English and science. In 2001, overall results were higher than in 2000 in mathematics and science, but a little lower in English.
3. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE in 2000 was 98 percent, and this was in line with other selective schools. Every pupil gained at least a pass grade in every examination taken, and this compares favourably with similar schools. The average points score per pupil, whilst very high in relation to the national average, was below that of other selective schools. A factor contributing to this is that the school has traditionally only entered pupils for a maximum of nine and a half GCSEs. This policy is currently under review with a view to increasing this limit. There are some differences in subject performance. The results in all subjects taken at GCSE in 2000 were considerably above the national figures for the subject, ranging from 29 percent higher in graphics, to 53 percent higher in mathematics. Subjects in which pupils usually perform very well, often with results above those from other selective schools, include religious education, geography, history, mathematics and food. Results in other subjects, although sometimes very good, are less consistently so and results in graphics tend to be considerably lower than in other subjects. The average points scored by pupils at GCSE is increasing at a faster rate than nationally, the trend of improvement being above the national trend.
4. In 2001, the overall GCSE results increased slightly to 99 percent of the pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades and the average points scores increased by one point. With the exception of graphics, results in all subjects continued to be high. The school's targets for pupil attainment were met.
5. The standard of work of pupils aged 11 to 16 seen during inspection in English, mathematics and science was well above average. In English, there is a good range of writing for a variety of purposes, and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of audience. Their use of spelling, grammar and punctuation shows a high degree of accuracy. There is good evidence of pupils' ability to write extended accounts, although occasionally pieces of writing are shorter than would be expected from higher attaining pupils. Many pupils can talk

confidently and at length in response to questions, although work seen in class does not always fully capitalise on pupils' high level of speaking skills. Pupils can read a good range of texts, and the range of literature is effective for some pupils, but is not always stretching enough for those with higher levels of prior attainment.

6. In mathematics, standards are well above average and pupils across the ability range achieve very well. Those with higher prior attainment achieve exceptionally high standards. Pupils demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Written work is very rigorous with topics taken to a level that provides a high degree of challenge for pupils. The progression in, for example, algebra is very good. Good attention is given to opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge, and they have a very good ability to apply knowledge to solve new problems.
7. Pupils' acquire very thorough knowledge of all aspects of science and show very good levels of understanding. Pupils' routine notes show a good command of scientific fact and detail and they can apply their knowledge well when answering questions on worksheets. Pupils' practical and investigative skills are very good, and the many opportunities given to pupils to undertake practical work helps them to develop their understanding well. Some good examples of pupils reflecting upon the scientific implications of experiments were seen, such as in biology when pupils related the effect of different concentrations of sugar solution on the mass of potato chips to the likely effect of such solutions on red blood cells. Some good efforts to develop pupils' skills of critical analysis and evaluation were seen, for example, when pupils were encouraged to explain unusual results in chemistry experiments, but this is not a strong enough feature of all of their work. Some good examples of questions being posed to challenge and extend the thinking of some of the highest attaining pupils were seen, such as 'how can we prove that the liquid left after a reaction with a metal is a salt solution?'. Some opportunities to develop the scientific thinking of pupils were missed however, such as when pupils were asked to make a hypothesis, but were not challenged to go on to explain why they had made this particular hypothesis. As a result, conclusions sometimes lacked scientific depth.
8. The attainment of students who were entered for two or more GCSE A level examinations in 2000 was very high, in the top five percent of schools nationally. The average points score for the 96 students taking at least two A levels was 27.4 against a national average for all maintained schools of 18.2 points, and an average for mixed selective schools of 23.4 points. There was a dip in results in 2001. There are no national comparative figures yet for the AS results taken by students in Year 12.
9. As the inspection was in September, early in the academic year, pupils and students were obviously at early stages in their courses. Standards seen were high, although not always as high as examination results would suggest. However, it is evident that the school prepares pupils and students extremely well for public examinations and tests, and the thorough preparation and revision that takes place closer to the examination period are the main reasons to account for this difference.
10. The standards outlined represents good levels of achievement for both girls and boys throughout the school. The school enables them to achieve the very high standards they are capable of and to attain very good examination and

test results overall. This includes pupils and students with special educational needs and most who speak English as an additional language. There is scope for standards to be even higher in some subjects.

Teaching is of a good quality. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they use to set high expectations for pupils and students and to challenge them to perform well.

11. The quality of teaching within the school is good and is a key contributor to the academic success of pupils. In almost four out of five lessons for pupils and students of all ages, the teaching is good or better, and in over three out of ten it is very good or better, with a small proportion that is excellent. Good or better teaching was observed in all subjects, except for graphics, and there was also some very good teaching in most subjects. Excellent lessons were seen in geography, geology, English and physical education. No lessons were observed where the teaching was unsatisfactory.
12. A considerable strength of the teaching is the very good subject knowledge that teachers have and the way they use it to ensure that pupils receive a very secure grounding in the subjects they are studying. Teachers use their thorough grasp of their subjects to ensure that pupils acquire a good level of knowledge and to provide a high degree of challenge to them which promotes very good understanding. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils; they fully expect them to cope with the intellectual challenges being posed. Pupils respond very well to these challenges and push themselves extremely hard to do what teachers are asking. They are very keen to succeed. Teachers' delivery is generally confident and purposeful and they ensure a fast and productive pace to lessons. In a food lesson, for example, the teacher's extremely good classroom management skills and complete mastery of the organisation of the practical aspects resulted in pupils making a speedy start to the production of their fruit salads, having been thoroughly briefed on the theoretical and practical issues first. Teachers use questioning well to probe pupils' knowledge and to extend their understanding. In a music lesson, the teacher responded to pupils whose answers to questions were too generalised by saying "tell me precisely what you mean". There is good attention to promoting and using pupils' literacy and numeracy skills within different subjects. The science lessons, for example, demand a high degree of numeracy. Usually pupils can cope with these demands well, but where they experience difficulties, usually because a mathematical concept is being used in science before it has been taught in mathematics, the science teachers are able to teach the mathematics involved in a way that enables pupils to use it to understand the science. Pupils give their full concentration to the teachers. They have a strong commitment to their own learning and the degree of self-motivation is high. Homework is taken seriously and set regularly.
13. Features of the very best teaching include, in addition to the above characteristics, great enthusiasm being shown by the teachers. Tasks are used that demand and enable very active involvement on the part of pupils. This motivates and inspires pupils and the increased degree of involvement results in even better learning than usual. In an excellent geography lesson on industrial change with Year 11 pupils, for example, the teacher radiated infectious enthusiasm and this promoted a very high quality and quantity of pupil response. The teachers' thoroughly prepared resources both engaged and challenged the pupils and the wide range of strategies employed, including whole class discussion, group work and paired work resulted in highly

motivated pupils being fully on task throughout the lesson and learning at a rapid pace. In a history lesson on agricultural enclosures in a topic on Britain 1700-1900, the teacher set up a role play situation for the pupils and their active involvement in debating the pros and cons of such enclosures resulted in them gaining a greater degree of understanding of the issues involved. In a religious education lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to reflect upon values and beliefs very well by starting the lesson off with a game, played in groups of four, that stimulated discussion and enabled them to express and explain their personal viewpoints. This resulted in some very mature and reasoned dialogue. One pupil, for example, gave an extremely clear explanation of the difference between sympathy and empathy.

14. In the smaller proportion of lessons where the teaching is satisfactory rather than better, teachers generally still have good subject knowledge and basic teaching skills but the pace of learning tends to be more pedestrian, and there are fewer opportunities for pupils to be actively involved. The quality of feedback to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work and the use of ICT are two general shortcomings in lessons. Despite this variability, teaching is good overall, with much that is very good and better.

Pupils and students have very serious and positive attitudes towards their work. They establish very good relationships and behave extremely well.

15. Pupils' and students' attitudes are very good indeed. They are very serious and positive about their work. As a result they push themselves very hard both whilst in school and outside of school. They give their full concentration in lessons, and many put in long hours completing their homework to a high standard. They are very self-motivated and take a genuine pleasure in their success. They respond extremely well to the very high degree of challenge placed upon them. The great majority of pupils and students have positive views of the school. They recognise and feel a sense of pride that they are at what is regarded as a very good school, and they are keen not to let the school, or themselves, down. A minority of the older pupils, in Year 11, and students, however, express a little less satisfaction with the school, citing mainly the degree of pressure they feel under and the fear of failure, and the fact that they feel their views are not sought or taken seriously enough.
16. Pupils' and students' behaviour is very good. They are well aware of what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and they comply with these expectations. As a result, almost all of their energy is directed towards their learning. They arrive to school and to lessons punctually, and settle to work quickly. They move around the building in an orderly fashion, and are considerate to the needs of others, such as fellow pupils with physical disabilities.
17. Relationships within the school generally also are very good. Pupils interact well together and show respect for their peers and their teachers. All feel that there is someone they could approach if they had any difficulties, and comment positively on the approachability and friendliness of most teachers. Pupils are able to work collaboratively with others in lessons when tasks require this, and they also interact well with each other outside of the classroom. Relationships between pupils and students of different ethnic groups, and between girls and boys, are also very good.

18. Pupils and students respond very well to the opportunities provided for their personal development. The school tries to give very real responsibility to older pupils and students to be involved in school life. They carry out allotted tasks efficiently and effectively. The head girl and boy, for example, hosted the parents' meeting prior to the inspection with maturity and poise. Prefects carry out their duties very responsibly and act as good role models for younger pupils. Year 10 pupils act as 'buddies' for Year 7 pupils, to the benefit of both groups. Pupils and students generally are self-confident and forthcoming when talking with each other, their teachers and visitors.

The new headteacher has diagnosed the school's strengths and areas for development very accurately, and is providing a clear educational direction.

19. The leadership and management of the school is currently in a state of transition. A new headteacher took up post in April 2001, and had therefore been in post for just over a term at the time of the inspection. Although there has been little time for her to have had an impact on outcomes within the school, she has diagnosed strengths of the school and areas that require development quickly and accurately. Almost all of the areas for development identified during the inspection have already been identified by the headteacher, and she has a very clear view of how she wishes to bring about improvement. Based upon her analysis, she has produced a school development plan, which comprehensively and clearly outlines the action to be taken within the school to bring about improvement. This has already started to be implemented. Actions that are necessary to facilitate further change have been prioritised, such as the rapid restructuring of the leadership team within the school and redefining job descriptions and management roles. She has also, for example, initiated new systems for analysing school performance and for enabling the school to measure the value it adds to pupils' attainments. She has also taken action to build on strengths. An excellent practitioner has been appointed as a teaching and learning co-ordinator, for example, with the brief to promote a wider range of teaching and learning styles across the school.
20. Other members of the leadership team, and other managers and staff, are supportive of the changes underway. Whilst having worked hard and usually successfully in relation to their current roles, they recognise and accept some of the weaknesses in current practice, and are pleased that they are to be enabled to work more effectively.

The provision for the moral development of pupils and students is very good.

21. Provision for pupils' and students' moral development, and opportunities for them to develop moral awareness, are particularly good. There is a very clear moral code and understanding of what is wrong and right within the school. As a result, pupils and students are very clear about what constitutes appropriate actions and behaviour, and they act as moral members of the school community. They understand the implications of their actions on others. For example, pupils listen with courtesy when others are talking and answering questions and they respect the views and opinions of their peers. There is good coverage of moral issues within the personal and social education curriculum, for example, in relation to sex education and drug misuse and pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect upon issues relating to their personal conduct. They have opportunities to consider moral and ethical issues in curriculum areas, such as religious education, history, geography, English and science. This work contributes to pupils and students having a well developed

moral and ethical awareness, relating, for example, to war and peace, environmental issues and racism. Pupils and students are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility towards others beyond their immediate environment, and they support a range of local and national charities.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The assessment of pupils' and students' attainment, the analysis of their performance, and the use made of the information gained.

22. Assessment is an area that has been identified by the school as requiring improvement, and it is the focus of much development. Pupils' and students' attainment is currently assessed in a variety of ways across the school, and there are some examples of good practice, for example, in the quality of some teachers' marking. Practice lacks rigour and consistency overall, however, and is currently unsatisfactory.
23. The regular and routine assessment of pupils' work does not usually relate closely enough to National Curriculum and examination course criteria. As a result, the feedback pupils receive is often not specific enough to inform them precisely how well they are performing, or what they need to do to improve. They are often given marks out of a total or a grade, for example, but without an accompanying comment or information which explains why. Despite the occasional good example, marking across the school is generally weak with inconsistencies in approach and with little detailed feedback given to pupils. Information about assessment criteria at a more general level is rarely shared with pupils. For example, in a graphics lesson, pupils starting their GCSE course were developing a specification for the designing and making of a book cover. They were not made aware of the differing degrees of detail necessary to include in the specification to gain the range of grades at GCSE. A means of enabling pupils to take some informed responsibility for their own learning and success was therefore denied to them. The assessments of pupils and students are not often detailed enough which limits the use to which the information gained can be put. There is insufficient use of target setting for pupils and students, or for monitoring their progress. They are not involved enough in assessing their own progress. There is also a lack of analysis of assessment information within departments, which results in them making insufficient use of it being made to modify the curriculum and their teaching approaches.
24. The analysis of assessment and performance data within the school as a whole is not well developed. Much of the analysis that has been done has compared the school's results to national averages, to which they compare very favourably, rather than with the results from other selective schools, which is a more proper point of comparison. Some subject managers, therefore, do not have a fully informed view or understanding of how well pupils or students are achieving in their subject. The use of data to establish individual pupil or student and whole school targets is not well developed. The analysis of the value being added to pupils' and students' attainment by the school and within individual departments is unsatisfactory.

25. These weaknesses have been fully recognised and action is now in hand to tackle them. From this September, the school has begun to use a national standardised system of testing and related predicting and target setting to improve its analysis.

The action taken within the school to bring about improvement, for example in relation to the key issues identified at the previous inspection.

26. Despite the maintenance of the very high standards attained by pupils since the last inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory overall. This is mainly because most of the key issues identified last time have at best been only partially tackled. Improvements within the school, therefore, have not been as extensive as would be expected. In particular, the planning processes in place have not resulted in a clear strategy or comprehensive outline of the action required to bring about improvement. Departmental development planning, for example, has not been closely enough linked to whole school development planning and thus actions taken at various levels have not complemented or consolidated each other. Monitoring and evaluation of practice have not been well enough established, either within departments or across the school as whole. The accurate identification of strengths and areas for development undertaken by the new headteacher, and the resulting comprehensive school development plan now in place, provide a positive and well-focussed agenda for action. Although its implementation is in the very early stages, it is already having a positive impact on practice. Staff and governors were not involved in the generation of this plan, although it has been fully discussed with them. The need for such groups to be fully integrated and involved in the process once it is incorporated into an annual cycle, is recognised and planned for. Similarly, the fact that departmental development plans are still not closely linked to the school development plan is also recognised and there are plans in hand to rectify this. Proper accountability and responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of practice is being written into new job descriptions and role definitions, alongside a recognition of the need for training and support for staff. These arrangements are all very new however, and although if implemented effectively are likely to bring about required improvements, it is too early to be able to report successful outcomes.

The pastoral support and guidance provided for pupils and students.

27. Much effort goes into ensuring an ethos of care and concern for pupils and students. Traditional pastoral relationships have been a strong aspect, and teachers are keen to provide pupils and students with personal support. Pupils like and respect many of their teachers, and feel that there is always someone to whom they can turn if they have any problems. Nevertheless, some parents and pupils feel that there is not enough support to help individuals who need it to cope with the considerable academic pressure they face within the school. Although there are positive aspects to the pastoral arrangements, there are some weaknesses in the systems that exist to provide support and guidance for pupils and students. Form tutors do not have much timetabled time with their forms, and thus a potential mechanism for supporting pupils is under-developed. The capacity of form tutors to get to know their pupils well and to be able to identify and respond to individual needs is limited. The role of form tutors and other pastoral staff in monitoring pupils' and students' academic progress is not well developed, and this provides another barrier to their capacity to be able to provide specific and targeted support and advice.

Careers advice to students in the sixth form is limited. There are weaknesses in the organisation and staffing of the personal and social education course for pupils aged from 11 to 14, which reduce its effectiveness as an avenue for pupils to explore issues and problems relevant to them. These deficiencies have been identified and are being addressed. The appointment of a new assistant headteacher with responsibility for developing pastoral provision is due to be made for January 2001.

How closely the school is perceived to work with parents.

28. Although most parents are positive about the school and are pleased with the quality of education it provides, a larger proportion than is usually the case hold some negative views. Parents of four hundred and ten pupils and students, 42 percent of the total, returned questionnaires outlining their views. Seventy-five sent in letters or comments with their questionnaires and 58 attended the meeting between inspectors and parents. Their responses indicate that the large majority of parents particularly like the fact that the school expects pupils to work hard, provides good teaching and enables their children to make good progress. Some letters accompanying questionnaires emphasised these strengths. However, 32 percent of those responding do not feel that the school provides a wide enough range of extra-curricular activities. Twenty-six percent of those responding do not feel that the school works closely enough with parents and letters received confirm this as a concern. A range of reasons are cited, including dissatisfaction with the responses made when concerns are expressed, the recent tightening of the school's expectations in relation to the wearing of uniform, and the lack of access to teachers to talk to about their children's progress at parents' meetings. There was little further direct evidence available on inspection, although some students and older pupils expressed some negative views about the extent to which their views were canvassed or taken seriously. Some of the above issues are acknowledged, such as the access to teachers at parents' meetings, and these are being reorganised in an attempt to deal with this difficulty. The school reports that it wishes to work closely with parents. The school's most recent internal canvassing of the views of parents, conducted in the last academic year, was largely positive. The day after the meeting for parents to meet with inspectors, the school held a meeting for parents to explain target setting, monitoring and assessment, which over 300 parents attended. Nevertheless the fact that a significant minority of parents have expressed these concerns indicates an issue to be addressed.

The meeting of outstanding statutory requirements.

29. There are a small number of statutory requirements that are not fulfilled. These are that:-
- Religious education is not taught to all pupils in the sixth form.
 - Not all pupils with special educational needs who should have an individual education plan have one in place.
 - Risk assessments are not carried out in all appropriate departments.
 - The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

30. In order to improve the quality of education and raise standards even higher, the governors, headteacher and staff should: -

(1) Improve the assessment of pupils' attainment and the analysis of their performance by: -

- Relating the ongoing assessment of pupils' work to national curriculum and examination course criteria;
- Giving pupils specific and precise information on how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve;
- Improving the quality and consistency of marking;
- Sharing assessment criteria with pupils;
- Using assessment information to set targets for pupils and departments;
- Providing pupils with opportunities to assess their own progress;
- Using assessment information to monitor the progress of pupils;
- Using assessment information to inform and modify the curriculum and approaches to teaching;
- Improving the value added analysis undertaken for the school as a whole and within individual departments.

(2) Take appropriate action to bring about required improvements, by: -

- Ensuring the newly produced school development plan is implemented and that key issues from this report are incorporated into it;
- Ensuring that departmental development planning is closely related to the whole school development plan;
- Monitoring the implementation of plans carefully, and evaluating the effectiveness of action taken.

(3) Improve the pastoral support and guidance provided for pupils by: -

- Increasing the time that form tutors spend with their forms;
- Widening the role of form tutors and other pastoral staff to include the monitoring of pupils' academic progress;
- Improving the organisation and delivery of the personal and social curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14.

(4) Take action to improve the views of the significant minority of parents who do not think the school works closely enough with them.

(5) Take action to fulfil statutory requirements by: -

- Ensuring that religious education is taught to all pupils in the sixth form;
- Writing individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs who should have one in place;
- Ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are carried out in all departments;
- Providing a daily act of collective worship.

Sixth form

- (1) Improve the assessment of students' work by: -
 - Giving students specific and precise information on how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve;
 - Using assessment information to set targets for students and departments;
 - Providing students with opportunities to assess their own progress;
 - Using assessment information to monitor the progress of students;
 - Using assessment information to inform and modify the curriculum and approaches to teaching;
 - Improving the value added analysis undertaken for the school as a whole and within individual departments.

- (2) Improve departmental development planning by: -
 - Ensuring that priorities identified focus upon improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning;
 - Ensuring that departmental planning is closely related to the whole school development plan.
 - Monitoring the implementation of plans carefully, and evaluating the effectiveness of action taken.

- (3) Improve the curriculum enrichment on offer to students, and the careers guidance they receive, by : -
 - Implementing a general studies programme for students in Year 12;
 - Implementing the planned key skills course;
 - Implementing the planned system of individual tutorials;
 - Increasing the amount of careers advice.

- (4) Improve induction arrangements, by; -
 - Organising a formal induction programme for students joining the sixth form;
 - Paying specific attention to the needs of those students joining from other schools;
 - Paying specific attention to the needs of those students joining the sixth form who speak English as an additional language, and where necessary, providing support to help them to cope with the language demands of their courses.

- (5) Take action to meet statutory requirements as outlined in the key issues for the school as a whole;

- (6) Improve the use of ICT in lessons across the curriculum.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	37
	Sixth form	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	1	13	16	7	0	0	0
Percentage	2	35	43	19	0	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	4	16	26	14	0	0	0
Percentage	7	27	43	23	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. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 7 – 11 and the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two and one percentage points respectively.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	768	214
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15	10

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19	9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	60

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	72	83	155

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	72	72	72
	Girls	82	82	82
	Total	154	154	154
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (99)	99 (99)	99 (99)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	98 (97)	99 (99)	97 (98)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	72	72	72
	Girls	83	83	82
	Total	155	155	155
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	94 (94)	100 (100)	99 (99)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	63	62	125

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	61	63	63
	Girls	61	62	62
	Total	122	125	125
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	98 (98)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	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	59 (60)
	National	38.4 (38)

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	N/a
	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	48	55	103

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	26.8	28.7	27.9 (28.1)	1.9	N/a	1.9 (4)
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	0	N/a
	National		76.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	9
Pakistani	46
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	4
White	913
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Based on the 975 pupils on roll in the last full academic year, 2000/2001.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	11	0
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)	55.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	268

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	82.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.6
Key Stage 4	22.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2,654,316
Total expenditure	2,586,966
Expenditure per pupil	2630
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,524
Balance carried forward to next year	73,874

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.45
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
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	975
Number of questionnaires returned	410

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	51	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	54	4	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	10	2	7
The teaching is good.	34	57	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	50	14	2	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	47	9	3	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	16	51	22	4	7
The school is well led and managed.	25	49	5	3	18
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	49	6	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	33	24	8	14

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

31. The attainment of students who were entered in 2000 for two or more GCE A and AS examinations was very high, in the top 5 percent of schools nationally. Results have been improving steadily over recent years, peaking in 1999 but dropping again in terms of average point scores in 2000 and 2001. The average points score for students taking at least two A levels (96 candidates) in 2000, was 27.4 against a national average for all maintained schools of 18.2 points and an average for mixed selective schools of 23.4 points. Retention rates are high between Years 12 and 13. The large majority of students who begin a course end up completing it. Even with the advent of students taking more (advanced supplementary) AS courses in Year 12 with the intention of dropping down to fewer of the new A level (A2) courses in Year 13, the continuation rates are high. In Chemistry, for example, 22 of the 28 students on the AS course went on to study chemistry at A2 level.
32. There are minimum entry requirements for joining the sixth form of at least GCSE grade B for any subject being taken to AS level, therefore the attainment of students overall at the start of Year 12 is certainly at least above the national average. Attainment is very high, overall, by the end of Year 13. The generally good A level results are largely the result of good, sometimes very good and excellent teaching, building well upon already high levels of attainment. Most students achieve well in the sixth form, including those with special educational needs and most of those for whom English is an additional language. Individual teachers in particular departments do a sterling job in ensuring that students new to the school, or to their subject, are well supported and helped to quickly catch up. Good examples of this were seen in chemistry and in geography. The school does not, however, make supporting students who speak English as an additional language a particular focus of its induction programme into the sixth form. In biology, for example, a small number of students who entered the school from other schools, and in one case from the far east, found the language requirements of the course demanding and this affected their results adversely. Female students performed slightly better overall than males at A level in 2000. Their points score was 1.1 higher than that of the males (27.9 as compared to 26.8).
33. Geography is the most successful of all the courses run in the sixth form. Its results have been consistently well above the national average in recent years, often in the top 5 percent of schools in the country, and well above those for selective school sixth forms. In 2000, all but one geography student in an entry of 34 students obtained either grade A or B. This was an outstanding result. In 2001, 24 out of 30 geography students and in 1999, 34 out of 37 students did the same. Good levels of success are also the norm in the following subjects, which also have relatively high numbers of students: business studies, chemistry, English language, general studies and psychology. Subjects with consistently good results but slightly fewer students are geology and religious studies. Attainment across all other sixth form courses is more variable. Mathematics results, which have improved since the last inspection were still weaker than those of other selective schools in 2000 and have dipped again in 2001. Results in biology vary from year to year. They are generally above the national average and were particularly high in 2000 when they were above

those from other selective schools, but have dipped considerably in 2001. Attainment in English literature matches national standards overall, but the proportion of students who attain the higher two grades is well below that for similar selective schools. Physics results were above the national average in 1999, but have been lower since then and they were below the national average in 2000. History results matched national figures for all schools in 2000, after their well above average results in 1999, but results were below average for selective schools. The 2001 results are higher. Economics and business studies students attained results well above the national in 2000, after their results matched national standards in 1999. The 2001 results are considerably lower. In 2000, A level results in information technology were in line with the national figures for the subject, but fell short of the results of selective schools. Results are similar in 2001, but had been higher in previous years. In the first year of the A level examination in physical education in 2000, results were well above average, but a little lower in 2001, with fewer higher grades attained.

34. Students' oral and written skills are generally good. In English, students are articulate and able to sensitively explore the layers of meaning in a poem. In history, students list some of the skills they believe they acquire in history classes as the ability to analyse, to communicate, to debate and to work as a team. They write fluently and express themselves clearly in religious studies. In economics / business studies and in psychology, students' note taking skills are of a high order. They annotate their notes well in mathematics. Students' application of number is also good. Examples of this include the construction of scatter-graphs in geography, calculations of the concentration of liquids in chemistry, and students' ability to apply relevant statistical tests during biology fieldwork. There is room for improvement in the development of students' information and communication (ICT) skills across the sixth form. Reasons for this include a number of staffing difficulties in ICT, and the fact that there are too few slots available in the rooms with computers for other subjects to book them. The use of ICT as a routine tool in other classrooms is not yet fully established in the school.
35. Although attainment is high overall, not all sixth form courses are equally effective in bringing the best out of the students. The large majority of students who took their examinations in 2000 achieved well in their time in the sixth form. Most students currently in the sixth form are also achieving well, showing good progress in their learning. However, there are indications that the standards students are achieving could be higher in physics and ICT, for example.
36. There are two things that make it difficult for the school to judge whether it is being fully effective in enabling students to make maximum progress. These are the lack of systematic procedures for predicting and measuring the success of individual students' attainments, and the lack of comprehensive analysis of performance data to measure the value being added both within departments and at a whole school level. These weaknesses have been recognised and are beginning to be tackled within the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning does not focus sufficiently yet upon recognising the most successful practice and sharing it, so that the quality of provision, especially the quality of teaching is equally high across all subjects. In many subjects at The Crossley Heath School there is a range in teaching quality. Even in geography, the most successful department, it ranges from satisfactory to excellent.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

37. The great majority of students have positive attitudes towards the school. Both those who have attended The Crossley Heath since Year 7 and those who were new to the school in Year 12 consider that they have made the right choice, citing the good quality teaching and helpfulness of staff as particular areas of strength. Students are quick to involve themselves in activities beyond their main areas of study. For example this year so many decided to take part in the Young Enterprise scheme that two companies had to be established. Students want to take on roles of responsibility within the school community. Almost two-thirds of Year 13 students have volunteered to take on a mentoring role with younger pupils.
38. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning and behave very well. Students attend school regularly and punctually, showing that they understand how important it is not to miss lessons. They come to the classroom well prepared and settle swiftly so that little time is wasted. They listen keenly to what teachers have to say and follow instructions well, sustaining their concentration so that, for instance, they can follow on smoothly from each other when translating a passage from French, or answer quickly when asked a direct question by the teacher. A small group of Year 13 students who have volunteered to study further mathematics outside normal lesson time showed triumph and delight when they successfully tackled a difficult problem. Those studying chemistry in Year 12 demonstrated good levels of resourcefulness and initiative when solving a problem caused by having too short a piece of rubber tubing on a condenser. Students are generally positive about learning, for instance making good use of the Resource Centre for independent work.
39. The very good quality of relationships between students and with staff is a significant strength of the sixth form. Although there has been no formal induction programme for those who have joined Year 12 from other schools, all those spoken with commented on the friendliness shown by other students in helping them to settle. Despite its cramped nature, the common room has a relaxed atmosphere with students instinctively respecting others' space and ensuring that the room is left reasonably tidy. Younger pupils find their prefects to be friendly, helpful and happy to notice and acknowledge them throughout the course of the day. In lessons, students collaborate very well when engaged in practical tasks, and also in discussion where they share ideas freely and show respect for others' opinions. The good relationships between staff and students means that lessons are generally conducted in an atmosphere of good humour with each showing respect for the other which generates a very good learning environment with everyone in the room engaged in the same task. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, which students in Year 13 completed, they expressed particular appreciation for the accessibility and helpfulness of their teachers, who offer them good quality and challenging teaching.
40. Sixth form students act as mature, forthcoming and self-confident young adults. More opportunities for taking on responsibilities are being introduced. Existing positions are being reassessed. The head boy and girl and their assistants now apply for the positions, are interviewed by sixth form tutors and elected, from a short list, by their peers. The current holders of these positions managed the recent meeting between inspectors and parents highly successfully. They are interested in the world beyond their own immediate

environment and sufficiently aware to, for instance, swiftly pick up on the idea of false friendship and the racial issues in *Othello* and identify how relationships develop. Most would recommend the school to their friends but some, in Year 13 especially, would like to be treated more as young adults. They would also like more advice to help them decide what steps to take when they leave the school since they clearly understand that their time spent at The Crossley Heath is not to be seen in isolation but as a preparation for the rest of their lives. One of the more negative comments from some students about sixth form life is that they do not consider that the school pays sufficient attention to their views and suggestions for improvements.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

41. The quality of teaching is good overall, a significant reason why well above average attainment is sustained in the sixth form, as it is throughout the rest of the school. The teaching in almost 8 out of 10 lessons seen was good or better, with almost one in three very good and one in fifteen excellent. Very good and excellent teaching is seen across both year groups, but mainly in Year 13. Excellent teaching is seen in English, geography, geology and physical education. Very good teaching is seen in English, mathematics, religious studies, music, French, chemistry, geography, geology and psychology. Some good teaching occurs in every subject inspected. No teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although there are areas for development in many lessons.
42. Within this healthy overall picture, there are relative strengths and weaknesses. In the subjects inspected, teaching is good overall in English language, English literature, mathematics, biology, chemistry, business studies, history, geography and physical education. It is satisfactory overall in information and communication technology and in physics, and very good in both psychology and religious education.
43. Teachers in all lessons demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They plan interesting lessons and their enthusiasm for their material often shines through and influences students' learning in a positive way. Their teaching objectives are clear and sometimes broken down into planned time slots. Teachers' expectations that their students will work hard are almost universal. Their knowledge and understanding of the new examination specifications show a good degree of recent hard work behind the scenes. Their understanding of exactly what students in general need to know, understand or do in order to extract every last mark in their forthcoming module tests or examinations is of a high level. This is a significant factor in the success of students as a whole at the end of their courses. Some departments are especially good at preparing their students in this way. The geography department stands out. The quality of the written advice it gives to students about exactly what they are required to do is exceptionally detailed and helpful. It is matched by an excellent analysis of why the department believes it is so successful in achieving such excellent overall results. This high degree of self-confidence is backed up by a great deal of research and experience over the years.

44. The excellent or very good lessons, in geography, chemistry and physical education for example, are where the students are motivated by well-focussed questions and very productive use of resources to maintain a very effective pace of learning. In chemistry this also involves imaginative use of ICT and a series of CD-ROMs, copies of which the students are able to obtain for their own private study.
45. The level of challenge in some lessons is not always high enough for each individual in the class. Teachers' planning rarely takes sufficient account of students' individual needs. Lesson objectives are not precisely enough geared to ensuring that pupils of all levels of prior attainment will be sufficiently challenged. In other words, too often the groups are treated as homogeneous, as if they were all at the same stage of understanding, all achieving at the same level. This is a characteristic of teaching in a number of subjects, including business education, ICT, physics, and English language.
46. Most teachers are skilled at using questioning techniques to test students' understanding, in order to assess how well they are doing and how much they have learnt. One teacher in chemistry intuitively targets individual questions to individual students by name. These questions have a built-in level of difficulty which takes account of the teachers' knowledge of exactly where to pitch things to stretch particular students. Sometimes, however, in mathematics for example, teachers too readily provide the answers to their own questions, thereby missing the opportunity to develop understanding by building upon student responses.
47. A less than strong feature of some teaching is the lack of emphasis teachers place on using assessment to set challenging targets for individual students to achieve. Teachers rarely use assessment information to make clear to students what their targets are and what they must do to reach the levels expected of them. It is important, if standards in the sixth form are to be maintained or to rise even higher, that the school identifies and shares the best and most effective teaching and learning strategies, including the best assessment strategies, so that learning in all subjects is as good as it is in the best. The lack of formal or even informal monitoring of each other's classroom practice makes this presently difficult to achieve.

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

48. The sixth form curriculum is directed towards academic studies and the school insists on a high standard of entry to courses. Except in very particular circumstances, students must have a GCSE pass at grade B in the subject that they intend to study at A level, or in related areas of study for subjects that are new to them. Courses are not offered for the significant minority of students who attain mainly grades C in GCSE. Just over one half of the pupils in Year 11 chose to return to the sixth form in September 2001 where they were joined by over 20 pupils from neighbouring schools and elsewhere. Almost all sixth form students complete their chosen course of study.
49. The school provides breadth of study for its sixth formers by its requirement that they all follow four AS courses in Year 12 and at least three A2 courses in Year 13. There is a good range of AS and A2 courses offered, in 22 subjects, which includes some non-traditional subjects such as psychology, geology and business education. However, in a number of other important regards the

curriculum is too narrowly focussed. A lack of resources and accommodation has prevented the school from offering other new courses for which there is a demand, such as law and media studies. Vocational courses are not offered as an alternative to A level provision, since the school does not believe that there is a demand for them, nor does it have the necessary resources to develop such provision. It has also wished to focus its efforts on what it feels it does best. Further enrichment of the taught curriculum has for many years been provided by a full general studies course in which students have also achieved a high level of success in A level examinations. Students in Year 13 are continuing with the general studies course they began last year. However, as a result of resourcing problems, and as part of an overall curriculum review, general studies is currently not offered to students in Year 12. The key skills courses for Years 12 and 13 are also not yet running, although an innovative way of providing them is planned for later this year. A very small amount of religious education is provided as part of the general studies programme for students in Year 13, but there is no provision at all for religious education for students in Year 12. In this respect the school is failing to meet statutory requirements. The only enrichment of the taught curriculum that is experienced by Year 12 students at present is through a weekly double period of either sports or community service. There is a good range of activities available in these lessons, including some off-site options such as skiing and trampolining. This sports period is optional for students in Year 13. A single tutorial period each week is used for careers guidance and personal, social education (PSE) as well as for individual support. All aspects of the curriculum are currently under review.

50. The taught curriculum for students in the sixth form is enriched by a reasonable variety of extra curricular activities. A number of sports are available although most students choose to participate in rugby or netball. There are some opportunities for students to join a variety of trips and visits, some of them taking place abroad as well as in Britain. The house system not only provides opportunities for their own participation in extra curricular activities but also allows students to show initiative and to take much responsibility in the organisation of a good range of inter-house competitions. They run annual competitions in drama and music, and regular sports competitions, all of which are enthusiastically supported by younger pupils in the school.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

51. The provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Several subjects provide opportunities for pupils' to reflect on issues of significance, and staff often handle sensitive issues well when these arise in class. This was the case in a German lesson when recent events in America formed part of the introductory conversation to the lesson. Very good opportunities are presented in religious studies to reflect on a range of philosophical and spiritual issues, which arise naturally from the course followed by students. Elsewhere in the sixth form curriculum, however, there is little planned provision for this aspect of students' development. The school does not meet the legal requirement to provide religious education to all students. It does not comply with the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship, although it comes closer to doing so than many other schools.
52. The provision for students' moral development is very good. Students are expected to respect the rights of others, behave morally as members of the school community and to act as good role models to younger pupils. The great

majority live up to these expectations. Moral and ethical issues such as racism, the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers, and responsibility for environmental pollution are discussed as they arise naturally in lessons and the PSE programme provides opportunities for consideration of questions related to personal conduct and moral responsibility. Students are encouraged to express practical moral concern through the support of national and local charities.

53. The provision for students' social development is good. There are numerous opportunities for them to show initiative and contribute to the school and wider community through the house and prefect system, community service and the Young Enterprise Scheme. Field Studies courses, foreign language visits and residential experiences enhance their opportunities to develop social skills in a variety of settings. In lessons and around the school the conduct of students is confident and mature and they relate well with their teachers and each other in formal and informal social settings.
54. The provision for students' cultural development is good. English, music, physical education and religious studies make good contributions to this provision. House productions of music and drama provide opportunities for students to display and develop their interests and talents. There are very good opportunities for participation in sports, but there is not a wide range of other extra-curricular activities. Students have opportunities to learn about the cultural diversity of contemporary society in a number of their courses and students of religious studies visit a Buddhist Centre in Manchester. Overall, however, this is not a strong feature of provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

55. The school has identified the assessment of work and target setting as major areas for development in promoting students' achievement. Action has already been taken to generate a comprehensive range of student performance data which is already being used to predict and monitor the results obtained in public examinations. The use of the data to establish whole school and individual student examination targets is in its early stages, however, and is not yet sufficiently well developed.
56. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory because regular, routinely assessed work does not include a diagnosis of the learning needs of individuals. Not all students are provided with sufficient feedback to know how they are performing, measured against a baseline and short-term targets, and what they need to do to improve. Present arrangements vary from subject to subject and, although assessments are made on a regular basis, they are not specific enough about what students need to do to improve. Students are not afforded the opportunity to be involved in evaluating their assessments and reviewing their progress and targets.
57. Some of the marking of work in many of the subjects is thorough and informative and there is some excellent marking in, for example, information and communication technology. This is not a consistent feature, however, and some marking is much weaker. There are strengths in marking and assessment, for example, in the positive comments made by the examination boards after moderation of the work in advanced level biology and chemistry.

However, internal monitoring by departments of students' work and their assessments is not a routine feature of many departments. This is a weakness because it means that there is little scope for using the data as a tool for modifying the curriculum or sharpening teaching strategies.

Advice, support and guidance

58. Support and guidance for the sixth form is being reviewed and is in the process of development. Students welcome the new initiatives. There are good relationships between tutors and students, and tutors make themselves readily available for discussion and advice. Students praise the guidance given in helping them to choose their A Level courses. On an individual basis, support and guidance are good. Overall the system lacks structure. The harder-edged side of sixth form advice and guidance and the promotion of high standards and effective teaching and learning are presently relatively weak.
59. Since the re-organisation of the former careers service, there is a dramatically reduced time allocation for the sixth form from the new agency. Career's advice is consequently in very short supply at present. The whole system of organising the teaching of Key Skills is being reviewed. General studies have been suspended in Year 12. Individual tracking and target setting for students are not yet well established.
60. Information and advice about the procedures for applying for Higher Education and other post school options is initially given by the careers tutor. Year 12 students are taken to the annual open day at Sheffield University. Otherwise the choice of universities is left largely to the individual student. There is a new emphasis on the form tutors' role in preparing students for the next stage of their education, and training is planned for them.
61. The tutorial programme being introduced this year has been organised as an individual support programme. Year 12 tutorial classes begin with study skills. An exercise on memory and how it works was effectively used to give advice on how to study and revise. In the next phase, tutorial time will be used for individual interviews. Lectures on specialised topics are given by outside speakers, for example, from the police. The school nurse also provides good support for all students.
62. Induction of new students into the sixth form, and there are significant numbers of them each year, is not formally organised. This is an opportunity missed to weld together present and new students in a way that would benefit everyone concerned. This term the school took over 20 new entrants into the sixth form. A considerable proportion of the 2001 Year 11 students chose other educational routes and did not continue into The Crossley Heath sixth form. The school is actively seeking ways to ensure that the sixth form education offered remains an attractive proposition.

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

63. Parents hold generally positive views about the sixth form, expressing particular pleasure that, because their children are expected to work hard and receive good teaching, they make good progress and behave well. The school's most recent internal canvassing of parental opinion, conducted in the

last academic year, shows that they feel well informed about their children's progress and find staff very approachable. However, in their response to the inspection questionnaire and at the meeting with inspectors, many parents of students in the sixth form were critical of the school. They stated, along with parents of pupils elsewhere in the school, that they do not consider that the school works in sufficiently close partnership with them or provides them with an appropriate amount of information. Of particular concern was the recent tightening of the school's expectations of students to wear uniform and the perceived weaknesses in the careers advice available for pupils and students. Another area of discontent is the relatively narrow range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

64. The staff with responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management, and for the pastoral care of the sixth form carry out well the roles they were appointed to. Students comment favourably upon their accessibility and the good quality of their support. Published guidance for students is good. This includes the well-written and clear sixth form handbook and the answers to commonly asked questions about whether or not modules can be re-sat, what happens after AS levels, about study periods, signing out, and so on. Procedures for appointing and deploying prefects, including the head boy and girl, are carried out effectively and fairly. When female students complained about the macho behaviour of some of the male students in the sixth form common room last year, matters were quickly resolved to everyone's satisfaction by effective leadership and negotiation. Students were thoroughly consulted, including by questionnaire, on a restricted choice of sixth form uniform, surprising the leadership by choosing in the end to stick in the end to the present blazers, rather than choosing the option of wearing smart suits.
65. Formal links between the leadership and management of the sixth form and the senior leadership team are not strong. This is recognised by the school, and there are plans in hand to improve this.
66. All departments inspected are at least satisfactorily led and managed but there is a range from satisfactory (physics, information technology, business studies and physical education) through to very good (geography, psychology and religious studies). There are areas that require improvement in all departments, more in some than others. Department managers at The Crossley Heath school are generally good at what they do best, organising so that their students do well in external examinations. With a few significant exceptions they are less good at monitoring and evaluating the work of their colleagues in order to determine and share good ideas and best practice in teaching and learning. Some departments, geography is one, are very good indeed at producing good quality documentation, including material specifically aimed at preparing students for achieving the highest possible grades in their subjects. Other departments have been slower to recognise the need to have more formality in departmental planning, in having clearer and more comparable assessment systems across a department and across the school as a whole. Lesson planning, in terms of the content to be covered, is competently done on the whole. But planning in the sense of learning objectives which are aimed at challenging students as individuals, rather than as a whole group, is an idea which has yet to permeate the school. A very

good start has been made by the new headteacher, both to explain this concept to parents and to plan to introduce it throughout the school, backed up with sufficient in-service training to make it clear to teachers exactly what it involves, and the benefits it holds for students.

67. Financial control is good, although strategic financial planning is just beginning, with the arrival of the new headteacher, to be formally linked to an overall development plan which in turn is matched to departmental plans. Costs in the sixth form are carefully balanced with those from the rest of the school. Group sizes are large and attainment is high at the end of both years. There are very few small sized groups in either Year 12 or Year 13, and many groups are bordering on being as large as 20 students. The sixth form is certainly cost-effective and gives good value for money. The school has in recent years made very good use of capital funds generated from the sale of a small section of land.
68. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities except for ensuring that religious education is taught to all students in the sixth form, and for making sure that the progress of students with special educational needs is monitored by means of an individual education plan. Risk assessments in physical education and a daily act of collective worship are also not presently in place.

Resources

69. Overall, the quality and range of resources for the sixth form are good. Staffing is good overall, with appropriately qualified teachers in all subject areas. There is a good balance of age and experience, and arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are good. The quality and number of non-teaching support staff are good, with the exception of laboratory technical support in physics, where insufficient time is provided.
70. The quality of accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school benefits from architecturally listed buildings of some distinction, which are both a blessing and a millstone. When funds permit it is possible to remodel the interior of some rooms but usually it is not possible to make small rooms any larger. The school consequently has an appropriate range of specialist facilities but some departments, sometimes those with large numbers of students, have to teach in very cramped conditions. In art, information technology, physical education, and design and technology, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The planned sixth form ICT suite is not yet ready for use. In physical education the small size of gymnasias (and swimming pool) restrict the range of activities for which they can be used. The unsatisfactory design and technology accommodation is soon to be considerably enhanced by the new workshops which are presently being built. In chemistry, physics and biology the quality of accommodation is good.
71. Learning resources are good overall, and they are used well. There are, however, some deficiencies in history, physical education and geography. The recent acquisition of modern textbooks for science students has helped to enhance the overall provision in physics and biology. The level of resourcing in the ICT department is good, but access to ICT equipment for most other departments is too limited for them to make as much use of it as they could.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for A level courses completed in 2000 [the latest year for which national comparisons are available] and in the case of AS for 2001 to show results from the first group of entries [but with no national figures yet available].

GCE A level courses 2000

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	27	85	89	56	45	6.4	5.9
Chemistry	20	95	89	60	42	6.6	5.9
Biology	21	100	88	62	34	6.9	5.3
Physics	13	77	88	31	41	4.6	5.7
Geology	10	100	89	100	31	9.0	5.2
Full Design and Technology	3	100	92	33	29	6.0	5.4
Business Studies	10	100	91	40	30	6.4	5.3
Economics	9	100	88	56	36	7.1	5.4
Information Technology	11	100	85	9	23	4.7	4.8
Physical education	14	100	91	50	25	7.0	4.9
Art and Design	9	100	96	89	45	9.1	6.4
Music	2	100	93	100	35	10.0	5.72
Geography	34	100	92	97	37	9.2	5.7
History	16	100	89	25	34	5.4	5.4
Religious Studies	11	100	91	73	35	8.2	5.6
Psychology	22	86	88	41	35	5.6	5.3
English Language	26	96	90	35	29	5.6	5.2
English Literature	20	95	96	40	36	5.7	5.9
French	4	100	91	100	39	9.5	5.7
German	8	88	92	38	41	5.0	5.9
General Studies	96	95	85	50	28	6.5	4.9

GCE AS level courses- 2001 The first year of the Year 12 entries – but with no national comparison figures available as yet

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	46	72		31		2.0	
Chemistry	28	100		64		3.8	
Biology	30	100		60		3.6	
Physics	20	95		40		2.8	
Geology	8	100		75		4.3	
Design and technology	5	80		0		1.0	
Economics	45	100		47		3.4	
ICT	34	97		12		2.3	
Physical education	19	100		32		2.8	
Art	20	100		75		3.8	
Music	2	100		50		3.5	
Geography	31	100		81		4.1	
History	18	100		56		3.7	
Religious Studies	8	100		13		2.6	
Psychology	28	96		46		3.3	
English language	39	100		85		4.3	
English literature	19	100		60		3.8	
French	14	100		43		3.4	
German	16	75		44		2.6	
General Studies	106	95		18		2.5	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics were all inspected, and work in geology was sampled. Geology is an increasingly popular subject in which standards of attainment are excellent as a result of very good and enthusiastic teaching.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are above national averages, and the standard of work seen on inspection is high.
- Teaching quality is good overall.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very positive.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures are not developed so that performance data includes short-term individual student targets that enhance learning and speedily identify any areas of under-achievement.
- Information and communication technology is not used to enrich and support learning.
- Development planning is not sharp enough to give the clarity and cohesion in the direction of the subject necessary to ensure that monitoring and evaluation promotes consistency of provision, particularly in the sharing of good practice.

Standards and achievement

72. Standards of attainment in A level GCE examinations are above average in 2000 and in recent years when compared with all schools nationally but are slightly below those of selective schools. Results have improved since the last inspection when they were slightly below the national average for all schools. In the 2000 examinations half the candidates obtained either a grade A or grade B, compared with 56 percent in other selective schools and 43 percent in all schools. The proportion of students who did not achieve within the A-E grade range (15 percent) was similar to that seen nationally, but significantly higher than that in other selective schools (5 percent). In the 2001 examinations the overall pass rate dipped, mainly because 20 percent of candidates at A Level, and almost 30 percent at the new AS Level, did not achieve a pass grade. In the years 1997 to 2000, five students studied further mathematics at advanced level and four achieved a grade A and one a grade B.
73. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' written work is high, particularly in Year 13. The work reflects the standards required for the higher examination grades and indicates that the achievement of the majority of students is at a satisfactory level, considering their minimum starting point into the sixth form of at least grade B. Notes are well structured and there is a systematic progression in both depth and difficulty. A good feature is that many students annotate their notes to suit their individual learning needs. The clarity of diagrams, particularly in mechanics, is very good and promotes understanding. The overall quality of solutions varies, with some are of a very

good standard. In statistics, however, some graphs are lacking in rigour because they do not, for example, reflect the continuous nature of the data. Although the assessment of work lacks detail and formality, it is evident that most students make satisfactory progress over time. Male and female students do equally well and, in the early weeks of Year 12, students demonstrate that they have been given a secure grounding in the essential algebraic manipulation skills that are required at this level. The use of information and communication technology was not evident in lessons or in students' prior work.

Quality of education

74. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. In individual lessons the quality ranges from satisfactory to very good. Two particular strengths characterise most lessons, the subject command of the teachers and the very good relationships between teachers and students. The combination of these two factors, and the positive attitude to study of the students, ensure that lessons are conducted at a challenging pace and systematically build well on prior learning. Students consistently apply themselves to their work with a high level of sustained concentration. In the best lessons the teachers' enthusiasm for mathematics is transmitted to the students. Their command of subject enables them to formulate questions which promote learning with understanding and they use any incorrect student responses skilfully to isolate misconceptions. For example, when working with increasingly sophisticated work on the binomial expansion, the teacher illuminates understanding by drawing comparisons between the simplification of algebraic fractions with those of ordinary numbers. Marking and assessment of work varies in both frequency and detail, but the better quality predominates. In the best instances, there is detailed analysis and correction of inaccuracies, with supporting comments. In less successful, but nevertheless, satisfactory lessons the teachers do not fully involve the students in their learning. This is mainly because the teachers too readily provide answers to their own questions, thereby missing the opportunity to develop understanding by building on student responses.

Leadership and management

75. The management of the department is sound but the leadership is less than satisfactory because there are weaknesses in prescribing the educational direction of the subject. Inadequate monitoring results in some inconsistent provision, even though all the mathematics teachers, and particularly the head of department, are committed to doing their best for the students and to improving results. At present, most students produce attainment levels which are consistent with their potential but the data indicates that there is some under-achievement, particularly by those students who complete their A level course without achieving a pass grade. A sharper departmental development plan should focus on developing strategies that speedily identify and remedy any under-achievement and ensure that the good teaching practice that clearly exists is shared and promoted more widely. There is a good match of teachers to the requirements of the various modules in the A and AS (Advanced Supplementary) level mathematics courses.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of students.
- Students have positive attitudes towards their work and are very keen to do well.
- Students achieve well, acquiring good levels of knowledge and understanding across courses.
- Fieldwork makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Accommodation and resources are good.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment does not result in students receiving enough precise feedback on how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.
- Performance data is not analysed sufficiently in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the department.
- Students' independent learning skills and their active involvement in lessons is not always encouraged enough.
- Curriculum planning does not take enough account of meeting the differing needs of students.
- Planning for development within the department is not well enough established.

Standards and achievement

76. GCE A level examination results in biology vary from year to year, but generally are high and above the national average. Results were particularly high in 2000, when they were well above the national average and above those from other selective schools. All students gained a pass at grades A to E, and almost two-thirds gained a grade A or B. A level results in 2001 show a considerable dip, however, and have fallen to their lowest level for several years. All but one pupil gained a pass at grades A to E, but under one fifth gained grades A or B. There are not yet any national comparative figures for the new Advanced Supplementary (AS) examination taken by pupils at the end of Year 12 in 2001 but the results compare favourably with other subjects within the school.
77. The standard of work of those currently taking biology in the sixth form is above average. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course but are already demonstrating a good grasp of the detail of cell structure and molecules and their relationship to function. Students in Year 13 have good levels of knowledge and a good understanding of the concepts being taught, and this is seen in the quality of their written work in particular, where they often give detailed and extended explanations. Their practical and experimental skills are also good. Particularly high standards of work were seen amongst Year 13 students who had just returned from their fieldwork course. Their understanding of investigative techniques and their ability to apply relevant statistical tests was impressive. A group of students were able to explain very clearly the approach they had taken to test their hypothesis that the characteristics of different habitats have an impact on the organisms living there. Generally, whilst students' skills of critical analysis and evaluation are sound, they are not as well developed as other areas. Some accounts of practical work and experiments, for example, lack explanation of the implications of the results obtained.

78. Both male and female students, including those who have English as an additional language, are currently making good progress in their courses overall, and are achieving well. In 2000, value added analysis indicates the students performed better than expected, whilst in 2001, similar analysis indicated the students did not perform as well as expected. The department reports that this is due to a small number of pupils with English as an additional language who entered the sixth form from other schools and who found the language requirements of the course demanding. The department did not provide any additional support for these pupils other than what they received routinely in lessons. Whilst achievement generally is good, there is the potential for higher standards to be attained.

Quality of education

79. The teaching of biology is good overall. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge plus an obvious enjoyment of biology, and they ensure that there is thorough coverage of the course requirements for students. As a result, students steadily acquire knowledge and understanding, and receive a good grounding in the subject. Teachers have high expectations and they pitch the work at a level that provides a strong degree of challenge to pupils. Students are committed to their work, have positive attitudes and are very keen to do well. They work hard to meet their teachers' expectations and they demonstrate perseverance in the face of demanding work. For example, many students in a Year 12 lesson found the making of models to illustrate different molecular structures difficult but they worked at it until they had completed the models accurately. Teachers generally use questioning well to test students' knowledge and extend their thinking, but they do not always fully ascertain the degree of understanding of all students. Whilst some students volunteer answers to questions in class, not all actively contribute. In the Year 13 lesson following on from the fieldwork, however, there was a very marked degree of enthusiasm with all students actively involved, and very good independent learning skills in evidence. These students also used ICT in their work to a greater degree than was seen in more routine classwork. Areas for development in teaching include trying to encourage more confident and active participation by students in lessons; improving students' independent learning skills; determining individual students' degree of understanding more precisely, giving specific feedback to them on how to improve and increasing the use of ICT.
80. Biology usually attracts at least 20 students in the sixth form each year, and in the current Year 13 there are 30 students. Most complete the courses they take, and a good number of those taking the AS course last year have gone onto to take the A2 course this year. The curriculum is appropriately planned to meet the new course requirements. It is being further developed, but as yet there is not enough attention given to meeting the differing needs of students, such as those who come into the sixth form from other schools, those with English as an additional language, and different levels of prior attainment. The main area requiring development is assessment. Whilst students' attainment is assessed and feedback is given to them, it does not contain sufficient precise and specific information on what to do to improve. Marking, in particular, is often fairly sparse, and lacking in detail. There is also insufficient analysis of performance data, especially relating to value-added, to measure the effectiveness of the department and promote improvement. Fieldwork is a strength of the curriculum but other enrichment activities in science are limited. The laboratory accommodation for biology, and the range and quality of learning resources, are good.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management of the department are sound. Strengths include the fact that the department is efficiently organised and the departmental manager is aware of areas that require improvement. However, the development planning processes and action required to bring about necessary change are not well enough established.

CHEMISTRY

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

Strengths

- Achievement is good, high standards are maintained throughout the sixth form courses.
- Teaching is good; students are kept interested and on task by well organised and knowledgeable teaching.
- Students in chemistry are keen and attentive on the whole, and relationships are very good.
- Most aspects of leadership and organisation are good.

Areas for improvement

- Development planning is rudimentary and needs sharpening.
- Assessment needs to be more consistent and learning targets more explicit.

Standards and achievement

82. GCE A level results vary from year to year but generally they at least match the national average (1998) and are sometimes above (2000) or well above average (1999). In 2000, 60 percent of students obtained the higher grades A and B. In 2001, 100 per cent of an entry of 21 students achieved at least grade E and over 40% attained either A or B grades. These results match results of selective schools. Advanced Supplementary (AS) results at the end of Year 12 in 2001 compare favourably with results for comparable subjects in the school. A healthy balance of male and female students study chemistry in the sixth form and their relative results are comparable year on year, Sometimes the males do better and sometimes the females. Minority ethnic pupils achieve as well as other students on the whole.
83. The standard of work seen during the inspection is variable but much of it is above average. Students in Year 12 are only a few weeks into the course but are achieving well, as expected from students who began with at least GCSE grade B and who are being well taught. They show good knowledge and understanding of basic organic chemistry nomenclature. They are self-confidently handling glassware which fits quickly together for the first time, and safely refluxing potentially hazardous mixtures of corrosive and flammable reagents. Students cope well with essential work of a transitional nature, bringing work of GCSE standard, such as the working out of chemical formulae, up to the higher AS level standard. Some students, particularly some who joined the sixth form from other schools, are less practised and less skilled in for, example, titrating reagents against each other. They show the need for some catch-up support which teachers willingly give them at lunchtimes. Year 13 students, reduced in numbers by just six out of 28 from last year's AS

classes are also achieving well. This is the result of effective and demanding teaching, linked to persistent but fair monitoring and nagging of those few students who fall behind with their assignments.

Quality of education

84. Teaching is good overall and some of it is very good. All three teachers have very secure knowledge and command of their subject, plus the capacity to make it interesting. Good use was seen of modern texts and of equipment, but especially of a very useful series of CD ROMs as part of the day-to-day teaching to consolidate, for example, Year 13 students' knowledge of catalysis. Expectations are high, especially of students in Year 13. Notable efforts are made to make sure that students remain up-to-date with their assignments. Teachers' questioning skills are sharp and clearly focused. In a Year 13 lesson observed, carefully chosen questions, directed at individual students by name, made sure that every student remained alert. Questions about biological catalysts of greater difficulty were targeted at those students who were expected to know the most about enzymes, the students who also study biology. There was some inconsistency in the use of protective clothing in different Year 12 classes, but this was discussed by the department and put right by the end of that same day.
85. Students in chemistry are keen and attentive on the whole, and relationships are very good. They have mature and positive attitudes towards the subject and react very well to the well organised and demanding teaching. They are becoming more independent in their learning as they adjust to the approach used, which stretches and challenges students more than some conventional courses do. There are sometimes students who are allowed to be passive for too long in lessons. More encouragement of them to make their own notes more often would be one way to counteract this.

Leadership and management

86. The department is generally well led and managed. There are developing schemes of work which act as a pathway through the scheme in the text. The new examination specifications are being well implemented and in some cases modified and improved slightly. The refurbished accommodation helps the quality of learning, and the range and condition of available learning resources is good. Teamwork, including the deployment of the very helpful and well-qualified technicians, is good. A slightly more formal system of monitoring the work of the department is needed in order to share the good practice within it. Development planning is a bit rudimentary as yet. Assessment is not yet consistent across the department and is not clear enough about what students need to do to improve their work. The purpose of particular exercises needs to be made more explicit to students more often.

PHYSICS

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

Strengths

- In the best lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge well to challenge students and have high expectations of their achievement.
- The quality and use of resources is good.
- The quality of accommodation is good.
- Students show positive attitudes to their work and enjoy good relationships with their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- In the least successful lessons, students are insufficiently challenged by questioning and by tasks which match differing levels of ability.
- The curriculum provided does not always take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment.
- Assessment is not used effectively to set clear learning targets for individual pupils, or to help them improve the planning of future work.
- The procedures for identifying priorities and evaluating the quality of provision, are not yet sufficiently formalised.

Standards and achievement

87. The GCE A Level examination results have varied over the past four years. For two of the four years results matched the national average or were above average. In 2000, however, the most recent year for which there are validated national results, students' performance overall was below average for all schools, and below average when compared with selective schools. Four out of thirteen candidates gained higher grade A and B passes, but three failed to achieve a grade E. In 2001, five of the eleven candidates achieved the higher grades and two failed to achieve grade E. The proportion of female students taking the subject has been consistently low and therefore gender differences in results are not significant.
88. Students in Year 12 are at an early stage of their course, but are making sound progress in their study of radioactivity. They are beginning to understand the differences between different types of particles, and can use the principles of conservation of mass and energy competently when writing and balancing equations representing radioactive decay. Students in Year 13 make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the Laws of Motion, mechanical energy and the application of the concept of conservation of energy. In work seen, students show a sound grasp of electrical circuitry and of heat transfer and they can use their knowledge to tackle problems and interpret data confidently. Standards overall are average. Some students are achieving satisfactorily, but some are underachieving.

Quality of education

89. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, although in some lessons it is good. Teaching is not as strong as at the previous inspection. In the best lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge well to challenge students'

thinking through incisive questioning. When given such opportunities, students invariably respond well, and more able ones confidently use their prior knowledge in new situations. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of resources to give pertinent demonstrations, which illustrate concepts well and stimulate students' interest. This was exemplified in one lesson on periodic motion and another lesson on wave interference. However, in the least successful lesson, the teacher talked for too long and used too few opportunities to change the lesson pace or activity in order to maintain interest and to assess students' learning through skilful questioning. As a result, some less confident students remain confused at times whilst higher attaining ones are not given sufficient challenge to extend their knowledge. Nevertheless, most students make at least sound progress. Teachers assess students' work regularly through end-of-unit tests and practice examination questions, and use these assessments to provide them with predicted examination grades. However, assessment is not used effectively to provide students with targeted areas for improvement; neither is assessment data used systematically to help teachers plan future lessons and modify course materials.

90. The programme of study is planned appropriately to meet the new A/S and A2 specifications, and teachers have found additional time, during lunch breaks and after school to give additional support to students encountering difficulties with their work. However, the curriculum does not take full account of the differences in ability of students, particularly in such basic skills areas as literacy, information technology and mathematics.

Leadership and management

91. Work in the department is soundly led and managed overall, but there are significant areas for development. The head of department provides a good role model as teacher and manager of the subject and successfully works in co-operation with other senior colleagues in leading the science department. He recognises that the present arrangements for monitoring teaching and evaluating departmental priorities and targets are not yet sufficiently formalised. The department benefits from good quality accommodation and resources. The number of good quality text books has recently improved and the school library contains a useful additional stock of appropriate text books and CD-ROMs. The department benefits from two well-qualified teachers, one of whom is very experienced. It currently has insufficient laboratory technician time to meet fully teachers' requirements. This results in teachers using their time inefficiently, such as in erecting and dismantling equipment.

BUSINESS

The economics and business studies course was inspected.

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STUDIES

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

Strengths

- Over the last four years results at GCE A level in both subjects have generally been above the national average.
- Students show interest in their work, have a good grasp of economic concepts and show good progress in their learning.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and provide a range of well-structured activities to promote learning.
- Lessons are well planned and use a range of resources suited to the differing needs of students.
- Assessments are effectively marked and moderated.

Areas for improvement

- Lesson plans do not identify students' learning objectives.
- There is not yet a structured and systematic approach to monitoring, evaluating and mentoring the work of individual students.
- There is too little access to and use of ICT.
- There is not yet a structured and systematic approach to the teaching of key skills in the subject.

Standards and Achievement

92. The GCE A level examination results in 2000 in economics and business studies were well above the national average and above the average for selective schools. Results over the last four years have generally been above average but in 2001 they fell in both subjects. Numbers of students taking the courses have fluctuated in the last four years but the new AS/A2 courses have proved to be popular and a increasing number of students are taking the subject. The AS results for 2001 are good but at this time it is not yet possible to formally compare them with national data. From 1997 to 2000 all students who took the examination gained a pass grade in both subjects at Advanced level.
93. The standards of work of students currently studying economics and business studies are above average. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course but already show a sound understanding of basic economic concepts and have a good understanding of market demand and supply, the function of the price mechanism and how to draw and interpret demand and supply graphs. They confidently approach their teachers and appropriately interrogate information presented to them. Students are achieving well.
94. In Year 13, students attain above the national expectation and achieve well. Note taking is generally of a high standard without it being closely monitored by the teachers. Students have a good understanding of the requirements of the A2 course and show higher level knowledge, understanding and skills. Students show good understanding of the spectrum of competition, the role of price in the market, cost pricing and indirect costs. They show good recall skills and effectively question the teacher in order to ensure that they fully

understood the work. Students have a very good understanding of the requirements of the formal assessments.

Quality of Education

95. Teaching is good overall and teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lesson plans provide a useful context to teaching by confirming teaching objectives, content, activities and homework. Learning objectives which provide focus on what is to be learned, rather than on what content is to be covered, are lacking. A sound range of teaching approaches and structured activities are utilised and there is a suitable range of teaching and learning resources. Students' learning was particularly enhanced where a range of materials suitable for the differing needs of students, including extension materials for the highest attaining students, were provided.
96. Lessons were characterised by good relations between teachers and students, brisk pace, effective questioning by teachers and students and challenge and encouragement. Assessments are effectively marked and moderated. Documentation on student attainment is good although the department has no agreed policy on day-to-day marking of students' work. Students do not have dedicated time to talk individually to their teachers, and the formal monitoring of their progress and the setting of individual targets are not well established.
97. Students learn effectively. They are attentive, interested and respond well to challenge. They support and help each other well and confidently contribute to discussion. They also are able to work independently using textbooks, written articles and other resources in order to extract information, make notes and apply economic concepts.
98. There is not yet sufficient access to ICT provision for students, and there is not a structured and systematic approach to their learning of key skills.

Leadership and Management

99. The department is soundly managed but there are weaknesses in leadership which result mainly from the lack of non-contact time available to the manager of the subject. For many years the manager of business studies has been the sole teacher of economics and business studies. He has effectively managed this department. This is the second year of a part-time, newly qualified teacher working in the department. This teacher is not monitored and supported in a systematic manner. Departmental meetings are not yet formalised with agendas, minutes and outcomes/actions. There is no detailed department development plan which clarifies objectives, success criteria and time frames for action.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology was inspected.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Examination results are usually well above national levels for all schools.
- The level of resourcing is good.
- There is some excellent marking and some high quality handouts and worksheets are used in lessons.

Areas for improvement:

- Learning objectives in lessons are not specific or applied to the needs of individual students.
- Some students in Year 13 are not achieving as well as they should.
- Informal assessment is not strong enough.
- Links between the students' computers and the school's learning network are not well enough developed.
- Procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the department have yet to be established.

STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

100. In 2000, A level results were in line with the national figures for the subject, but fell short of the results of selective schools. Results are similar in 2001. Results had been higher in previous years. Female students generally perform better when there are more of them. When they outnumber male students, they have outperformed them. When numbers are smaller, they do not. This is a popular subject, and most students complete the course.
101. The work done by students, as seen during the inspection, was above average, but rarely better than this except for final coursework files. These were often of a higher standard, showing professionalism and flair. The brief to 'address real local needs' in this course work results in students being more engaged with their work, which is reflected in its higher quality. In their lessons, the students generally show an appropriate knowledge of the elements of the subject. They often show a good grasp of relevant areas of technology, such as the design process, and of business studies, such as aspects of marketing and resource management. Very few of those just starting the AS course in Year 12 are yet fluent users of word processing and spreadsheet software. For instance, for most, the rate of typing is too slow to allow them to become immersed in their work. By Year 13, students are proficient in word processing and in spreadsheet usage and programming and have a clear understanding of the technological approach to problem-solving. Few students in either year group show any great excitement or enthusiasm for ICT. Although achievement is satisfactory overall, some students are working below their capacity and are not achieving standards as high as they could. This is largely because of some deficiencies in planning which limit the effectiveness of teaching. In all the lessons seen the quality of female students' work is higher than that of the males.

Quality of education

102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally better. Positive features include the detailed subject knowledge of the teachers, both of whom gained much relevant experience before they joined the profession. This enables them to help the students understand the applications of the subject in the 'real world' and also to gain in their understanding of how business and industry work. Teachers use a good variety of resources in lessons. These include very well designed handouts and worksheets, which help students to learn and encourage them to have pride in their work. The marking of students' work is sometimes extremely thorough. This helps students to become very familiar with their strengths and weaknesses and to know how to build on the former in order to improve.
103. The teachers have explicit objectives for their lessons, and share these well with their classes. However, these objectives are not specific enough to be able to support really high quality teaching and learning. They do not take into account the differing needs and prior attainment of students, and they do not enable the teachers to assess the extent to which individual students have progressed. They also do not ensure that lessons are interactive or exciting enough, or that there is a fast enough pace to learning. Improving planning and the teaching based upon these plans by addressing these weaknesses is a main area for development for the department.

Leadership and management

104. Management is now satisfactory as a result of some recent improvements to resourcing within the department. The school has not long had adequate ICT accommodation, equipment and staffing to meet the needs of all the students. The room used for the advanced classes is fairly new, but the computers in it are not yet on the school network; also it has various limitations that make it less than ideal as a learning environment. The appointment of a second full-time teacher in the department and a technician is relatively recent. Prior to their arrival, the head of ICT had, in addition to his teaching timetable, responsibilities for hardware and software development and maintenance, and also for network management. With the above changes, the subject manager is now able to give increased attention to leadership and management of the department. Developing organisational and administrative systems and ensuring that there are procedures in place for monitoring the effectiveness of the department require particular improvement.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education was inspected.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- In the first year of the GCE A level examination in 2000, students gained results that were well above the national average.
- Teachers make great efforts to enable students to pursue their practical strengths in examination work.
- High standards are achieved in extra-curricular sport, and there are very good opportunities for the gifted and talented to excel in selected sports.
- Relationships between staff and students are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of the marking of written coursework and students' files to ensure consistency and high standards.
- The procedures for assessing and recording students' attainment and progress.
- Health and safety risk assessments in physical activities have not been completed.

Standards and achievement

105. In the first year of the GCE A level examination in physical education in 2000, results were well above the national average. All the students gained a pass grade and half the group gained the highest grades, A and B. In 2001, results at A level were good. All students gained a pass, but the proportion gaining the higher grades was lower than in 2000. In the first year of the GCE AS examination, 2001, for which there are no national comparisons, all Year 12 students passed, but results at the higher levels were more modest.
106. Work seen during the inspection shows that the students currently in Years 12 and 13 are producing work of average standards. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement. All groups of students make progress at the same rate.
107. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course and they are achieving satisfactorily. In preparation for a weekend in the Peak District, as part of their mountain activities course, students show a generally sound knowledge and understanding of map and compass work. They are confident in orientating their maps, can pinpoint their position accurately, and explain how they could use features represented on the map to determine this. The majority of the group understand and demonstrate how to use back bearings to confirm their position, although a significant number have to be reminded, or shown how to do this. High attaining and more experienced students play an active role in explaining the process to their peers, particularly when the task progresses to taking bearings from the map, with a view to walking in a specific direction. Although map-reading skills are satisfactory, compass work proves to be less secure for a significant minority of the students. The students' written coursework shows that they have already gained a sound command of the technical language of the subject, and can apply it, effectively, in their preparation for the expedition.
108. In Year 13, students achieve satisfactorily overall, and in some lessons they are progressing well, because of effective teaching that makes demands on them. In one lesson, a small group of students show a good awareness of how

the past has influenced the present sporting scene. They participate readily in a discussion on the concept of sport as a form of social control, and present their views articulately. The students are motivated by video extracts of popular 'mob' games and draw effectively on their own experiences to make connections with present day sport. In another lesson, students used their knowledge and experience of physical education and sport in England to make perceptive comparisons with sport in America, which led to a lively debate on the ethics of high level sport.

109. Students showed above average levels of attainment in an extra-curricular sixth form netball team practice. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of tactics and techniques, which they apply effectively in play. This under-19 netball team won the Calderdale District Netball Championships, earlier in the year. High standards are also achieved by boys in rugby, well illustrated by the success of the under-18 rugby team, which reached the last eight in the national Rugby Football Union Vase competition, open to all schools. Four sixth form boys represent Yorkshire at rugby.

Quality of education

110. Teaching is good overall. The most effective teaching promotes very good learning through lively, well-paced, demanding lessons, which stimulate students to extend the depth and breadth of their learning through reflection, formulating new ideas and presenting convincing arguments to support their views. Very good subject knowledge is a strength of all teachers. In a Year 13 class, students were motivated by enthusiastic teaching, well-focused questions and excellent use of resources to maintain a good pace of learning. They made a significant contribution based on their own knowledge and experience, with particular reference to the development of rules of play in games. Some teaching was not as dynamic and, although sound overall, lacked the planning, pace and rigour to challenge all students appropriately, particularly the high attainers. There is insufficient use of clearly defined targets based on specific learning goals to ensure a more rigorous approach to raising standards and achievement.
111. The quality of Year 13 students' written coursework varies but, in general, presentation is poor and files are not well organised. Such files cannot make a satisfactory revision resource. A significant minority of low attainers' files contains insufficient marked work to show the depth of study required, and there is an emphasis on descriptive or factual writing. High attaining students' files reflect more extended explanation, justification and analytical work. Some good examples show their capacity for independent research and study, with good use of ICT. There is limited evidence of regular marking, and no indication that missing work should be completed. Marking lacks consistency. Although students receive some helpful comments about how they might improve their work, this is not always the case. Longer comments on students' work, analysing its strengths and weaknesses, are rare. The monitoring and marking of written work is a key area for improvement, leading towards raising attainment and achievement.
112. Very good relationships between staff and students are creating a positive learning ethos in lessons and extra-curricular sport. Students' attitudes are good and they are enthusiastic about physical education. They are attentive, work productively when given a strong lead, and learn well. Some low attaining students tend to be passive learners, and require teacher intervention to

ensure that they contribute actively during class discussion. Students support and help each other well, as seen in the expedition planning lessons. Independent learning skills are developing satisfactorily. However, when students set their own pace in lessons, the productivity rate slows, and their work could be better.

Leadership and management

113. The leadership and management of physical education are generally satisfactory, but there are areas for improvement in management. The physical education component of the Years 12 and 13 enrichment programme is a strength. Students are offered a variety of off-site recreational options, such as skiing and trampolining, which adds breadth to their previous experience of the subject.

114. The staff are a strong experienced team, but it is unfortunate that the head of department is the only male specialist teacher. He has a heavy workload, balancing an extensive boys' extra-curricular commitment, with his management responsibilities. This may explain the lack of developmental planning in the Sixth form. The identification and planning of priorities, policies, and guidance on the implementation of the AS and A2 specifications, and other documentation to support the work in Years 12 and 13, are only in the very early stages of development. Procedures for assessing and recording students' attainment and progress need further development. Monitoring of the work of the department, particularly students' written coursework, is required. Rigour and pace in lessons is not promoted through monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching, or the sharing of best practice. Health and safety risk assessments in physical activities have not yet been completed. The indoor accommodation for the subject is inadequate for most games activities.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history, religious education and psychology were inspected.

GEOGRAPHY

The quality of provision in geography is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are very high.
- Standards of teaching in human geography are very high.
- There are high expectations of pupils to achieve well in examinations and to become good geographers.
- The department is very well organised and highly effective.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of students' attainment and progress is not sufficiently rigorous and does not make effective use of target setting.
- Although staff in the department work closely together and meet regularly, there is not any cross checking of each other's work or formal assessment of each other's teaching to ensure the dissemination of best practice.
- There are insufficient audio-visual resources and not enough use is made of ICT.
- The quality of accommodation in which geography is taught is poor.

Standards and achievement

115. GCSE A level results are excellent. Since the last inspection all students have passed the examination and the proportion of students gaining the highest grades has consistently been well above the national average and well above the average for selective schools. In the last three years over three-quarters of students have obtained the highest grades A/B. In 2000, nearly two thirds of the students passed at grade A and in 2001 just under half passed at grade A. In the first A/S level examination in 2001 all students achieved a pass grade, nearly one third of them achieving a pass at grade A, and four fifths achieving passes at grades A/B. Although national comparisons are not yet available, it is likely that these A/S results will represent attainment well above the national average and the average for selective schools.
116. Even though students in Year 12 are only three weeks into their course, the standard of work seen during the inspection is generally very high and students are achieving extremely well. In human geography, students already have a very good understanding of the basic concepts and terminology associated with population study. The quality of their written work, both in accuracy in their use of English and in its geographical content, is very high. They have good recall of their GCSE work and are able to build on it effectively in order to develop their skill in the use of statistical techniques such as the construction of scatter-graphs and the application of Spearman's rank correlation. They demonstrate their very good thinking skills in developing sound hypotheses to explain correlation between a range of variables that relate to stages of development and population growth, and the gross national product of a number of very different countries. Students' attainment in physical geography is not yet as high as in human geography and their independent written work is less extensive than in human geography. However their appreciation of the historical development of the theory of plate tectonics is good, as is their command of a new vocabulary. Two students who are new to the school and who did different work at GCSE, and one student, who did not study geography for GCSE, have some gaps in their knowledge. However, they are well supported by their teachers and fellow students, so are not disadvantaged in their potential achievement.
117. The standard of attainment seen in students' work in Year 13 is very high and they are achieving very well. Students relate reality to theory well. They have high levels of geographical skills plus an excellent geographical vocabulary. They are still able to recall GCSE work well and use it to support new understanding. They are able to create and interpret graphs thoughtfully and accurately in order to further their understanding of this theory, and to draw valid conclusions about urban land use from their perceptive interpretation of photographs and maps of central urban areas. Their fieldwork study in the Isle of Arran shows very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies they employed, and effective statistical analyses of their results that are used to support appropriate conclusions. The written work on physical geography in students' files from Year 12 is of a high standard. They make very good use of well-chosen case studies, using both local and distant examples, to illustrate how physical processes operate in practice. Maps, diagrams and photographs are effectively integrated into the text to clarify further the operation of the processes.

Quality of education

118. Teaching is good overall, ranging in quality from satisfactory to excellent. The excellent and very good teaching results from teachers' outstanding subject knowledge, thorough and detailed planning of every lesson, high expectations of students, and the use of a highly effective range of teaching strategies. These lessons begin with a clear link to the previous lesson plus an outline of the intended outcomes of the present lesson. They make frequent use of very good question and answer techniques; they provide a series of short and carefully timed activities, using a variety of up to date resources. All this ensures that students' learning is built up incrementally and securely during the lesson. The sense of pace in these lessons is heightened by the use of precise technical language by both students and teachers. This aids precision in thinking, ensures clear communication and encourages students in their feeling of involvement in the subject. Previous examination questions are extensively used and the teaching is related very well to examination requirements, although this is occasionally over-stated at the expense of developing a sense of pleasure in learning for its own sake.
119. Students are interested and attentive in these lessons. They concentrate extremely well, work hard, and their attention does not flag during the seventy-minute periods. Students' own prior knowledge and understanding is well incorporated into the lessons and they are encouraged to think for themselves and to come to their own understanding – with appropriate teacher support – so that the quality of their learning is very high. The combination of very good teaching with commitment and hard work from intellectually able students produces the exceptionally good examination results.
120. In some lessons the teaching is less well planned, expectations of students are not so high and the pace is slower, so that students are less attentive and they learn less in the lesson than they are capable of doing. Their descriptions of the characteristics of a range of rock samples in a lesson were superficial because the task was not clear. However, their commitment to the subject and their self motivation are sufficiently high that they still manage to complete work in all the areas of the course to a very high standard. Students' attitude to geography is very good. They put much effort into presenting their work very neatly, as well as ensuring that it is of high quality. Many of their files are models of clear and well ordered presentation. Geography is a popular A level choice and the numbers choosing to study it have increased in recent years. In 2001 it was the third largest subject entry, behind only mathematics, and General Studies, which all students have to follow.

Leadership and management

121. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department provides a very clear, enthusiastic and committed sense of direction to the subject. The departmental handbook is exemplary and includes a very detailed scheme of work that ensures very effective coverage of the course. Excellent guidance sheets have been developed for students which clarify all course requirements and offer students very practical advice on how to achieve high standards. The department has carried out its own, and accurate, evaluation of the reasons for its success: they include hard work from a well-qualified and experienced teaching staff.

122. There are two areas for development in management that are recognised by the department. The monitoring of students' attainment and progress is not sufficiently rigorous and does not make effective use of target setting. Although staff in the department work closely together and meet regularly, there is insufficient cross checking of each other's work and of formal assessment of each other's teaching to ensure the dissemination of best practice.
123. Although book resources in the department are adequate, audio-visual resources and access to ICT are not adequate. In practice, video film can be little used, as video equipment is not available at all in rooms where many geography lessons are taught and available only with difficulty in others. Students' understanding of a subject that is much concerned with knowing what features look like, prior to understanding why they look like that, is therefore diminished. There are no ICT resources in the department and access to school resources is very limited, so the curriculum is not enhanced through the use of the rich resources of ICT that are now available in geography.
124. The accommodation for the teaching of geography is unsatisfactory. Much of it takes place in two very small rooms, one of which is so small that it is very difficult for students to leave their seats, so they cannot use many resources with ease or carry out any sort of investigative work. This poor accommodation cannot but impact upon standards and it is a tribute to both students and their teachers that standards are so high in spite of the unsatisfactory accommodation.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good; it is knowledgeable, energetic, confident and distinguished by its clarity.
- Relationships are very good; teachers and students share an enthusiasm for the subject.
- Teachers have high expectations; students respond well to the academic demands made of them.

Areas for improvement

- Not all necessary departmental documentation is in place.
- Procedures for assessment, monitoring and target setting are not fully developed.
- Access to ICT is too limited.

Standards and achievement

125. Standards at GCE A Level between 1998 and 2000 have been in line with or slightly above the national average, although below average for selective schools. The 2001 results seem to indicate an improvement, but there are no published national standards to compare with yet. All the examination candidates achieved A to D grades and over 50 percent gained A or B grades. There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students or of those with a minority ethnic background.

126. Students currently in Years 12 and 13 achieved GCSE grades well above the national average. Observation of lesson and scrutiny of samples of students' work confirmed that the standards they are currently attaining are above average and achievement is good. Year 13 students are able to analysis the political motivation of Bismarck or Baldwin. They can explain the circumstances in which political parties flourish or fail, for example, how the young Labour Party was scuppered by the 'Red Scare'. They understand the vested interest of the social groups which supported the government in Tsarist Russia. They use historical terminology – social, political and economic – confidently and accurately. Often they react to questions rather than initiating discussions but they do so intelligently and with considerable energy. They listed with appreciation the skills which they believe they have acquired in history classes – to analyse, to communicate, to debate and to work as a team.
127. Students in Year 12 are a short way into their course. Most already have an impressive knowledge of the topics studied. They use source material effectively. They are familiar with political and economic terminology, for example, “ gas and water socialism” and Imperial Preference. Working as a group they quickly compiled a list of arguments for and against tariff reform. They are able to compare poor working conditions in Britain with the high wage economy which brought prosperity to America.

Quality of education

128. The students' good progress is the result of the good teaching in the department. In the lessons observed, teaching was all good or very good. Teaching is direct, energetic and confident. Subject knowledge is very good. Teachers give a clear lead to students in lessons, but allow them the scope to take some responsibility for their own learning. By careful questioning the teacher establishes the framework but pupils provide the information to fill in an argument. The pace is fast. The most constant question is “why?” Teachers make learning relevant. For example, the division in the Conservative Party over tariff reform was compared to the contemporary split over the Euro. Expectations are high. Students are encouraged to offer opinions and to make judgements, for example, on the success or failure on the Tsarist policy of Russification. Supporting evidence must be accurate. Emphasis is placed on precise vocabulary. Assignments are clearly explained. Students know what they are expected to do. Sometimes they are held on too close a rein, whilst at other times they are left to work things out for themselves. For example, they are asked to unravel Marxist political theory from their independent reading of the Communist Manifesto. Teaching styles in the lessons observed were not varied, in part because one of the teaching rooms precludes the use of videos. Class access to ICT is limited.
129. Students enjoy the course. Recruitment into the department is good. Students recognise the academic value of the subject. They are beginning to understand the processes of social and political change and to appreciate the way in which the often vivid connections which are made illuminate their understanding of the present. Relationships are very good. Students co-operate well and support each other. Those from minority ethnic groups are completely integrated. Most students are fully involved in lessons and their enjoyment of debate and controversy is patent. Lessons have a very pleasant, good humoured, hard working atmosphere. Students appreciate being treated as intellectual equals.

Leadership and management

130. Work in the subject is well led and well managed. The two history specialists work efficiently as a team. Some aspects of departmental management are not fully developed. Departmental documentation is insufficiently formalised. The marking of assignments is accurate and has a positive impact on the quality of writing. Formal assessment, monitoring and targeting procedures are not fully developed. Textbooks are up-to-date. As at the time of the last inspection not enough relevant reference books are available.
131. The history department is progressive, forward-looking and receptive to change. Teachers are committed to raising standards. The department lacks the sets of special topic books pitched at first-year university level necessary to stretch these high attaining students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of provision in religious education is **very good**.

Strengths

- Student achievement is good.
- Examination results at A level in recent years have been well above the national average, especially at the higher grades.
- Students write with confidence and Year 13 students have an extremely good grasp of concepts and specialist terminology.
- Teaching is very good; careful course planning and imaginative approaches in the classroom help students to acquire insight into religious beliefs and ideas.
- Confident mastery of the subject by the specialist teacher helps students to develop secure knowledge and informed understanding.
- The subject is very well managed and links with faith communities in the region enrich students' classroom experience.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment of written work needs to be more specific in telling pupils how to improve.
- Target-setting needs to be more fully developed to complement improved assessment.
- Greater interaction between pupils in lessons should be encouraged, to develop speaking and thinking skills.

Standards and achievement

132. The standards attained by students in the A level examination have improved considerably over the past three years. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades in 2000 was almost twice the national average, all students gained a pass grade and the average points per pupil were well above the average for both maintained schools and selective schools. Although the proportion gaining the highest grades in the 2001 examination was lower than in previous years, most students performed in line with expectations and all gained a pass grade. Few boys take the examination but when they do there is no significant difference between their results and those of girls. The final results for the A/S level examination in 2001 were not available at the time of

the inspection, since the school has raised a number of concerns with the examination board relating to the award of grades.

133. Scrutiny of students' written work, and observation of lessons, confirms that they are achieving well and reaching standards, especially in Year 13, which are well above average. The written work of A Level students shows a secure grasp of concepts, such as "dhamma" in Buddhism and key ideas of liberation theology in their study of twentieth century Christian history. They write fluently and express themselves clearly. The enthusiasm and interest which they show in lessons is reflected in the quality and quantity of their written work. A distinctive feature of their studies is the preparation of seminar papers. These show that they can work independently and collaboratively in exploring issues and presenting their findings to the whole group. Students in Year 12 have made a very positive start to the course and their written work shows good levels of application and understanding, though some are a little hesitant in answering questions in class.
134. Clear and substantial progress is being made by students over the two years of the A Level course. This is particularly evident in the acquisition of knowledge. They have, for example, a detailed knowledge of the main developments of early Buddhism and can explain how key figures, such as the emperor Asoka, exemplify Buddhist virtues and ideals. There is also clear development in students' ability to think conceptually. Most of them use specialist terms and concepts well in their written work, though less so when speaking in class.

Quality of education

135. Teaching is very good. The teacher is an enthusiastic and well-qualified specialist who has planned the course carefully to help students develop a very thorough understanding of contemporary religious developments and philosophical issues. Lessons are very well planned, challenge students to think and use a variety of approaches, including use of audio and video material, to engage and inform students. In a Year 12 lesson, very good use of archive film helped students place religious developments in Nazi Germany within the contemporary historical context. Very good use of popular music in a Year 13 lesson gave students insight into the way in which the experience of slavery influenced the development of Black Theology. Classroom relationships are very good. This helps lessons to flow with good humour and encouragement without restricting the rigour of demand placed on students. On occasion, opportunities to develop students' speaking skills are not fully exploited. The assessment of written work is regular but is not always sufficiently specific in explaining to pupils how they might improve, and there is no use of individual learning targets.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Resources are good, with the exception of video material for the Buddhist option. The specialist teacher works very well with the Head of Department. A substantial amount of teaching takes place outside the specialist accommodation. This often presents organisational difficulties in using teaching aids, and lessons are often conducted in rooms which have no stimulus or focus for the teaching of the subject.

PSYCHOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision in psychology is **very good**.

Strengths

- Results are consistently above the national average.
- Students are able to apply their knowledge well and can develop approaches to testing their hypotheses.
- Teaching is very good; lessons are well planned and use a wide range of teaching methods which effectively help students to build up their knowledge and to apply this to investigate real problems.
- Teachers and students have high expectations which are demonstrated in some excellent discussion in lessons and in students' written investigative reports.
- The subject is well led; both teachers work effectively as a team.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for students to assess their own progress and to identify their next targets and actions are not developed enough.
- Marking of some work is not yet as thorough and helpful as the best examples in the subject.
- The setting of targets for individual students in psychology is not well enough developed.

Standards and achievement

137. In psychology, examination results were above the national average in 2000. Examination results in 2001 are similar, with every student who took the examination gaining a pass grade. There are not yet any national figures to compare these results with. Half of the students gained the highest grades, A and B. Male and female students did equally well, although more females than male students study the subject. The proportion of students who complete the course is high.
138. The standards of work of the current students are above average and they are achieving well. Students who are now in Year 13 gained good grades in their AS level examinations, with a high proportion gaining the highest grades of A and B. The high standards achieved reflect some very good teaching. Teachers demand much of the students, particularly in relation to independent research and thinking and in how they are expected to apply their knowledge and theories to real situations and investigations. In the lessons seen students were particularly sensitive to the ethical issues of psychological research. For example, they were aware of the effects an observer might have on research participants' responses. They were able to test different theories critically when looking at different explanations for human relationships in a variety of contexts. These skills are reflected in the course work of many students.
139. Students in Year 12 are new to the subject and have only just begun the course. They are achieving as much as expected and are gaining a good grounding in the knowledge and methods of the discipline. They know about the limitations of some different research methodologies and that sample size and bias may affect findings. The examination specification demands much in

the gaining of knowledge. As a result, students have had limited opportunity to check and challenge ideas and theories.

Quality of education

140. Teaching is very good overall and students learn very well as a result. Objectives for lessons are clear, planning is very thorough and a very good range of approaches and materials secures effective learning. Both teachers have a very good knowledge of psychology and of the examination specifications. In one lesson, open-ended approaches enabled some excellent debate. The teacher asked probing questions and gave feedback to challenge hypotheses and methods. As a result students think hard about their research proposals and respond confidently and articulately. Both teachers are effective in securing students' understanding of psychological terms and concepts. Much of the marking is very thorough. It is clearly matched to examination requirements and gives grades in line with those used in the examinations. Students are shown how their work can be improved. Steps are in place to secure marking of this quality for all the work of the students.
141. Students learn very well. The subject is new to them and they are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding at a good pace. In lessons they are attentive and show high levels of interest. Teachers expect much of their students and as a result they are motivated to study independently, particularly by Year 13. Students take pride in their written work, usually producing full and thorough accounts presented with care. In most cases students work well in pairs and in discussion with the teacher. In some lessons, students do not have opportunities to review what they have learned to date and, as a result, the next steps for their work are not identified clearly.
142. Students are gaining a range of skills and communicate particularly effectively both in writing and in speaking. They use their reading and note-taking skills well. For example they could extract some key features of different styles of infant-adult relationships in a Year 12 lesson on attachment and temperament. Work using ICT and numeracy skills was less evident. Working with others, study skills and problem solving are developed well.

Leadership and management

143. Work in psychology is well led and managed. Schemes of work in line with the new examination specifications are developing well. The way in which both teachers are involved in planning lessons ensures good coverage of the subject requirements and encourages a variety of methods of learning. Resources to support students' learning are good. Target setting, in line with approaches being developed in other subjects across the sixth form, is not yet completed. Students receive constructive feedback on how they can improve their work, but further work is needed, as planned, to ensure consistent strategies are used by teachers and students to secure the best progress and results.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English language and English literature were inspected.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Overall the quality of provision in English language is **good**.

Strengths.

- Students have a sound grasp of linguistics and language development.
- Teaching is good, with teachers knowing their subject very well.
- Students learn well; they have excellent working relationships with their teachers.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Areas for Improvement.

- Some students need to develop independent learning skills and contribute personal research to lessons.
- Planning needs to be further refined as the new courses develop by addressing the needs of all students and defining clear learning objectives to ensure a well-structured experience for all students.
- Current assessment practices need reviewing; information is not shared enough with students and is not used to monitor their progress.

Standards and achievement.

144. Standards achieved in GCE AS and A Level examinations are above national averages. They have been above the national average for two years. However the percentage of students achieving the higher grades A and B is well below those achieved by students in similar schools. The 2001 AS results were much better with 85% of students achieving A, B grades. Male and female students did equally well. Very few students did not complete the course. In relation to their GCSE results they did as expected. Retention rates are above average.
145. The standard of work seen is good and students' achievements are satisfactory. In Year 13, students are achieving in line with predictions based on their GCSE results. In the lessons seen they were doing well as a result of effective teaching which provided challenging and well-structured lessons. In one Year 13 lesson students confidently explored the notion of different aspects of language as it developed through the ages. In another lesson students were able to distinguish between the different stages of language acquisition in children. Students in Year 12 have just started their AS level courses but are achieving well. In a lesson identifying linguistic devices all students were able to identify structure and the manipulation of language. The more able students confidently cross-reference texts and offer sensitive exploration of linguistic devices. Discursive essays are generally well handled but attainment is limited because some work is still affected by minor grammatical flaws and incorrect spellings. Students do not proof-read and edit their work rigorously enough.

Quality of education.

146. Teaching is good overall. Students learn well as a result. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and had read around the subjects' specifications to ensure an extension to the basic requirements. A Year 13 lesson on stages of language acquisition demonstrated very high expectations as the students completed challenging tasks successfully. Lessons are well structured which supports students' learning, an excellent example was a Year 13 lesson where students imitated different modes of speech by demonstration, thereby enabling them to consolidate learning on language acquisition.
147. Marking is inconsistent. Assessment criteria are not shared with all students, many of whom are unable to talk about their own progress and development in English. Although the excellent practice of regular sharing of views of the quality of work is in place this does not form the basis of student profiles. Although students are set targets they are not challenging and dialogue about progress is therefore limited. The lack of a rigorous link between assessment and student profiles limits the extent to which students' progress can be effectively monitored.
148. Relationships are very good and are a strength of the department. Students concentrate well and as a result are able to identify key features of language. Students support each other effectively and in groups talk and listen to each other maturely as part of their learning.
149. There was little evidence of independent work during the inspection. However, folders demonstrate that students are confidently using a range of resources, including information technology, to complete homework tasks. They are capable of extracting appropriate information from reference texts.

Leadership and management.

150. The department's leadership and management are good. An enthusiastic team works hard to provide an enriched language course. The new A level specification is being translated into schemes of work which effectively reflect the subject's requirements. Further development needs to focus on lesson planning with clearly defined learning objectives which encompass assessment criteria. These need sharing with students and used as a basis for monitoring student progress. Resources are good and are effectively used to extend learning.

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Overall the quality of provision in English literature is **good**.

Strengths.

- Students have a sound grasp of literary criticism.
- Teaching is good with teachers displaying sound subject knowledge.
- Students learn well, they have excellent working relationships with their teachers.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Areas for Development.

- Some students need to extend their reading beyond the prescribed texts.
- Planning needs to be further refined by building on the existing good practice, and developing more focused short-term plans.
- Assessment data needs to be used to inform planning and analysed at department level to monitor and support student progress more closely.

Standards and Achievement.

151. Standards achieved in GCE AS and A Level courses are satisfactory. They match the national average and have maintained a similar standard in the last two years. However, the percentage of students achieving the highest grades (A, B) is well below that of similar schools. Male and female students did equally well. Retention rates are above average.
152. The standard of work seen is good and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 13 students are achieving in line with predictions based on their GCSE results. During the inspection students were doing well due to effective teaching. In a Year 13 lesson on 'Tennyson's poem *Ulysses*, students articulately and sensitively explored the layers of meaning in the poem by analysing and evaluating the structural and language devices. Students in Year 12 are making satisfactory progress as they demonstrate a good grasp of dramatic effects in a lesson on Shakespeare's *Othello*. More able students empathetically explore the emotional response of the character Desdemona. Students display a confidence orally and a move towards independent learning which indicates the successful transition from GCSE to 'A' level. Students are able to write critically, the higher attaining students analyse texts with sensitivity and maturity. All students confidently explore the prescribed texts but need to extend their reading in order to explore other critical views.

Quality of Education.

153. Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. Teachers show very good subject knowledge, this is manifested in their exploration of texts and their response to students questions. In a Year 13 lesson on 'Ulysses' the teacher confidently extended the poem with thorough background knowledge of the character Achilles, thereby consolidating previous learning for the students. In a year 12 lesson on *Othello*, the tasks were well structured to enable all students to interact with the play. Careful open-ended questioning enable students to choose appropriate literary evidence supporting the notion of friendship between Othello and Brabantio.
154. Marking is inconsistent. Some teachers carefully construct a dialogue with their students whereas others only correct mechanical and technical errors. Students are not set challenging targets, nor does the marking reflect the course criteria. Although assessment criteria are shared with some sixth form students, this practice is not consistent across all teaching groups, and as a result not all students understand what progress they have made and what they need to do in order to improve.
155. Relationships are very good. Students value the work of their teachers and are quick to value contributions from other students. Group work demonstrates that students have a mature and businesslike attitude to their learning.

156. Students confidently extract information from reference texts and the Internet. They do not all undertake enough independent learning, and an opportunity for them to complement the work of their teachers, by, for example, presenting seminar papers, is not capitalised upon.

Leadership and Management.

157. Teachers are enthusiastic and widely read. They are well led and managed and are all focused on raising the literature results. Further development needs to focus on assessment and planning. There is good practice in cross-moderation, but this does not form the basis of student profiles in which individual targets are set. Literature resources are very good and are effectively used to extend learning.