

INSPECTION REPORT

HALL CROSS SCHOOL

DONCASTER

LEA area: DONCASTER

Unique reference number: 106808

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Jones

Reporting inspector: Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 15 - 19 October 2001

Inspection number: 190718

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thorne Road Doncaster
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Williams
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 1996

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11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
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27201	Clive Ashworth	Team inspector	English	EAL
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
20729	James Berry	Team inspector	Biology Chemistry	
15462	Clifford Blakemore	Team inspector		<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities provided for pupils and students?</p> <p>Sixth form co-ordinator</p>
22531	David Burbidge	Team inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	Special educational needs Sociology	
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
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27416	Thomas Howard	Team inspector	Sixth form Mathematics	
28101	Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	History	
10340	John Lockett	Team inspector	Design and technology	
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3930	Roy Pitcher	Team inspector	Religious education	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science and Physics	
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15372	Patricia Walker	Team inspector	Sixth form English	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hall Cross School has 2033 boys and girls, including 430 in the sixth form, which is well above the number of pupils in the average secondary school. The school is successful in recruiting students from all over the borough into the sixth form. There are 176 pupils from ethnic minority families, which is well above the national average; only six pupils are at the early stage of learning English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Twelve per cent of pupils are on the special needs register and about three per cent have Statements of Special Educational Needs. The proportion of pupils on the register is below the national average and the proportion with Statements is above the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is slightly above the national average and the school attracts pupils from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities initiative.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hall Cross School is a good school and its strengths outnumber its weaknesses. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, their behaviour is good, and the quality of relationships within the school is very good. Attendance is below the national average and is improving. The quality of teaching is consistently good. There are very good arrangements to support all pupils. The school is well led and has clear strategies for raising achievement. The school provides good value for money and the sixth form is cost-effective.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach high standards in many subjects and achieve very high standards in art.
- It provides a broad curriculum enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for sixth form students is very good.
- The use of marking and assessment to set targets for individual pupils is good.
- Pupils are well advised and guided.
- It achieves consistently good teaching across the school.
- The support provided to individual pupils with special educational needs, including behavioural needs, is very good.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is a strength of the school.

What could be improved

- Subject co-ordinators taking more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-G.
- Ensuring that all pupils receive their full entitlement to information and communication technology (ICT).
- Ensuring that all teachers consistently implement literacy and numeracy strategies.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1996 the school has been re-organised into a split-site 11-18 school. The school has made good progress since its last inspection. In 1995, 47 per cent of pupils gained five GCSE grades A*-C and this has increased to 48 per cent in 2001. The average A-level point score in 1995 was below the national average at 15.7 and this increased to 17.1 in 2001. The governors have made good progress in tackling the key issues from the last inspection but not all pupils yet receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum for ICT. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced. Pupils' attainment on entry is now used to set targets for pupils in Years 7 to 9. There is now a good breadth and balance in the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 and there is a wider range of courses in the sixth form. There is now sufficient time for religious education in Years 10 and 11, though not all students in the sixth form receive their entitlement to religious education. Opportunities for spiritual development have increased but are still limited. Safety in and around the school is no longer an issue and the co-ordination of personal and social education has been effectively tackled.

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	C	C	D	B
A-levels/AS-levels	D	C	C	

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

Pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. Girls perform better than boys in all three subjects. The upward trend in the school's results in these subjects is below the national trend. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils in this school achieve results which are well above average for all three subjects. The 2001 tests show an improvement in science results and a slight improvement in mathematics.

In the 2000 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-G was well below the national average. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, the proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C was well above average but the proportion gaining at least five grades A*-G was below. The proportion gaining at least one A*-G grade was well below. Results for 2001 show an improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C, at least five grades A*-G and at least one grade A*-G. Pupils achieve particularly good GCSE results in art, science, English, geography and sociology. In 2000, results in mathematics, design and technology, history, physical education, Spanish and other languages were lower compared to other subjects. Boys' results are close to the national averages for their sex but girls' results are below. The upward trend in pupils' average point score over the past five years has been below the national average but above average when compared with similar schools. However, in 2001 there was a significant increase in the average point score. In 2000 the average point score was very high when compared to schools with pupils of a similar background. The performance of pupils in the 2000 A/AS-level examinations was close to the national average. In 2001 there was a significant improvement on the 2000 results.

The school exceeded its targets for the proportion of pupils gaining at least one GCSE grade A*-G and in reaching the average point score. It failed to meet the target for the proportion pupils gaining at least five GCSE grades A*-C.

The evidence of work seen during the inspection shows that pupils are reaching good standards in Years 7-11 for art, geography, history, physical education and religious education. In English, science and music standards are good in Years 7-9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils reach high standards in modern foreign languages. In all other subjects pupils' attainment is satisfactory, except for ICT where standards are below those expected. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils enjoy attending school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils move round the school in a civilized fashion.

Personal development and relationships	The quality of relationships among pupils is very good, as are the relationships between pupils and their teachers. Pupils and students respond well when provided with opportunities to take responsibility in lessons and in the wider life of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is below the national average and there have been significant improvements in attendance during the last year.

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.

High expectations from teachers and their good management of pupils have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and on the progress they make. In the 299 lessons seen teaching was excellent or very good in over a quarter. In over two-thirds of lessons the quality of teaching was judged to be good. Only in ten lessons was the quality of teaching judged to be unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. In English, mathematics, art and design, geography, history and physical education teaching was good. Teaching was good in science, design and technology and music in Years 7 to 9. It was good in modern foreign languages and religious education in Years 10 and 11. In all other subjects teaching was satisfactory.

Teachers have good subject expertise and use their knowledge well to prepare resources to stimulate pupils' imagination. They use a wide range of teaching methods to involve pupils in their learning. In the best lessons, pupils are always challenged through expert questioning to gauge and extend their understanding of the work. Teachers are particularly skilful in managing pupils' behaviour. The marking of written work is good and many teachers indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve.

Some lessons, but not all, are planned in detail to include well-ordered and timed activities that refer to previous and future learning. Effective strategies to improve literacy and numeracy have been developed but are not yet being consistently applied by all teachers.

Teachers successfully help to maintain pupils' interest in their learning and pupils concentrate well in lessons. They persevere with their learning and work productively, whether individually or in groups, to carry out research, as well as to explore and develop their ideas. Pupils display a high commitment to learning and this, along with the consistent quality of good teaching across the school, explains why they make at least satisfactory and often good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress as a result of good teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. In Years 7 to 11 the curriculum is broad and designed to meet the needs of all pupils. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provides many opportunities to enhance pupils' education. In the sixth form a wide choice of A-level and vocational courses is offered and a very good enrichment programme supplements these courses. The school is failing to meet statutory requirements for ICT.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Well-organised provision, which is specifically targeted and carefully monitored. The school provides very well for a wide range of needs including those found in literacy and behaviour.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils make good progress as a result of the good teaching and the support they receive.

language	
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is good overall and that for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and for promoting good behaviour are very good. There are good arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by his senior staff. However, their heavy teaching commitments restrict the time available to undertake their departmental and whole-school responsibilities. Middle management is good, but the work of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators is under-developed. The management of initiatives to keep pupils from being excluded are good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the school and undertakes its responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. The school is failing to meet its statutory requirements in ICT, providing a daily act of collective worship and in providing religious education for sixth form students.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall, the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school are satisfactory. The school development plan identifies appropriate strategies for school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school provides good value for money. Rigorous efforts have been made to reduce the budget deficit. The school obtains the best value in the purchase and use of resources, with the exception of the use of computers. However, there is an inefficient heating system for the upper school buildings and catering facilities there are inefficient.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School has high expectations of pupils. • There is good teaching. • The school is well led. • Pupils are making good progress. • The school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like the school to work more closely with parents. • They would like to be better informed about their children's progress. • Homework.

There is a very good partnership between the school and its parents. There was a high response rate to the questionnaire seeking parents' views of the school. Inspectors agree with the views of the parents on what pleases them most. However, they judge that the amount of homework set is appropriate for the needs of pupils and students, that there are sufficient opportunities for parents to work closely with the school and that there are very good arrangements for parents to be kept informed about their children's progress.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is large. There are 430 students, comprising 250 in Year 12 and 180 in Year 13. The numbers are slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection and vary slightly from year to year due to local circumstances.. The school continues to draw students from the whole of Doncaster. Up to about half of the sixth form join the school in Year 12. Its town centre position provides easy access from all parts of the borough and from outside of the town. The overall ability of students on entry to the sixth form is near to the national average overall, with a high proportion of students following GCE A-level courses. The majority of students continue their studies in universities and other centres of higher education on completion of sixth form courses. An increasing number of students are following one or two-year courses, such as business and health and social care, that lead to GNVQ or other vocational qualifications. The sixth form has an open entry policy for students wishing to continue their education beyond the age of 16 and this is consistent with the inclusive education policy of the school, extending learning opportunities as widely as possible. The school offers a very good range of post-16 courses, including such popular courses as psychology and media studies, GCE AS level, RSA courses and intermediate and advanced level GNVQ.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a very effective sixth form, with many very good aspects. Students achieve above the level expected given their attainment on entry to the sixth form. In 2000 students' attainment was in line with the national average, though the proportion of students gaining the higher A and B grades was below the national average. These results, however, show an improving trend over recent years, and in 2001 they were near to the national average of recent years. The quality of teaching is good overall, meeting the needs of the students. As a result they learn well. A strong feature of the sixth form provision is the support and guidance students are given; this has a good effect on attitudes to study and as a result students make good progress. The leadership and management are good, ensuring that students' progress is consistently monitored and that challenging targets are set for them. The sixth form is successful, cost-effective and gives good value for money.

Strengths

- Students achieve well overall.
- Students have very good attitudes to study. Their behaviour is good and they work hard.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects and many opportunities for learning.
- The care and support given to students is very good.

What could be improved

- The planning of the timetabling for the general studies course.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Use ICT more widely to support teaching and learning
- Meeting the statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. A-level standards are average, but above average in further mathematics. Teaching is good and students achieve well in lessons.
Chemistry	Good. Standards are below average, but rising. Teaching is good; teachers have good knowledge and understanding and as a result students achieve well.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Biology	Good. Standards are average. Girls attain higher standards than boys overall. Teaching is good and the assessment of work fully informs students on how well they are doing.
Physics	Satisfactory. Standards are below average. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lesson demonstrations are effective but students are not sufficiently actively engaged and challenged in lessons.
Business Studies	Good. Standards are below average but rising in 2001. Teaching is good but ICT is not used enough to support learning. Standards are above average in economics. GNVQ advanced students achieve well in applying theoretical study to real situations.
ICT	Satisfactory. Standards are satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers know and understand the course requirements, but not enough use is made of computers in many subjects.
Physical education	Very good. Standards are above average. Students' knowledge and understanding are above average and practical skills are well above average. Research skills are good. Teaching is very good and results in high achievement.
Art and design	Very good. Standards are above average overall and are rising. In Year 13 standards are well above average because of very good teaching and very good attitudes to learning. Students' experiences are enhanced through visits to galleries at home and abroad. ICT is not well used to support learning. Teaching is very good.
Music	Good. Standards are average. Most students achieve satisfactory standards. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good, well supported through extra-curricular provision and performances.
Geography	Good. Standards are above the national average overall, and high-attaining students achieve standards that are well above the average. The quality of teaching is good but not enough use is made of computers to support learning.
History	Good. Standards are average and students are competent in written and oral work. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of topics and the high expectations of students' effort and performance lead to good progress. The curricular provision is good, but not enough opportunities are provided for history visits.
Religious studies	Good. Standards are below average but the progress that students make is satisfactory. Teaching is good, with high quality marking that helps students improve standards. Statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education to all students are not being met.
Sociology	Good. Standards are above average. Students have good knowledge and understanding of topics and research their work well. Teaching is good and the curriculum covers a wide range of study relevant to the modern world.
Psychology	Good. Standards are average and rising. Girls attain higher standards than boys. Most students achieve at least the standards expected of them. Teaching is good. The very good assessment of work helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses and leads to improving standards. The monitoring and evaluation of performance, however, are unsatisfactory.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English	Good. Standards are below average, but students achieve well. Teaching is good and meets the needs of all students.
French	Satisfactory. Standards are average. Students achieve expected levels given their earlier attainment. The quality of teaching is good but there are not enough opportunities for students to show initiative and self-reliance in lessons.

Other sixth form courses were sampled. In the single lesson seen in ancient history, teaching was good and the quality of teaching in the weekly 'enrichment programme' was judged to be very good. In general studies teaching was satisfactory but the planning of the timetable for general studies is a weakness. The personal and social education programme includes the general studies programme, the teaching of Key Skills and careers education. Careers support is excellent and the guidance that students receive is very good. In design and technology teaching was good in two lessons and satisfactory in two others. Two GNVQ lessons in health and social care were inspected. Teaching was good in one and unsatisfactory in the other. Teaching in GNVQ manufacturing at intermediate level was satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The educational and personal support and guidance for students are very good. There are very good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress and the information from assessment is well used to guide and support students, all of whom have tutor support and individual target setting. The quality and accessibility of information and advice about careers and opportunities in higher education are excellent. Sixth form tutors are effective and enjoy the confidence of students.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The senior staff with responsibility for the sixth form carry out their roles very well, giving very good guidance to teachers and students. Students' progress is regularly monitored through subject reports and by tutors, and this is effective in raising achievement. The monitoring of progress across subjects, however, is inconsistent. Financial planning is good and there is a good match of teachers to most groups and courses. The school's aims are fully reflected in the planning and work of the sixth form, providing equal opportunities for all.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of teaching they receive. • They enjoy the sixth form. • The wide range of courses offered in the sixth form and the enrichment programme. • The good advice on university entrance and future careers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advice they are given about their future options. • The information they receive about their progress. • The provision made for general studies. • The preparation for vocational courses. • Opportunities to use ICT in some subjects.

Inspectors agree with the students' views on what they like about the sixth form. Inspectors also agree with the students' views on the weaknesses in the provision for general studies and in the lack of opportunities to use ICT in some subjects. However, they judged that the preparation for vocational courses was satisfactory, as is the information students receive about the progress they are making. The inspectors judged that the quality of information students receive about their future options is good and the overall quality of careers education and guidance in the sixth form is excellent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in the year 2000 were close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. Girls perform better than boys in all three subjects. The trend in the school's results in English, mathematics and science is below the national trend. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils in this school achieve results which are well above average for all three subjects. The 2001 tests show an improvement in science results and a slight improvement in mathematics.
2. In the 2000 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining at least 5 grades A*-C was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining at least 5 grades A*-G was well below the national average. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, the proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C was well above average but the proportion gaining at least five or more A*-G grades was below. The proportion gaining at least one grade A*-G was well below. Results for 2001 show an improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C, at least five grades A*-G and at least one grade A*-G. Pupils achieve particularly good GCSE results in art, science, English, geography and sociology. In 2000, results in mathematics, design and technology, history, physical education, Spanish and other languages were lower compared to other subjects. Boys' results are close to the national averages for their sex but girls' results are below. The trend in pupils' average point score over the past five years has been below the national average but above average when compared with similar schools. However, in 2001 there was a significant increase in the average point score. In 2000 the average point score was very high when compared to schools with pupils of a similar background. The performance of pupils in the 2000 GCE A/AS-level examinations was close to the national average. In 2001 there was a significant improvement on the 2000 results.
3. In relative terms girls do better than boys in Years 7-9 and yet in Years 10 and 11 boys' performance is better than girls' in 2000. In part this is explained by the successful efforts of teachers to tackle boys' underachievement. However, the school recognises that there are a significant number of girls in each year group who, by the time they reach Year 11, are no longer motivated to do well in examinations. They have low aspirations and often have poor attendance records by Year 11. The analysis of the examination data has identified this issue and the school is now developing strategies to tackle it.
4. In 2001 the targets set for the school were for 50 per cent to achieve five GCSE grades A*-C, for 88 per cent to achieve one A*-G and to achieve an average point score of 33. In the event they failed to meet the five A*-C target but exceeded the one A*-G target and significantly exceeded the average point score target. The main factor which enabled the school to increase its average point score and the number of pupils gaining one grade A-G was the success of the school's inclusion strategies and their effectiveness in improving the attendance of Year 11 pupils. For 2002 a challenging target has been set for the number of pupils to reach five A*-C grades (52 per cent). In the light of the 2001 results the targets for one A*-G (90 per cent) and for the average point score (34) may not be seen as challenging as they were at the time the targets were set.
5. The work seen during the inspection shows that pupils are reaching good standards in Years 7-11 in art, geography, history, physical education and religious education. In English, science and music standards are good in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils reach high standards in modern foreign languages. In all other subjects pupils' attainment is satisfactory except for ICT where attainment is low. In the sixth form students' attainment is high in art, physical education, mathematics, geography, history, psychology and sociology. In all other subjects except for ICT students' attainment is satisfactory. One of the reasons why pupils are achieving good standards is the very effective use of data on pupils' prior attainment to set targets for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Teachers have a very clear indication of the projected grades all their pupils should be capable of reaching.
6. Literacy levels are average overall. Technical accuracy in writing is often sound, though lower-attaining pupils make errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar; nevertheless these are less frequent than usual for secondary aged pupils. Writing skills are generally sound, with most pupils able to form sentences and paragraphs and apply syntactical rules, even if at a simple

level. Higher attainers are able to compose writing of greater sophistication and accuracy. Reading skills are at least at average levels for most pupils, though some have reading ages substantially below those expected for their ages. Higher attainers are able to read texts of some complexity with fluency. Speaking and listening skills are good. Most pupils, including lower attainers, are able to speak clearly and form appropriate utterances using an appropriate register and tone.

7. Pupils entering the school in Year 7 having attained levels below 3 in the national tests in Year 6 receive good help from the literacy progress unit, which they attend in small groups, three times a week for approximately thirty minutes. They make good gains in accuracy and language development in a controlled and supportive environment as a result.
8. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is good. The pupils learn well and their progress is good relative to their prior attainment. For the pupils at an early stage of language acquisition the literacy progress unit provides a structured and effective framework for language learning. The pupils participate for thirty minutes, three times a week over the course of Year 7. Many EAL pupils are able speakers and writers, producing work at least comparable to that of their peers. Pupils of Chinese origin are the highest performing ethnic group and asylum seekers make good progress.
9. A whole-school strategy to improve standards by developing and co-ordinating the use of numeracy skills is not in place. To assist the development of such a strategy a numeracy co-ordinator has recently been appointed. The professional development needs for all teachers to promote numeracy across the school have not yet been identified. Currently, the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented in Year 7 in mathematics. Pupil numeracy packs have been prepared. Subject numeracy policies are not in place and the use of numeracy skills varies within subject areas. Some are making a very positive contribution to this area of pupils' learning.
10. Pupils with special needs make good progress in many areas of the curriculum, including English, mathematics and science. A notable feature is the very good progress made by pupils with reading ages well below average in improving their reading skills and achieving functional literacy. Pupils also make good progress in art, music, physical education and business studies, and in geography in Years 7 to 9. They make satisfactory progress in religious education, design and technology and modern languages in Years 7 to 9, and in geography in Years 10 and 11. Progress is unsatisfactory in ICT in Years 7 to 9. The progress of sixth form students is good and sometimes is very good, although evidence seen during the inspection was very limited. A notable feature is the very good progress achieved in art.

Sixth form

11. The attainment of students in the sixth form who were entered for two or more GCE A and A/S-level courses or the equivalent vocational courses was near to the national average in 2000. This average has been maintained over recent years, and in 2001 the average point score rose from 15.4 in 2000 to 17.1. Retention rates are good, with most students who start sixth form courses remaining to completion.
12. Students achieve well in the sixth form, including the one student with especial educational needs. In 2000 most students achieved well above expected levels given their attainment on entry to A-level courses whilst in 2001 they achieved expected levels in A-level or equivalent vocational courses. Female students achieved better than did male students in 2000 but both male and female students were below their respective national average point scores. In 2001, however, male students achieved better than female students did. Standards of students' oral and written skills are generally good. In English, geography, ancient history and vocational courses, for example, students debate and discuss well, helping them to a better understanding of the topics studied, whilst in history and psychology higher and average-attaining students write well-structured essays with appropriate reasoning and conclusions. There is open access to the sixth form with much variation in students' GCSE attainment. A significant minority show weakness in literacy skills. In English language, for example, writing shows many grammatical inaccuracies and weak spelling whilst in French students do not develop their oral skills well enough. Overall, the attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is average. Most students are making very good progress in the development of their learning skills.

13. In 2000, art and design, communication studies, geography, full design and technology and sports studies were the most successful A-level courses, with many candidates attaining above or well above the national average. Entry numbers in most AS-level subjects, however, were too low to make comparison possible. Results were well below the national average in English literature, French, physics, history, economics and general studies, but in many of these subjects there was improvement in 2001. Students achieved well overall, however, in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE.
14. In 2001 GCE A-level attainment was high in mathematics, where half of the candidates gained A grade and all passed. In art and design nearly two-thirds achieved A or B grades and similar grades were achieved by 40 per cent of candidates in history and geography. Good results were also achieved in performing arts and German. Results were average in English literature, French, chemistry, physics, psychology, and sports studies, but below average in English language, sociology, biology, and classical civilisation. The results in design and technology are currently the subject of appeal.
15. The least successful subjects in 2001 were economics and general studies. In both, the point scores for the students who were entered were well below what they gained in their other A-level subjects. Male students achieved more highly than female students did, although female students achieved slightly higher than males at grades A and B. The results reversed the pattern in 2000. In general studies female students' average point score was well below the average point score in their other subjects, whilst for male students it was below. In the GNVQ subjects overall attainment was well above the national average in 2000, but fell in 2001 when results were broadly average. In 2000, the number of candidates achieving a qualification was above the national average. The proportion of students gaining a qualification in 2001 was lower than in 2000. More detailed information on attainment in the subjects inspected at post-16 in A-level and AS-level GCE and vocational examinations can be found in the subject sections of this report. Overall, the large majority of students who took their examinations in 2000 and 2001 achieved well during their time in the sixth form.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to the school, both in lower school and post-16, are very good. In the vast majority of lessons seen pupils' response, their attitudes to learning and their behaviour were also very good. Pupils work extremely hard and remain on task throughout lessons. They display maturity and in many instances are able to work collaboratively together. For example, in a Year 9 personal, health and social education lesson, pupils worked well together in groups to identify and discuss stereotyping and were able to present their personal views in a mature and considered way.
17. The school is a very orderly community and pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, at recreation and around the school. In the dining hall pupils show courtesy and consideration to one another, and relate well to peer groups, asylum seekers and minority ethnic groups. All these groups are successfully integrated into school life. Pupils demonstrate a respect for their own belongings, other people's belongings and school property. The library and computers are well used by pupils, vandalism is rare and the school is both litter and graffiti-free. The innovation of the 'STEAM room' (School Time Exclusion and Monitoring Unit), where disruptive pupils are sent for a fixed period of time to modify their behaviour, and the learning support unit for pupils with more severe behavioural or learning problems, has had the positive effect of reducing fixed-term exclusions by 50 per cent and staff feel that the behaviour policy, part of which deals with disruptive pupils, is appropriate and adequate. Prior to the introduction of the 'Steam Room' the number of fixed term exclusions was high for a school of this size. The exclusion rate is now at an acceptable level.
18. Personal development throughout the school is very good. The pastoral system is very effective and is given a very high profile by the school. A mentoring officer has been appointed and pupils who are identified at Year 6 as possibly being in need of mentoring and guidance are given individual support and help immediately they enter school at Year 7 - and throughout their school life, if appropriate.
19. Relationships at the school are very good. Form tutors remain with their class throughout each key stage and as a result teachers know their pupils well and are able to identify any pastoral or academic problems quickly. The Year 7 tutor has excellent relations with the feeder primary schools and visits pupils at Year 6, before their admission to the school. He therefore gets to

know new pupils before they arrive and as a result they are very quickly integrated into school life and settle down well. Year 7 pupils confirmed that they thought transitional arrangements for them were good and that they very soon felt they were part of the whole school family.

20. Oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism and racism, are rare and are swiftly dealt with by the school under their discipline procedures. The school quickly addresses any instances of unacceptable behaviour and its behaviour policy is appropriate and effective.
21. Pupils are given ample opportunity to take initiative and personal responsibility. Year 13 pupils are invited to apply for positions as prefects and they are appointed after discussion by senior staff. The head boy and head girl are elected and take responsibility for organising the prefect system. Year 11 and 12 pupils and students mentor Year 7 pupils; senior pupils operate the paired reading scheme, help in the special educational needs department and social committee and are elected to the student council. They also attend first aid training, Young Enterprise schemes and do voluntary work in the community.
22. In personal health and social education modules, pupils undertake group work and are able to debate and discuss in groups current issues such as sex education, drug awareness, citizenship and preparation for life.
23. Attendance at the school is improving and, at 90 per cent for the last year, remains below the national average. Although attendance in Years 10 and 11 remains at under 90 per cent, the school has introduced procedures to improve these figures. Progress made by pupils in their behaviour and personal development mentioned in the last report has been maintained.

Sixth form

24. Students have very positive attitudes towards their studies. Their behaviour is good and they work hard. The quality of relationships among students is very good. They work well together and support each other effectively. The quality of relationships between students and their teachers is very good. Most students make the transition from GCSE courses to the demands of sixth form courses very well. They are given greater responsibility for organizing their own time and most work well without constant supervision. Students on sixth form courses are developing good research skills.
25. Many students completed a questionnaire giving their views of the school to the inspectors. Most students have very positive attitudes to the sixth form. Many students join the school in the sixth form and they integrate well with students who have previously been in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. Teaching is good overall and shows an improvement since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection 50 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better at Key Stage 3 and this has improved to 65 per cent. At Key Stage 4 there has been a slight improvement, with 68 per cent judged to be good or better compared with 66 per cent. In the sixth form the proportion of lessons judged to be good or better fell from 75 per cent to 72 per cent. Of the 299 lessons observed during the inspection over one in four were excellent or very good and over two-thirds were good or better. Only eight lessons were unsatisfactory, one was poor and one very poor. The quality of teaching is good in the lower school, the upper school and in the sixth form.
27. The good teaching is having a clear impact on the quality of learning throughout the school in most subjects and most pupils are making at least good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. In particular, the quality of pupils' physical and creative efforts is good as a result of the good teaching they receive in performing arts, art and design and physical education.
28. The quality of teaching was good in English, mathematics, art and design, geography, history and physical education. Teaching was good in science, design and technology and music at Key Stage 3. It was good in modern foreign languages and religious education at Key Stage 4. In all other subjects teaching was satisfactory. A particular strength is the effectiveness of teachers' planning, which leads to a good pace of working, especially by older pupils. Many teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils and at the end of lessons pupils recap on their gains during the lesson so that the teacher can judge whether the lesson's aims have been met. The management of pupils' behaviour is good and all teachers are consistent in applying the school's

behaviour policy. Teachers' expectations are high throughout the school. When teaching is unsatisfactory or poor pupils are not being fully stretched and the lack of challenge results in their making insufficient gains in their learning.

29. Teachers are using a good range of teaching methods throughout the school. The variety of teaching methods sustains pupils' interest and concentration in lessons. The one teaching method which is rarely used is to provide pupils with access to ICT in order to give them further opportunities for independent learning.
30. The school has no whole-school literacy policy as yet. As a result, provision across departments is inconsistent. Some departments, such as geography, have a departmental policy on the teaching of literacy whilst others do not. Many departments - for example, English, history, geography and mathematics - effectively display key subject-specific words in classrooms but others do not. Many departments do not yet include wide reading beyond the immediate information needs in their requirements. Most, but not all, plan for including extended writing for different audiences in their schemes of work. The majority of departments do, however, carefully correct spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in their marking. Drafting as a means of encouraging accuracy and development in writing is well established in many departments, for example, English, art and history, but not in others where it could be a valuable asset in promoting literacy skills. Almost all subjects encourage the development of speaking and listening skills through a variety of appropriate oral activities. The well-stocked and organised library is used well by some subjects but very little by others to promote literacy development.
31. There is no whole-school policy for developing numeracy skills across subjects. In geography, in Years 7 to 9, there is satisfactory, but inconsistent, use of numeracy skills as pupils study grid references and draw line and column graphs. In Years 10 and 11 pupils build upon earlier work with a wider use of graphs, and learn to interpret hydrographs and demographic transition models. They use pie charts, and collect and present data in graphical format. ICT is rarely used to aid numeracy work in geography. Numeracy skills are being promoted in design and technology where the use of measuring and weighing skills are evident. Pupils rarely use estimation in their work. Graphs and charts are used in food technology, textiles and product development lessons. Pupils are not good at accurately drawing three-dimensional diagrams, and rarely link scale to the full size article. Some good statistical work is seen in child care and food technology. Lower ability pupils studying electronics have difficulty when using formulas related to Ohm's Law and parallel resistors. Links with the mathematics department have not been made. In Year 10 business education, mental arithmetic is used for the calculation of profit, or loss, on share purchase. Statistical work occurs in Year 10 and 11, and graph work is evident in AVCE Business coursework. In a Year 9 ICT spreadsheet lesson, the teaching of numeracy skills was unsatisfactory.
32. A feature of most lessons is the constructive and purposeful relationship between teachers and their pupils. The good use of praise by teachers enables pupils to feel secure and confident enough to answer and ask questions. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good and in those lessons where teachers demonstrate a real enthusiasm for their subject the response from pupils is very good.
33. In most subjects teachers mark pupils' work carefully and accurately and most are using marking to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The school has a lot of data from external testing of pupils' attainment; this is used very effectively by all teachers to set targets for individual pupils to raise standards.
34. A significant minority of parents raised concerns about the homework set. The inspectors' judgement is that the setting of homework is good. During the inspection week appropriate homework tasks were set. Several teachers were rigorous in ensuring that homework tasks were correctly recorded in the pupils' planners.
35. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in the great majority of subjects and there is a consistency of good practice in the majority of areas of the curriculum. Specialist teaching is very good. Support staff are well used and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. A notable feature of the effectiveness of support staff is their ability and willingness to support pupils during the process of working through tasks as well as in assessing outcomes achieved.
36. Specialist teaching produces a very effective ethos for learning; corrective reading lessons not only provide very good challenge to each pupil but they also involve all pupils in contributing to

each other's learning. This ethos creates a very supportive learning environment in which pupils can gain self-esteem and confidence as well as develop their literacy skills. Lesson planning is very good, with targets given to each pupil as a focus for their achievement. Specialist support lessons in mathematics are also very effective, with work matched to pupils' target skills. Withdrawal support is very effective; in one example a Year 11 pupil with specific learning difficulties dictated text to a support teacher to enable him to complete homework and coursework tasks for different GCSE courses. ICT is very well used to enable pupils to access individual learning programmes to develop both literacy and numeracy skills; in one example Year 10 pupils worked very productively, with both a teacher and support assistant working through calculation methods with individuals on paper to consolidate learning from a numeracy program.

37. A variety of methods are well used to support pupils with special educational needs in different areas of the curriculum. In geography resources are well matched to needs and include extension tasks to challenge pupils further; good planning pairs pupils at different levels of attainment to give good support to pupils with special needs. In business studies pupils' progress is carefully monitored; they are shown how to improve and what to do next in a series of structured activities. In art the high quality of teaching, including the very positive relationships established, gives very good support to pupils. In music a learning support assistant worked very closely with a Year 8 pupil to prepare a performance that was then celebrated by the rest of the class. In English the use of writing frames provided an effective structure for Year 10 pupils to write character studies, with a learning support assistant working closely with two pupils and supporting others according to need. In mathematics two staff worked alongside Year 11 pupils in a small group to enable them to find the correct method for a variety of calculations including route finding, percentages, using grid references and using data to find distances travelled. Planning for pupils' needs is less effective in religious education, design and technology and in ICT lessons.
38. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The pupils learn well and their progress is good relative to their prior attainment. For the pupils at an early stage of acquiring English, the literacy progress unit provides a structured and effective framework for language learning. The pupils participate for thirty minutes, three times a week over the course of Year 7. These pupils and others are well supported in lessons by two specialist EAL teachers, who work closely with subject teachers.
39. Since the start of this term the school has been developing strategies to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils as part of the Excellence in Cities Initiative. The co-ordinators for this work are currently identifying with departments the pupils identified as gifted and talented. Many subjects have already identified extension tasks to challenge pupils and the work of the gifted and talented initiative should enable a consistent approach across all subjects in ensuring that extension activities are provided for the most able pupils.

Sixth form

40. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and this is a significant reason for the success of the sixth form. Of the 117 lessons observed during the inspection, teaching in seven was judged to be excellent, in 32 very good, in 48 good and in 27 satisfactory. In four lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory.
41. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons well, progressively building students' knowledge, skills and confidence. In art and design, for example, the teacher's subject expertise and enthusiasm resulted in students making significant gains in knowledge and understanding in evaluating the work of artists such as Picasso and Dali. Most lessons have clear learning objectives, shared with the students so that they understand what is expected of them. Teachers expect students to work hard and apply themselves to their studies. In the majority of lessons they respond very well; they show interest and a willingness to concentrate on the tasks set for them. In a Year 13 AS-level food technology lesson good progress was made because the teacher engaged students' interest and set challenges to identify and give reasons for changes in the taste of foods with different levels of sugar. Teachers manage students very well. Students enjoy good relationships with teachers, behaviour is sound and lessons proceed smoothly and this leads to good progress. Most teachers structure lessons well, they provide opportunities for variety in learning styles and give individual support in order to ensure that students make good progress. The teaching of key skills, particularly communication skills, is a feature of the better lessons. In biology, for example, the teacher provided a clear

- focus on how to make good oral presentations, challenging students to plan and develop logical argument. In general studies Year 12 students prepared and gave a good oral presentation about people's perceptions of different cultures through traditions of dress. This enabled the teacher to assess and record their achievement in key skills. In the minority of lessons, however, teachers talk for too long and students get few opportunities to question and speak about their ideas. On these occasions progress in developing students' communication skills is unsatisfactory.
42. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory, the students make satisfactory progress, but often the level of demand and pace of work expected of students is lower than in the more successful lessons. In some lessons there is weakness in planning the learning activities, with teachers spending long periods explaining topics to the neglect of engaging students actively in the lesson. On these occasions students are not being fully challenged throughout the lesson, and learning, at times, is not as brisk as it might be. In an AS-level design and technology lesson students were set an appropriate challenge to design a bookstand. They used computers effectively and the co-operation between teachers and students enabled satisfactory progress to be made, but the work rate was not consistently high enough because the minority of students tired of the task and failed to sustain concentration.
 43. In the small minority of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, students made unsatisfactory progress. This was mostly because there was a lack of rigour in teaching the topic and the pace of progress that students made was slow.
 44. Teachers make sound use of a range of resources to support learning in subjects, except for the use computers. In many subjects, such as mathematics, business, geography and art, computers are not well used for purposes such as research, data handling or graphics.
 45. Most students have very good knowledge of how well they learn and the progress they make. This is because teachers give individual guidance in lessons and through the careful marking of work that identifies strengths and weaknesses of assignments. Their knowledge of how well they learn is further supported through the regular individual consultations with their form tutors when progress is reviewed against the grades that they are expected to achieve. Students value the reviews and respond well to them through continued effort and application to study. Students' self-confidence improved in a Year 13 French lesson when they gained knowledge of key vocabulary about environmental issues and showed understanding of language structure. Students' interest and concentration in lessons and in private study are good. They listen carefully to explanations and sustain concentration for long periods of time. In a Year 13 lesson on ancient history, for example, students made good progress when they listened attentively to the teacher's explanations about power politics in ancient Rome and then discussed ideas in depth about the reasons for Tiberius' actions. The pace at which students work is variable across subjects. It is good in subjects such as English, physical education, and music but slower in other subjects. The progress made by a student with special educational needs is good because teachers prepare materials to address the difficulty and because the student has a very positive attitude to study.
 46. The school needs to review the quality of its provision and planning for GCE A-level general studies. For many students subject clashes result in lack of continuity of learning and this leads to slower progress being made than is expected of students. This has the effect of reducing their confidence and the effort they make on the course and is reflected in the poor results of recent years. The teaching of personal and social education, including careers advice, is good overall. Form tutors teach a varied programme of study at identified times in the curriculum and the quality is well monitored by the upper school management team.

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

47. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are good. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 provides the subjects required by the National Curriculum. In addition, within the performing arts programme there are opportunities for drama and dance for pupils in Year 7 and 8 and Latin in Years 8 and 9 for those pupils wishing to study a classical language and who would benefit. Two additional modern languages, German and Spanish, are offered from Year 8 onwards. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in information and communication technology in subjects other than English, physics, design and technology, history and, careers education. In this respect, the curriculum

does not comply with statutory requirements. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Emphasis is placed on promoting health education issues, including sex education and drugs education, and the initiatives taken are well supported through the local education authority. In the main, form tutors teach the lessons and they contribute well to the preparation of the scheme of work.

48. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive additional help in class from either learning support assistants or teachers of English as an additional language. The co-ordinator works closely with subjects to plan and monitor the progress that pupils make and review meetings lead to the planning of the next stage of learning. A co-ordinator has been appointed to develop literacy strategies, teachers have taken part in in-service training and departments have identified where they can support pupils' literacy skills. The benefits are beginning to work through subjects such as history, where key words are regularly emphasised to support understanding and spelling, but this is not yet established in all subjects. Planning to promote pupils' numeracy skills is at a very early stage of development and therefore not effective in improving numeracy standards through the different subjects.
49. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is very good. The school provides an extensive range of academic and vocational subjects to meet the needs of all pupils. Most pupils study the subjects required by the National Curriculum and, in addition, religious education and personal, social and health education. There are 80 students disapplied from modern languages in Year 10 and 12 in Year 11 when they attend Doncaster College for vocational training. Vocational subjects are leisure and tourism, health and social care, business, manufacturing and an NVQ Level 1 in administration. Arrangements to teach information and communication technology are unsatisfactory and the provision made does not comply with statutory requirements. Opportunities to study three sciences are available to pupils who would benefit, but teaching of the third science is extra-curricular and places extra demands on pupils and teachers. Residential programmes are regularly planned, such as the outdoor pursuits programme for lower-attaining pupils.
50. Pupils have equal access to all parts of the curriculum. Subjects are providing greater learning opportunity. In science, for example, pupils have an alternative course to GCSE through the Certificate of Achievement and, in design and technology, they can take a vocational course in manufacturing.
51. The school has a range of links with local business and industry and this benefits pupils by extending their experience of life through the workplace. All Year 10 pupils participate in work experience and the programme is well supported through the Doncaster Partnership. The guidance that pupils receive in careers education is very good. Teachers are well briefed and this ensures that pupils make very good progress on the course. The Programme of Study is broad and relevant to needs and uses the Trident-based resources to develop knowledge and understanding about opportunities after full-time education. Links with the local community are very good. There are established arrangements through the Hall Cross pyramid of local schools to ensure that there is smooth transition to the school when pupils attain the age of 11 and the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative assists the learning support unit and the mentoring programme in the school.
52. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. Participation rates are high, particularly in the extensive range of sports and musical activities. There are several teams in most games and boys and girls have equal opportunity to participate in at least one of the sports. The orchestra, bands, choirs and individual instrumental work provide ongoing opportunity to participate and many pupils, supported by teachers, do take an active part. Other activities include the 'Right 2 Act' Theatre Company, which is managed by pupils, showing initiative and responsibility to organise events, workshops and performances in and out of school.
53. Provision for pupils with special needs is very good and is characterised by very effective in-class support together with a very wide range of additional opportunities. Provision is specifically targeted, according to individual needs. ICT is an integral part of the very good provision in both lower and upper schools, giving pupils opportunity to access very challenging individual learning programmes to develop literacy and numeracy skills. These programmes benefit a wide range of pupils. A very effective corrective reading programme is also a central feature of provision. Other features include a structured phonic programme and paired reading sessions. Voice talk software is being well used to support pupils who have difficulty communicating in writing. Provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties is significantly enhanced by the deployment of a specialist teacher. A notable feature of the school's provision

is that the programme of very good support offered to pupils in the lower school is sustained in the upper school with appropriate modifications.

54. The school's overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school relies heavily upon religious education to meet its responsibilities in this aspect of school life. Although English and art in particular make good contributions, most subjects do not develop the opportunities offered. Religious education plans its work to develop pupils' spiritual awareness quite well and the school supports the subject but this aspect of school life is not given a high priority. Although the school can provide only relatively few school assemblies, there is no 'thought for the day' in tutor times.
55. The provision for moral development is good. There is a clear seven-point code of behaviour and high moral expectations underpin school life. To a larger or lesser degree, moral issues are considered in English to some depth in novels such as 'To Kill a Mocking Bird'. In art, moral and spiritual issues are examined when studying artists influenced by the Spanish Civil War, such as Salvador Dali. Courses such as PSHE and child development also make distinctive contributions. The new short GCSE courses in religious education grapple with many contemporary modern moral problems such as personal decision-making in everyday lifestyles.
56. The provision for pupils' social development is good. This is a strength in the school and efforts are made to cover most aspects of social awareness and responsibility. There is a strong social inclusion policy, which partly seeks, with a good degree of success, to ensure that the 176 pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are under no racial pressures. The teachers are justly recognised by parents and pupils generally as good role models. Social development is fostered throughout the school work, both in the curriculum and in the way pupils are organised in their learning groups. A major development has been the emergence of citizenship within the PSHE syllabus. This includes industrial links and health education. Citizenship is also being built into subject syllabuses such as history. Pupils in the upper school have the opportunity to take some responsibility for decision-making through their year councils. A high proportion of pupils are involved extra-curricular activities. The school encourages pupils to support less advantaged people by numerous charitable activities. For example, UNICEF receives well over £1000 a year from the non-uniform day, aerobic activities raise £400 for charities and pupils raise approximately £200 by selling calendars for the RNIB.
57. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have many high quality opportunities to develop their cultural awareness. Art, for example, is exceptionally rich in its offerings, which have ranged from having an artist in residence to having close links with various galleries both locally and as far afield as New York. The range of visits to concerts and localities presents many good opportunities. Visits to France focus on language development. English, science and geography, for example, use residential experiences at Whitby to broaden the pupils' horizons. The school itself has a highly esteemed railway museum, which highlights aspects of Doncaster's industrial heritage. Many opportunities are available for pupils who wish to take them. Preparation for pupils to live in a multicultural society is satisfactory.

Sixth form

58. The sixth form curriculum provides a wide range of courses to meet the learning needs of students of different attainment and interests. The provision made by the school is very good. There are currently 28 GCE AS and A-level courses and these are supplemented by GCSE classes in English, mathematics and science, along with vocational courses in manufacturing, health and social care, leisure and tourism and business. In addition, all students follow a general studies course in Year 12 (optional for Year 13 students), which incorporates the teaching of key skills. All students follow a personal and social education programme that includes careers support and advice. The curriculum is further enhanced through the half-day compulsory enrichment programme when students choose from an extensive list of sports activities, work experience or community studies. The teaching of religious education, however, is not taught as a discrete or modular course and in this respect, the school is failing to meet the statutory requirements.
59. Access to the sixth form is very good. The school works hard to give opportunity to all those who wish to continue their education post-16. The wide range of courses on offer is increasingly meeting the needs of students of differing attainment from the Doncaster area. The school has set up a clear structure to support students' academic and personal development. This is

successful in ensuring that students who might not normally follow a sixth form education leave with a worthwhile qualification at the end of the course. The school's philosophy of inclusive education is central to this development. Very good arrangements are in place to inform students and their parents about the opportunities available in the sixth form and visits to the school are arranged for students and their parents from the 11 to 16 local schools. This is very successful and leads to the development of a cohesive sixth form.

60. The provision that the school makes to support students' personal and social development is good overall. The enrichment programme is very well organised and makes a very good contribution to broadening students' experience. One group, for example, applied themselves fully to the theoretical and practical application of life saving skills. They recalled work learned earlier in discussion and gained skills in handling a body for resuscitation purposes. The progress made was very good because of teacher expertise and the practical challenges set for the students gave real life experiences. Other groups participate in worthwhile activities such as community service and work experience. Students are very well supported through careers advice with excellent resources to research opportunities in higher education. The curricular content of the general studies course is sound, but the quality of experience and the progress students make is unsatisfactory because of weakness in planning the course. The quality of the personal and social education programme is satisfactory overall, but the lack of staffing stability on the course reduces the continuity in learning for some students.
61. The governors make a valuable contribution to the development of the sixth form. They are very supportive of the broadening of the curriculum to cater for wider student needs, and consider they reflect the wishes of parents to offer a wide range of courses at the school in addition to the vocational focus available through local centres of further education.
62. Good progress has been made in the organisation and planning to develop students' key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. A team of 14 teachers has taken part in the in-service training and the co-ordinator works closely with heads of departments to plan developments in subjects. Good practice was observed in a Year 13 biology lesson and in a Year 12 health and social care lesson when the students improved their oral skills through prepared presentations to the class. Developments in numeracy and ICT are at an early stage of development and it is too early to see their impact on learning.
63. The school makes very good provision to support a wide range of extra-curricular activities in the sixth form. There is a comprehensive programme of sports for both male and female students, including inter-school matches. The level of participation is high and much greater than is usually seen in schools. In addition, the school is very successful in the range of musical activities it promotes through the performing arts department, such as the school orchestra and choir, and these make a very good contribution to students' learning. Within subjects, however, the provision for extra-curricular development is variable. It is good in some subjects such as art and design, geography and biology, but weak in physics, history, design and technology and information and communication technology.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

64. Procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare are satisfactory. In the lower school these procedures are good; records are well kept by the child protection officer and liaison with outside agencies is good. Appropriate staff training takes place for all staff and there is separate monitoring of pupils in local authority care. Records of pupils at risk are dispersed among heads of year and not kept centrally.
65. There is a health and safety policy and termly tours are effectively conducted. Most departments in the school carry out their own risk assessments. The school keeps records of fire alarm tests and fire practices.
66. Education and personal support and guidance for pupils are very good. The school's strong pastoral system ensures that teachers know pupils well and the regular meetings held between form tutors, heads of year and subject heads, together with good record keeping, ensure that pupils' progress is tracked and well monitored.
67. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school has appointed an attendance officer, who is employed four-fifths of the week. Her duties include first day

contact with the parents of non-attenders and home visits. In addition, two education welfare officers work at school for the majority of the week and meet heads of year and the attendance officer weekly to discuss individual cases. The school has introduced a reward system consisting of certificates and vouchers for free meals. Attendance records are maintained by computerised systems. They are accurate, up to date and comply with legislation. These developments and procedures have had a significant impact in improving attendance.

68. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating and monitoring oppressive behaviour. Reports on pupils' behaviour are centrally collated and kept on computer by staff, and regular meetings are held between year heads, form tutors and subject heads where pupils' behaviour and progress is discussed.
69. The reward and sanction system is well understood by staff and the introduction of the 'steam room' and learning support unit have ensured that the school now has a structured approach to dealing with challenging behaviour; this provision has resulted in a marked reduction in fixed term exclusions.
70. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good in both the upper and lower schools. The school carries out formal assessment across the curriculum.
71. The school has a common policy relating to ongoing assessment and monitoring and this is implemented in various ways, such as: common assignments in National Curriculum subjects, classwork and inter-departmental tests. The school uses base line predicted data to conduct assessment, which is calculated by prior attainment of pupils at all key stages. Target levels and grades that pupils have achieved are well recorded by teachers in mark books and the progress pupils make is correlated to these levels. Pupils are given regular feedback on progress. They are well motivated, and target setting and achievement are much encouraged.
72. The school uses its own internal assessment procedures as they consider the information they are able to obtain from their own system more accurate than that provided by commercial organisations. Highly accurate and useful data is produced and target setting is carried out by awarding point scores/grades in every subject of the National Curriculum. Predictions for Year 7 pupils entering the school are made on a combination of Key Stage 2 SATS results and testing, which the primary school carries out in Year 6. Analysis is also undertaken at the end of Key Stage 3 to predict for GCSE performance and of GCSE results to predict for AS/A level. Data are made available to all staff for all year groups. In addition, following each external assessment, the school produces through its systems administrator very detailed value-added data which enables departments and individual teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning that have taken place.
73. Year 7 pupils are setted in mathematics and science after the first half term, predominantly on the Key Stage 2 SAT's results. The setting is reviewed half-termly after that. Assessment and monitoring are vigorously applied, ensuring that pupils remain in correct settings and receive guidance and support.
74. The school is participating in the 'Progress File' pilot scheme, which is due to replace the national record of achievement from 2002. This trial scheme has now been established at Hall Cross School for over two years and is helping pupils in the management of their own learning and in preparation for transition.
75. Minimum target data are used during examination preparations and ongoing monitoring and assessment constantly take place. The school uses 'cause for concern' slips and direct referral to head of year, involving parents as appropriate. One-to-one interviews are regularly held with form tutors to review academic progress and pastoral issues and again minimum target grades data are used to review pupils' progress.
76. Pupils in the learning support unit have a separate internal assessment, which is carried out using a well-defined and sophisticated system, using positive and negative scoring. Pupils' academic and pastoral progress is effectively monitored and evaluated. This initiative ensures that these students receive a high level of support and that problems with learning or behaviour are quickly identified and addressed.
77. The high profile that the school gives to assessment and monitoring in both lower and upper school ensures that good progress is maintained throughout both key stages and pupils are able to move on to their next stage of education with confidence.

78. Links with feeder schools are good, with full use made of information received to identify pupils' special needs on entry to the school. Identification and assessment procedures, including testing on entry, are very good and ensure that provision is specifically targeted according to need. Reading ages on entry are very well used to allocate provision. Criteria for placement on the special needs register are very clear, with pupils remaining on the register until functional literacy has been achieved. There are regular reviews of progress, and testing is well used to coincide with reviews. Pupils are appropriately involved in review procedures, with pupils in Years 9 and 10 completing progress review sheets. Monitoring procedures are very thorough and include checking the progress of pupils who have been taken off the special needs register. The procedures for annual reviews of pupils with Statements are also very thorough. Individual Education Plans are well constructed, with targets that are well matched to individual needs. Target setting is well used and extends beyond Individual Education Plans, with, for example, targets set for corrective reading and the ICT Successmaker program.

Sixth form

Assessment

79. In the sixth form the school effectively uses the DfEE data to predict minimum target grades for A level. These data use a point score of grades awarded at GCSE to predict A-level grading. Mock examinations are held in Year 12 and 13 and subject teachers provide feedback jointly to students and heads of year regarding grades achieved towards minimum target levels. Heads of year and subject tutors follow up concerns in interviews with individual students. In January and June, following the publication of examination results, students with potential problems and underachievers are identified by heads of year and parents contacted by the school, if there are any concerns. Value added analysis is effectively carried out at this point.

Advice, support and guidance

80. The educational and personal support and guidance for students are very good. There are very good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress, and the information from assessment is well used to guide and support students, all of whom have tutor support and individual target setting. The quality and accessibility of information and advice about careers and opportunities in higher education are excellent. Sixth form tutors are effective and enjoy the confidence of students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

81. Parents' views of the school are overall very positive. The significant majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire thought that the school had high expectations of pupils, that the school was well led and that pupils were making good progress. Most parents felt that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible. The inspection findings concur entirely with those views. Some parents would like to see the school work more closely with parents and they would like to be better informed about their children's progress. Inspectors judge that there are sufficient opportunities for parents to work closely with the school and that there were very good arrangements for parents to be kept informed about their children's progress.
82. The school prospectus is exceptionally attractive and is professionally produced; it contains a range of useful and interesting information about courses and facilities and on the school's ethos on behaviour and its pastoral arrangements. A newsletter is provided each half term giving up-to-date information on school activities. Each year group has at least one parents' evening a year, with Years 7, 9 and 11 having two. These evenings are well structured and both parents and pupils have a joint opportunity to meet all subject teachers to discuss progress. They are well attended and much appreciated by parents.
83. Annual reports are produced for all year groups in the summer term, which are based on pupils' national record of achievement. Although pupils are given the opportunity to comment on the report on their perception of progress, parents are not and reports do not give a clear explanation of grades achieved. In some subjects, reports do not say what pupils could achieve nor do they give target settings. The school contacts parents either by telephone or letter if appropriate to report on concerns that there may be on pupils' behaviour or progress. This action is much appreciated by parents.

84. Parents are welcomed into the school to help, although few take the opportunity to do so. Parents do help the school by supervising pupils on school outings. The 'Friends of Hall Cross School' is a lively organisation that arranges social functions such as fun runs, cheese and wine parties, fashion shows and barbecues, all of which raise considerable funds for the school. Their work is much appreciated. The school has an open door policy for parents to come into school at any time to see staff if they have any concerns.
85. The home/school agreement, parental contribution to student planners, open access to school and very good reporting procedures by the school ensure that parents are able to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
86. Inspectors agreed with parents' views that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.
87. Homework throughout the school is well structured and carefully monitored and the views of some parents - that pupils do not receive the correct amount of homework – is not confirmed by inspection findings.
88. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend annual reviews and contribute to Individual Education Plans and target setting. In respect of special educational needs the links with parents are good. Parents are kept well informed of the provision available to pupils on entry to the school and of progress made. They are appropriately involved in reviews of progress and kept well informed of targets set, with an invitation to comment on proposed targets. The contribution made by parents to pupils' learning and the very good efforts made by the school to work with parents ensure that pupils make good progress.
89. The concerns raised by parents in the last report, regarding approachability of staff and senior managers, have been well addressed by the school and significant progress has now been made in liaison with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

90. The quality of the leadership from the headteacher is very good. He provides clear leadership for raising standards, with a focus on raising the academic performance of all pupils but especially of lower-attaining pupils. Although only in post for a short period of time, he has clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses within the school. In this task he has been well supported by his deputy headteacher and the two heads of school. There is a clear commitment to promoting social inclusion and racial harmony. In such a very large school on two separate sites the headteacher recognises the importance of improving communications between staff.
91. Members of the senior management team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They each have responsibility for leading the major departments within the school and also have some whole-school responsibilities. Their leadership and commitment are good but their effectiveness is restricted by the heavy teaching commitment each carries.
92. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection in tackling one of the key issues identified then: the lack of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Members of the senior management team have mainly carried this out. Although the performance management policy has been effectively introduced, there is a weakness in ensuring that all staff with management responsibilities are consistent in their approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of their areas of responsibility. Some members of the senior management team are effective in delegating responsibilities to other middle managers. However, others are reluctant to delegate.
93. Other teachers with curricular and pastoral responsibilities provide good leadership. In the case of art and special educational needs the leadership is very good. On a split-site school there are added pressures on providing good quality leadership in ensuring continuity from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Some subject co-ordinators make determined efforts to ensure that they have teaching commitments on both sites.
94. The governing body meets regularly and is supportive of the school. Governors have a satisfactory role in shaping the direction of the school. They receive good quality information to enable them to form clear judgements on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In most

respects the school fulfils its statutory duties but the governing body is failing to ensure that all pupils receive a daily act of collective worship and that all pupils are receiving their full National Curriculum entitlement to ICT. Sixth form students are not receiving their entitlement to religious education.

95. The school development plan has appropriate priorities for raising standards. The issues identified by the inspection team match closely the priorities already identified by the school. Those identified by the school include improving levels of literacy and numeracy, and improving attendance and behaviour. Useful strategies have been selected to tackle these key issues and measurable targets are well used to evaluate success.
96. There is a very good whole-school approach to special educational needs. The governing body is appropriately involved, with a designated governor appointed. The special needs co-ordinator provides governors with detailed reports about the effectiveness of the school's provision. Links with departments are good, and departmental representatives meet regularly with the special needs co-ordinator. The special needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership. Learning support is very well organized; staff with delegated responsibilities work very effectively on both school sites. ICT learning support programmes are similarly very well managed, and individual progress is regularly monitored. Specialist staff work very well as a team. A strong feature of the leadership provided is the combination of very efficient management of existing provision together with the promotion of innovation and development. The school is well prepared for the revised Code of Practice. Good use is made of external services, and funding is appropriately deployed. Since the last inspection the school has grown in size with two additional year groups and is now operating on two sites instead of one as previously. The very good provision reported at the last inspection has not only been sustained during a period of great change but also significantly enhanced.
97. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Over a third of the staff have over 10 years experience of teaching at the school. The school has sufficient staff to teach all the areas of the National Curriculum. There are weaknesses in the number of specialist staff to teach ICT and music.
98. The ratio of pupils to teachers is close to the national average and the amount of time teachers spend in contact with pupils is close to the national average. Overall staffing costs are below the national average. Administrative, clerical and technical staff provide good support for the efficient day-to-day running of the school. Their hard work and commitment make a valuable contribution to the work of the school.
99. Staff development is well organised. In recent years there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of staff development to raise standards of teaching and learning. Teaching staff who are new to the school are well supported. Some teachers lack confidence in using ICT to support learning in their subjects.
100. Overall accommodation is good. The lower school buildings are of good condition set in an enclosed and attractive site. The upper school is housed on the site of the former boys' grammar school. The original buildings have been added to in order to provide adequate accommodation for pupils. The heating system on the upper school site is inefficient and the dining area is a dismal area. Both sites are well maintained and pupils show respect for their school as there is a marked absence of litter and graffiti.
101. The spending on learning resources is low by comparison with other schools. All departments have adequate resources although many textbooks are old. The majority of departments are not adequately accessing ICT to support teaching and learning; for example, during the inspection week many computers were not being used regularly. In most subjects, whilst ICT is used occasionally, the coverage this represents is insufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
102. The libraries are a strength of the school. On both sites these are well stocked with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils use the libraries well during lessons and at lunchtimes and after school.
103. The expenditure per pupil is above the national average. Finances are managed effectively. The most recent auditor's report was positive; it contained recommendations which have been accepted by the governing body. The financial planning for the last two years has reduced the budget deficit of nearly half a million pounds to just over £100,000. The deficit arose at the time

of the reorganization when the number of pupils entering the school fell well below the expected numbers. The school's popularity has been regained and there is an increasing number of pupils entering the school. However, the governors have had to make reductions to the overstaffing levels in 1999 and to adjust other budgets in order to reduce the budget deficit. The school seeks to achieve the best value in purchasing and using resources and is increasingly targeting its resources to meet the needs of the school development plan's priorities. There are some inefficiencies in the use of resources, such as the heating of the upper school site, the use of computers and the use of the upper school dining room. Specific grants, including those for special educational needs, Excellence in Cities, and Standards Fund, are spent effectively on the purposes for which they were intended and in line with the priorities for the school's development. Full use is made of management information systems to run the school effectively and efficiently.

104. In relation to the level of funding received, the examination results achieved by pupils and students and the good quality of teaching, the school is providing good value for money.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

105. The management of the sixth form is good. There is a well-established organisational structure, in which managerial roles and responsibilities are clear. There is a programme of regular liaison meetings between the heads of year in the sixth form and the head of Year 11 in order to establish the setting of targets for pupils joining the sixth form. Teachers working in the sixth form have good opportunities for in-service training, with a recent focus on current curricular developments. The management of teachers' performance, culminating in an annual performance review for all teachers, has been successfully introduced, but there is a weakness on the consistent monitoring of teaching and learning by heads of department. There is good monitoring of students' progress, but insufficient monitoring and support of sixth form teaching. Links with universities, especially Sheffield, Durham, Oxford and Cambridge, and with local employers, are strong.

Resources

106. For most sixth form courses the quality of learning resources is good. Accommodation is good and the match of specialist teachers to teaching sixth form courses is mainly good, with the exception of psychology, where the appointment of specialist teachers has not kept pace with the increasing popularity among students of these courses. The size of the sixth form is sufficiently large to allow a broad range of courses to be offered. The large teaching groups in some subjects enable the school to support minority interest courses. The staying-on rate is good, with most students who start sixth form courses completing their courses to the final examination. The sixth form is cost-effective and provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

107. In order to raise standards even higher, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff should:
- (1) Require subject co-ordinators to take more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
(paragraph 92)
 - (2) Improve the proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE grades A*-G by:
 - continuing to raise the attendance levels for pupils in Years 10 and 11;
 - continuing to develop the strategies for social inclusion.(paragraphs 2, 17, 23)
 - (3) See to it that all pupils receive their full entitlement to ICT by:
 - ensuring that all schemes of work clearly identify the opportunities for using ICT to support teaching and learning;
 - ensuring that all the requirements for ICT are clearly identified and are covered in timetabled ICT lessons or through subjects;
 - ensuring that all teachers have the confidence to use ICT to support teaching and learning.(paragraphs 29, 97, 99, 178 –187)

- (4) Ensure that policies for improving standards of literacy and numeracy are clearly formulated and understood and are consistently implemented through appropriate strategies.
(paragraphs 30, 31)

Sixth form

- (1) Improve the planning and timetabling of the general studies course. (paragraph 60)
(2) Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning. (paragraph 105)
(3) Use ICT more widely to support teaching and learning. (paragraph 44)
(4) Meeting the statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education. (paragraph 94)

In addition, the governing body may wish to include the following less important issues for consideration within the action plan:

- Upper School dining room. (paragraph 100)
- Collective worship. (paragraph 94)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7- 11	182
	Sixth form	117
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		67

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	5	34	83	54	4	1	1
Percentage	2.7	18.7	45.6	29.7	2.2	0.5	0.5
Sixth form							
Number	7	32	48	26	4	0	0
Percentage	6.0	27.4	41.0	22.2	3.4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1603	430
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	283	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	58	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	243	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	137

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	122
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	144

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	10.0	School data	2.1
National comparative data	7.7	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
	2001	130	162	292

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	71	86	82
	Girls	121	106	103
	Total	192	192	185
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (66)	66 (65)	63 (59)
	National	(63)	(65)	(59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (35)	44 (43)	35 (29)
	National	(28)	(42)	(30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	90	83	71
	Girls	134	108	98
	Total	224	191	169
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (67)	65 (66)	58 (64)
	National	(64)	(66)	(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (27)	41 (35)	27 (38)
	National	(31)	(39)	(29)

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
	2001	155	125	280

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	63	131	140
	Girls	70	112	116
	Total	133	243	256
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	48 (46)	87 (85)	91 (88)
	National	(47.4)	(90.6)	(95.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38.1 (34)
	National	(38.4)

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

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
	2001	87	118	205

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	16.9	17.2	17.1 (15.4)	1.3	3.3	1.9 (1.0)
National	17.7	18.6	(18.2)	2.6	2.9	(2.7)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	4
Indian	47
Pakistani	68
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	18
White	1710
Any other minority ethnic group	36

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	1
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	170	11
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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)	129.13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.7

Education support staff: Y7 - Y13

Total number of education support staff	31
Total aggregate hours worked per week	882

Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11

Key Stage 3	24.0
Key Stage 4	21.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	5,812,987
Total expenditure	5,529,711
Expenditure per pupil	2804
Balance brought forward from previous year	-437,734
Balance carried forward to next year	-154,458

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	33
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	1972
Number of questionnaires returned	763

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	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	55	3	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	54	9	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	56	13	2	4
The teaching is good.	27	61	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	47	20	4	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	47	6	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	21	49	19	4	8
The school is well led and managed.	32	50	4	1	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	52	5	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	7	1	10

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching in both key stages.
- Leadership and teamwork within the department.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.
- Standards, especially at Key Stage 3 and the proportions gaining five GCSE grades A*-G.

Areas for improvement

- Developing strategies to raise 'D' grade candidates to 'C' at GCSE.
- Consistency of marking pupils' work at Key Stage 3.

108. Results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3 in 2000 were close to the national average for pupils achieving Level 5 and above. Sixty-six per cent of pupils gained Level 5 or higher compared with a national average of 63 per cent. These results were well above the average for schools of a similar type. The results for 2001 show a further improvement, especially in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 6 and above.
109. In 2000 the GCSE results in English were in line with national averages. Fifty-nine per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C against a national average of 56 per cent. This overall figure masks the fact that a high proportion of these were high grades - A*/A. At grades A*-G all pupils achieved a grade. These figures indicate a rising trend of attainment in English since 1997. Boys achieved above the national average for boys whilst girls were in line with the average for their sex. There was no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls, overall. The 2001 results indicate a slight increase on the 2000 figures at grades A*-C, whilst A*-G grades remained constant at one hundred per cent, as they have for the past five years.
110. In 2000 the GCSE results in English literature were in line with national averages for grades A*-C and A*-G. Boys' achievement was in line with national averages for boys whereas girls achieved below the national average for girls. Overall, however, there was no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The results for 2001 were broadly in line with the 2000 figures, indicating consistent achievement over the last three years in literature.
111. Inspection evidence from lessons and work seen shows that standards are just above average at Key Stage 3 overall and average at Key Stage 4. Within these broad judgements there are considerable variations; in particular, there is a significant minority of pupils at Key Stage 4 whose writing and whose response to reading are well above average.
112. Speaking and listening skills are good overall. Almost all pupils listen carefully and respond appropriately. Most pupils at both key stages are able to discuss ideas thoughtfully and sensibly, employing Standard English as required and making use of a reasonably wide and appropriate vocabulary. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 10 talked with understanding about characters and themes in the novel 'The Scarecrow' and were able to convey their ideas clearly. Year 7 pupils discussed with animation how to present character in story writing. They expressed their viewpoints clearly. Higher attainers can use language precisely and thoughtfully, as when a Year 8 class analysed changes in language structure since the time of the King James Bible.
113. Reading skills are often good, in both key stages. Many pupils are able to respond with understanding and appreciation to the study of a wide range of literary and non-literary texts. Year 9 pupils explored how to reconcile different audiences and purposes within one piece of writing; Year 7 looked at the functional differences between formal and informal letters; Year 11 considered the historical context behind a novel they are studying for GCSE; and Year 10 analysed a poem in detail at word, sentence and text level. These examples illustrate the range of skills which pupils acquire as they progress through the school. Most responses at both key stages show sound development of understanding of the different methods of writers and purposes of texts.

114. The standard of written work is satisfactory overall. It is, however, sometimes above or well above average, across both key stages. Pupils are exposed to many types of writing - for example, letters, diaries, stories, poems, extracts, invitations, articles and lists. Exposure to this wide range encourages pupils to explore audience and purpose widely. Some writing, at both key stages, and especially from higher attainers, is very impressive in the use of imaginative and descriptive language and in the ability to analyse and compare works of literature at a high level. Overall, the level of technical accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar is good. Even lower attainers make fewer errors - and less consistently - than is usual at this level. Pupils in Year 7 with levels below 4 are very well helped by the Literacy Progress Unit, which helps them to develop accuracy and understanding of basic literacy in a controlled and supportive environment.
115. Progress is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and often good within lessons. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good at both key stages. Provision and support for these pupils are consistently good.
116. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Half the lessons were judged good, a quarter were very good and a quarter were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge. Most teachers possess very good questioning skills: they ask open questions, which encourage pupils to think, and then insist upon pupils developing and refining their answers. As a result good learning takes place. This was exemplified in a good Year 10 lesson where pupils were exploring the symbolic nature of the scarecrows in the novel 'The Scarecrows' and in a Year 7 lesson where the teacher led the pupils to consider the nature of character creation in writing. Most lessons maintain a good pace, which keeps pupils interested and alert and, therefore, encourages learning. Lessons are almost always well planned. This results in learning which is logical, sequential and clearly structured. For example, most lessons begin with teachers sharing the objectives with the class and end with a short plenary session which examines how far these objectives have been met. Most teachers have good classroom management skills; this results in lessons progressing in an orderly and calm manner and an appropriate ethos for learning. Generally, teachers have high expectations which demand that pupils make maximum effort in order to respond effectively. Subject-specific vocabulary is widely used in teacher exposition; this encourages pupils to use the correct conceptual frameworks. There is, however, no extension work for pupils who are gifted and talented. Where lessons are less good, there is some lack of structure and therefore clarity to the lessons; this results in some classroom management difficulties and hinders learning. Marking is generally careful and accurate, although some at Key Stage 3 is not sufficiently detailed or diagnostic to be useful to the pupils in showing them how to improve. Homework is set regularly and is used well to enhance learning begun in class.
117. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils arrive in lessons in an orderly manner, ready to work. In many lessons pupils show enthusiasm and interest in the subject and readily respond to questioning. They work thoughtfully in pairs and groups and collaborate well, as when a Year 10 group explored the nature of a speech in 'Animal Farm'. Pupils also show the ability to work with a good degree of concentration and effort by themselves for sustained periods of time. Attitudes become less positive when the teaching fails to engage pupils' interest.
118. The school has no whole-school literacy policy as yet. As a result, provision across departments is inconsistent. Some departments, such as geography, have a departmental policy on the teaching of literacy whilst others do not. Many departments - for example, English, history, geography and mathematics - effectively display key subject-specific words in classrooms but others do not. Many departments do not yet include wide reading beyond the immediate information needs in their requirements. Most, but not all, plan for including extended writing for different audiences in their schemes of work. The majority of departments do, however, carefully correct spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in their marking. Drafting as a means of encouraging accuracy and development in writing is well established in many departments, for example, English, art and history, but not in others where it could be a valuable asset in promoting literacy skills. Almost all subjects encourage the development of speaking and listening skills through a variety of appropriate oral activities. The well-stocked and organised library is used well by some subjects but very little by others to promote literacy development.
119. The department is well led with vision and efficiency. There is a strong team of teachers, who work well together. Delegation is effective. Good teaching is underpinned by sound schemes of work. The departmental development plan is well considered. Assessment is generally thorough

and effective. There is some individual target setting, using data analyses, but this is capable of being developed further. There are strong links with primary feeder schools, which provide useful information on incoming Year 7 pupils. Formal and informal monitoring of teaching is well established in the department.

120. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The previous report was almost entirely positive, only two minor points being raised. Regular experience of drama is now provided at Key Stage 3. Pupils have an appropriate amount of time allocated from the English department allowance. Teaching was previously judged to sometimes lack pace and urgency but this is no longer the case. Standards of written presentation were described as being 'satisfactory' in the last report; these are now good. Examination results at both key stages have also improved since the last inspection.

Drama

121. Drama as a separate subject which is regularly and consistently taught has only very recently been introduced into the Key Stage 3 curriculum and there is, as yet, no evidence about pupils' attainment at the end of the key stage.
122. The percentage of pupils attaining GCSE A*-C grades in drama in 2000 was below the national average, although the number taking the examination was extremely small and comparisons with national statistics are not necessarily valid. All pupils who took the examination attained a grade between A* and E. In 2001 the percentage attaining A*-C grades was lower than the national average but there was a small increase in the number attaining A* and A grades. All pupils attained a grade between A* and E. All pupils met the grade which had been predicted for them and made satisfactory progress. Attainment in drama seen during the course of the inspection was in line with what is seen nationally.
123. The standards shown by students when they are acting using speech are generally satisfactory, although some have a tendency to overact. They make better use of body language, mime, movement and facial expression to convey plot and character, showing observational skills and sensitivity. All pupils make appropriate use of the opportunity to plan and revise their performances in groups of varying size. They are able to try out their plans and revise them in the light of their observations. Students very new to the study of drama have made good progress in the use of such techniques as freeze frame.
124. The teaching in all lessons seen was at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to plan, revise and perform their work, offering good advice and support for this process. There is appropriate emphasis on the acquisition of the basic skills of drama, which pupils had not had consistent opportunities to experience during Key Stage 3. Teachers make good use of the good drama accommodation and equipment to give pupils an authentic experience of performance, using lighting, for example, to establish an appropriate mood.
125. A good start has been made in the establishment of drama as a separate subject of the curriculum. There is a full and comprehensive scheme of work, supplemented by weekly plans. This scheme of work is informative and gives good support to all teachers involved in the teaching of drama. There are clear guidelines for the establishment in pupils of good working habits in the drama studio. The department provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in drama through extra-curricular activities.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and the commitment of the teachers to raising standards.
- Assessment procedures and the use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress.

Areas for improvement

- The further development of the use of ICT.

126. When pupils enter the school their standard in mathematics is about average in relation to national expectations. Overall levels of attainment at the end of Year 9 are average, but higher attainers have achieved well in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Overall levels of attainment at the end of Year 11 are average. Higher-attaining pupils continue to achieve well. The quality of teaching is good. This is a key factor in ensuring the good quality of learning and the positive attitudes of pupils. Overall, in Years 7 to 11, pupils make satisfactory progress, with higher-attaining pupils, in particular, making good progress as they move through school. At the time of the last inspection, results at the end of Year 9 were above the national average and GCSE results were in line with the national average.
127. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds, the pupils' results were close to the national average when compared to all schools. The results were well above the national average in comparison to schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. In comparison to all schools, this represents satisfactory achievement, as pupils progressed through Years 7 to 9. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The performance of the pupils was similar to their performance in science, but not as good as their performance in English. The test results reflected Teacher Assessment. When compared to all schools, the average point score has fallen since the last inspection. In the reported results for 2001, the proportion of pupils working at, or above, the national average was maintained, as in 2000, but the proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels, Levels 7 and 8, increased.
128. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C was broadly in line with the national average but the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-G was below the national average. The average point score for GCSE was below the national average. Pupils did not perform as well as they did in English and science. In 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C was maintained, but the proportion of pupils achieving A*-G increased, an indication of the department's successful efforts to include poor attenders within the examination system. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C has not changed significantly since the last inspection. In 2001 a significant number of pupils were also entered for GCSE statistics, three-quarters of them achieving grades A*-C, and all achieving grades A*-G.
129. Work seen during the inspection indicates that the standards that pupils achieve at age 14 are broadly in line with the level expected nationally. Pupils are making steady progress in relation to their prior attainment. Numeracy skills are satisfactory for the majority of pupils, with many pupils being able to make an appropriate use of a calculator. Pupils respond well to good teaching. By the end of Year 9 most pupils have made sound progress with the consolidation of their number skills. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 use calculators competently and are able to use sine, cosine and tangent rules to determine unknown values in right-angled triangles. Middle-attaining pupils are able to make reasonable estimates of metric length and, using their knowledge of scalene and isosceles triangles, are able to calculate unknown angles correctly. Lower-attaining pupils with good quality support, overcoming their lack of confidence in the manipulation of number, are able to construct a tally chart, group data, and create a bar chart. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 8 developed their problem-solving ability as they identified a number pattern and discovered a rule. They made good progress as they developed their data handling skills when designing a questionnaire for fellow pupils. Lower-attaining pupils enjoy and respond well to competition with the teacher, as when, for example, they used whiteboards to show their ability to halve and double numbers. In Year 7, where lessons follow the format of the National Numeracy Strategy, pupils respond well to a variety of class activities. Handling data, they are able to determine the mean of a group of numbers and to create pie charts. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language and high attainers mainly make good progress in lessons, as they receive effective support from differentiated work and from teachers and support assistants. Although key words are highlighted in most lessons, literacy skills require more consistent development. Using ICT, the typing ability and spreadsheet understanding of Year 9 pupils are below expectation.
130. Work seen during the inspection shows that the standards that pupils are achieving at age 16 are broadly in line with the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make steady progress in relation to their prior attainment. In Year 11 higher-attaining pupils, supported by very good teaching, demonstrate a very good understanding of algebra and trigonometry when, having correctly constructed a graph, they calculated the gradient of the curve. They understood the significance of the changing value. Some middle attaining pupils find difficulty when using negative signs in a substitution process to solve simultaneous equations. Using the small suite of computers in the mathematics area, lower-attaining pupils, working on the 'Destinations' program, made satisfactory progress as they consolidated their

knowledge and understanding of simple fractions. Higher attaining Year 10 pupils enjoy the challenge of manipulating algebraic formula. Middle attaining pupils understand Pythagoras' theorem and are able to apply it to calculate sides of right-angled triangles. Lower-attaining pupils consolidate their understanding of place value. Mental arithmetic skills are not well developed by lower-attaining pupils.

131. The overall quality of teaching is good, resulting in good learning for pupils as they move through the school. In Years 7 to 11, teaching is never less than satisfactory, is mainly good and on occasions is very good. Although teachers' written planning is on occasion minimal, and objectives are not always written on the board for pupils, clear objectives are outlined to pupils verbally, and good links are made between lessons, for example in Year 9, when the teacher prepared a set of similar flashcards, using words related to angles and sides of a triangle. Good practice in planning is not sufficiently shared within the department. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to explain concepts clearly. The good relationships between teachers and pupils make pupils want to learn, and help create a very good learning atmosphere in most classrooms. Teachers create an appropriate pace to motivate pupils and sustain concentration. They manage pupils well and have high expectations. The questioning of pupils is good. Pupils listen attentively and they are keen to answer. Homework is used well to consolidate and extend pupils' skills and understanding. The availability of the class textbook to support home study would further support pupils' understanding, particularly with higher-attaining pupils. Mainly, marking is thorough and follows the departmental marking policy, giving pupils understanding of their progress. Teachers' comment is mainly helpful and pupils are aware of the level of their learning, the progress made towards their targets and what they need to do to improve. There are good displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and corridors. Support assistants and teachers are used very effectively in lessons. They are aware of the content of Individual Education Plans and have planned their support effectively. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress with their learning. Setting within the subject allows the easy provision of suitable challenge for the more able pupils, ensuring good progress for gifted and talented pupils. Although key words are identified in most lessons, literacy skills are underdeveloped. Opportunities for the increased use of ICT should be considered, for example, when teaching algebraic function graphics. Opportunities within mathematics for the extension of pupils' spiritual and cultural development are not always taken. Teachers' involvement in supporting revision classes and extension work classes and in mathematics challenge competitions makes pupils keen to improve their attainment in mathematics.
132. Overall, attitudes to learning are good in Years 7 to 11. Pupils apply themselves well to their tasks and appear interested in what they are doing. Generally, pupils behave well, but there are occasions when individuals do not behave as they should, talking whilst the teacher gives instructions or calling out, and slowing the progress of other pupils in the class. Pupils co-operate well when sharing equipment or textbooks. Standards of presentation of work vary, but are particularly good when, for example, Year 11 pupils measured the gradient of a curve and Year 9 pupils found unknown angles using trigonometry. Care is taken when drawing graphs. Work is normally headed and dated and homework clearly identified.
133. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory overall. The head of department has delegated responsibility well on each site. However, a heavy teaching load and pastoral role, aligned to significant whole-school responsibility, do not allow reasonable time for the monitoring of teaching and the evaluation and long-term development of the subject. The teachers work very well together and the whole department places great emphasis on raising achievement. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced fully in Year 7 and partially in Year 8. Numeracy packs have been prepared for all pupils. The strategy will be extended throughout the key stage. Mental warm-up sessions for pupils at the beginning of these lessons should be sharp and precise and not extensive, to serve their purpose. Procedures for assessing pupils' performance are good and pupils' progress is closely tracked as they pass through the department. The accommodation is good, but in the lower school a partition wall between classrooms is unsatisfactory and allows noise transfer between rooms. The availability of resources is good and they are well managed.
134. A whole-school strategy to improve standards by developing and co-ordinating the use of numeracy skills is not in place. To assist the development of such a strategy a numeracy co-ordinator has recently been appointed. The professional development needs for all teachers to promote numeracy across the school have not yet been identified. Currently the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented in Year 7 in mathematics. Pupil numeracy packs have been prepared. Subject numeracy policies are not in place and the use of numeracy skills varies

within subject areas. Some are making a very positive contribution to this area of pupils' learning..

135. Improvement since the last inspection is good. A common assessment procedure has been introduced and inconsistency in classroom practice is being addressed. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and GCSE statistics, aligned to a new setting procedure in Year 10, has assisted the diversification of the schemes of work.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and their commitment to pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers' management of pupils in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Strengthen the role of individual departmental heads.
- Review the Key Stage 4 curriculum.
- Develop further the analysis and the use of data for calculating value added.
- Improve the use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

136. From an intake whose standards are just above average, at the end of Key Stage 3, science results were in line with those of all schools nationally for the year 2000 and they were above this in 2001. In 2000, the results were well above those of similar schools. Girls' achievement is a little better than boys. From Key Stage 2 to 3 progress is good.

137. Doncaster Schools Effectiveness Unit, the school and OFSTED data show that progress from Key Stage 3 to 4 was satisfactory for pupils in 2000. Able pupils achieve well, many better than expected; less able pupils achieve well but some not as well as they might. The proportion of A* -C grades has remained in line with national averages for the last four years. The proportion of pupils gaining A* - G is below national figures. The results for 2001 present a complex picture. A*-C double award science results are below national figures but, for those pupils entered, achievement was above expectations. The most able group of students were entered for separate biology, chemistry and physics GCSE. Biology A*-C results were above national figures for 2000, 89 per cent of students attaining this standard. Chemistry results were in line with those nationally in 2000 but physics results were below national figures. When compared to other subjects in school students make good progress in science. Overall in 2001 progress in science in Key Stage 4 was good.

138. Teaching in science is good, all teachers having secure knowledge of the subject. In Key Stage 3 the highest proportion of teaching was good and some very good teaching was observed. Where teaching was good, effective use was made of questions and pupils' answers to establish understanding and set the scene at the start of lessons. Board work was legible and well organised. Work sheets were used to good effect to save time, challenge pupils and to provide extension work for the more able or those who worked quickly. Teacher demonstrations were effective and contributed to the 'awe and wonder' of science, as in collapsing can or "self-decorating Christmas tree" experiments. Teachers make efforts to use correct scientific terminology and ensure that pupils understand the words used. The approach to teaching pupils of lower ability is good, the teacher being calm, deliberate, pleasant and firm while maintaining an appropriate level of scientific content in the lesson. Where teaching could be improved, the production quality of some work sheets is not good, the quality and some overhead projector transparencies are not well used. Unwarranted assumptions are sometimes made of pupils' understanding: for example, in a lesson on food chains, the work involved dog whelks but, even when the work was being completed, pupils did not know what a dog whelk was, thus making complete understanding difficult.

139. In Key Stage 4, all teaching seen was satisfactory or better. The majority of lessons were good or very good. Where teaching is good, lessons started and finished in an orderly fashion. Classroom management is good, pupil movement and activity are well controlled and apparatus is sensibly deployed for pupils. This is aided by sensible pupil attitudes and good self-discipline.

The best lessons are well planned and thought is given to the progression of ideas; lesson objectives are explained and are reviewed at the end of the lesson. Effective use is made of questions and answers to set the scene for lessons and to probe pupils' understanding. The challenge and pace of learning are good, and strategies are used to ensure that all pupils are actively involved in the lesson – for example, giving all pupils cards which they had to make use of or the lesson could not progress. Pupils are encouraged to use mental arithmetic as a quick check on answers to calculations. Teachers treat pupils as mature, sensible learners, not as pupils who need to be controlled and told what to do. Where teaching shows room for improvement, less able pupils are not given a secure grasp of fundamental concepts; some teaching, though apparently progressing well, is based on insecure pupil understanding. Ideas and concepts are not always presented in the most logical sequence for pupils. Too long is spent on the same activity in some cases. Not enough thought is given to providing apparatus for practical work, for example, the need to provide dropping pipettes or bottles to ensure pupils can transfer liquids easily. The quality of overhead projector transparencies is not always good.

140. The work of pupils in Key Stage 3 is appropriate in content and improves in quality from Year 7 to 9. Year 7 pupils can explain compression of solids, liquids and gases and able pupils can use particle theory to do this. Food chains are clearly understood. Year 8 pupils showed a range of levels of understanding of the boiling and freezing point of water. Able pupils in Year 9 could explain the principle of displacement reactions whilst less able pupils struggled with the term 'exothermic'. Pupils are typically working at average and above average levels.
141. The work of pupils in Key Stage 4 is generally of good quality and is well presented. Able pupils in Year 10 could explain neutralisation and in Year 11 could clearly explain redox reactions. Able pupils have a good understanding of the digestive system, enzymes and products of digestion, and less able pupils clearly know the structure and functions of the parts. A pupil with a poor attendance record showed weak scientific knowledge. Less able pupils with a good attendance record showed an understanding of electrical circuits and units of electrical measurement. There is some confusion in pupils at all levels of ability of the understanding of diagrams drawn in exercise books, for example, of a villus, a motor neurone and a representation of the aluminium extraction process. Pupils found difficulty relating these to real-life situations or locations. Overall pupil knowledge is good and correlates well with pupils' ability and their attendance records. Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
142. The statutory curriculum is in place. The use of information and communication technology is developing. The QCA scheme at Key Stage 3 and awarding bodies' specifications at GCSE level are being used to form the schemes of work. Most pupils follow double award science in Key Stage 4, and able pupils can choose to follow separate sciences (in which they gain considerable success), but they need to top up the course with extra lessons after school since it is not formally timetabled. Some find it difficult to attend these extra lessons due to other commitments. Certificate of Achievement science is available for those for whom it is most appropriate. There are good examples of work in the department that contribute to the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils but approaches are not yet well enough co-ordinated.
143. The science department is managed well. Meetings are held regularly. There are good links with the special educational needs team. The budget is well managed in providing resources but there is still a need to replace ageing equipment and for new textbooks to meet the demands of the changing curriculum. The laboratories are well decorated and the environment improved by attractive displays of pupils' work. Teachers make considerable efforts to produce materials for lessons but there is an opportunity for greater sharing of materials across the department so that work is not duplicated by different members of staff. Greater attention to common schemes of work and programmes could help reduce workload. Marking is carried out by all staff, though some Year 11 marking was sporadic. There is a need to consider the purpose and content of written comments on pupils' work. There is a tendency for comments to relate to presentation and effort; advice on how to improve achievement does not feature enough. The department has an extensive database on pupil attainment. This is used for target setting and to determine value added. The process is not yet refined enough to give a view of the "big value added picture" or to help individual pupils. The technicians serve the department well. The provision for chemical storage and the chemical stock are both inadequate. The head of department has significant responsibility and a heavy workload. Those colleagues with posts of responsibility within the department have not been encouraged to be proactive enough in monitoring and contributing to the work of the department to lighten the workload, strengthen the already strong team and be more alert to departmental issues.

144. Since the last inspection progress has been good. The last inspection report for science was very good. The department has maintained or improved its position in most areas. The reference “matching of the pace and challenge of lessons to meet more closely the needs of pupils – for less experienced teachers” no longer applies. There are now sufficient textbooks for Key Stage 4 pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The methods of pupils working from observation.
- The leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities for printmaking and textiles.
- More structured approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The amount of time for art in Years 7-9.

145. Teacher Assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 indicate that the numbers who meet or exceed expectations are close to the national average. Standards have risen since the last inspection. The pupils who reached the age of 16 in the Year 2000 and were awarded grades A* to C also reflect an improvement since the last inspection and their results were well above the national average. The attainment of both the boys and the girls was well above the national average. These GCSE results were the best in the school. The 2001 results were less good and close to the national average, with the boys’ results being well below their 2000 level and the level of the girls.
146. The work seen in school during inspection week shows that the standards achieved by pupils in Year 9 in 2001 are being maintained. The work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 meets national expectations and reflects the department’s commitment to the process of personal research and investigation. All of the pupils receive a sketchbook when they arrive in Year 7 and inside the front cover is a statement which makes clear the department’s expectations of its pupils. Observational drawing and critical studies play a central role in the pupils’ work and they experiment with line to show emotions such as happiness, sadness, boldness and timidity. There is good graphic portrayal of words such as ‘expression’, ‘distortion’, and ‘exaggeration’. The range of activities which pupils are offered is wide. Object drawings with a view through the window are developed into clay reliefs; found objects are converted into sculpture. The pupils’ critical skills are developed when they study Aboriginal art and the symbolism within it. They are able to compare paintings such as Degas’ “Absinthe Drinker” with Gainsborough’s “Reverend and Mrs Andrews”. Pupils also use images produced by a digital camera and the iMac computer as source material for gargoyles, which they make in a range of materials, including clay, plaster of Paris, paper and cardboard.
147. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is above the national average. Here again, the continued use of sketchbooks for investigation, experimentation and research is impressive. The pupils make reference to an unusually wide range of artists and other sources in their research, ranging from Botticelli, Klee, Lichtenstein, African masks, machine parts, and modern icons such as Batman. Information and communication technology (ICT) is gaining an increasingly firm foothold. The pupils’ work is scanned into the computer, then modified by their using specialist art packages, and skilfully manipulated into package design and sophisticated overlaid images in their paintings. The pupils are confident and articulate when explaining their work and are aware of its quality and, in many cases, the measures needed to improve it.
148. Allowing for the pupils’ varied and often limited previous experiences of art when they arrive in Year 7, their achievement is very good throughout the school. Their use of sketchbooks, the systematic development of skills and knowledge of two and three-dimensional processes, and their well above average understanding of the work of famous artists raises the standard of their work from below average when they arrive in Year 7 to above average at the end of Year 11. Throughout the department, the work of its pupils and students is adventurous in scale and reflects well-developed technical skills. Much of the work gives a personal response to the natural environment of the north of England.

149. There is good provision for those pupils who have special educational needs. They make good progress in their art lessons, thanks to the understanding nature of their teachers and the good relationships that exist within the department. Those children who are gifted and talented do well in art. Almost three times the national average were awarded a grade A* in the 2000 GCSE examination.
150. Teaching and learning in art are good overall and in Years 10 and 11 very good. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject are particular strengths of the department. From Year 7 the pupils receive a firm foundation in practical skills and critical studies. In a very good lesson the teacher used her own design worksheet to encourage her pupils to analyse two portraits, one by Vincent van Gogh, the other by the Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer. She provided just enough biographical detail about the two artists to whet the imagination of her pupils, who were impatient to proceed. Their learning was further advanced when they were required to describe the artists' work in their sketchbooks, thus improving their literacy skills.
151. The teachers' insistence that personal research through observational drawing is central to their subject is another great strength of the department. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. In a very good Year 11 lesson pupils were making good progress when recording information through drawing. One pupil was using a mirror to make a close-up study of her eye, while another made very good progress when tackling the difficult task of drawing the reflected view of distant houses through the angled glass of a partly opened window.
152. In the only unsatisfactory lesson seen, a small group of Year 8 boys resisted the best efforts of their teacher by wasting time and making noise out of all proportion to their number. They went on to interfere with the learning of the remainder of the class.
153. The curriculum in art is broad and balanced and provides opportunities for pupils to work in both two and three dimensions. The department receives less time than is normal to deliver the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The experience of the pupils will be further enriched when there are more opportunities to work with print and creative textiles. The systems for marking and assessing pupils' work are very good and make a positive contribution to their academic development. Data gathered from the assessment of pupils' progress is not used to set targets for pupils.
154. The management of the subject is very good and the head of department, who has a clear vision for the future, provides strong leadership for staff and pupils alike. All of the teachers are specialist art teachers. Teamwork is very strong and the shared commitment to succeed extends across both the upper and lower schools. There are strategic plans for short, medium and long-term developments in the subject. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning need formalising. Schemes of work concerned with delivery of ICT need further detail. The accommodation is good and spacious in both upper and lower schools. The displays of work within the department and in the public areas of the school reflect the high standards that are a feature of the department.
155. Since the last inspection standards at the end of Year 9 have risen. The GCSE results continue to be above the national average. Pupils who have special educational needs now make good progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented make very good progress. Teaching and learning have improved and are now good. Critical studies now play a central role in the work of the department, while the use of ICT is being developed and used in every year group. The management of the department has improved. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and is a strength of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards at GCSE are improving. There has been a considerable reduction in the percentage of pupils obtaining only the lowest grades.
- The progress made in Key Stage 3 is good.
- A GNVQ course in manufacturing has been introduced.

Areas for improvement

- To raise standards further at GCSE and AS level.
- To raise the standards and complexity of design and increase pupils' knowledge of technical terms.
- To stretch the most able pupils with extended tasks and opportunities for extended writing.
- To allow the head of department more non-teaching time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in the department.

156. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school, judged by a scrutiny of Year 7 work, shows standards which are in line with standards nationally. Standards of drawing and general presentation skills are not high but the pupils follow instructions well and the first module of work was of a satisfactory standard in all areas of the subject.

157. The attainment of pupils, as measured by the Teacher's Assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2001, showed attainment somewhat higher than standards nationally. There were few very high-attaining pupils but only about one-fifth of pupils at National Curriculum Levels 4 and below. Current work reflects the Teachers' Assessments, and the present Year 9 pupils are working at levels similar to those in 2001. Very good work was seen in a Year 9 electronics group making a moisture detector and in Year 8 doing isometric drawings using a computer. The strengths were in the application, interest and standard of 'make' in the practical tasks. Less good were the folders. Presentation skills had not increased in line with practical skills, especially in producing initial sketches and developing them into a working drawing. Opportunities were missed to increase the attainment levels of the gifted and talented pupils. Year 9 pupils in an electronics group had no idea what the colours meant on a resistor. No extension task was set to investigate these coloured rings and work out the value of the resistor and its tolerances. There are examples of extended writing in pupils' folders and opportunities missed to research the link between technology and its implications for society not taken. Progress through the key stage is good in all areas of design and technology.

158. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, as measured by the 2000 GCSE results, was well below the national average. There was considerable improvement in 2001. The A* - C pass rate improved slightly but the biggest improvement was a reduction by almost one half in the pupils attaining U and G grades. In home economics in 2001 there was a marked improvement on the 2000 results, with the A* to C passes twice the 2000 rate and the U and G grades only one-third the 2000 number. Again, the strengths are in the 'make' element of the course. There is some good work in textiles and in electronics, for example, a well designed electronically operated combination lock. As in Key Stage 3 the weakness is in the quality of the folder work. Some folders are well ordered and each sheet is a finished piece of work. Others, however, are full of partly completed sketches and worksheets only half done. Initial sketching has not improved as much as it should have done and there are relatively few instances of proper orthographic or exploded isometric drawings. The final drawings are of better quality but lack detail on 'make'. Few extended pieces of written work are produced on the development of the ideas. However, some very good pieces of written work in the child care course reflect the experiences of pupils doing a child study. In the electronics folders there was a very good booklet on components and their specifications and formulae but there was little evidence of the pupils actually using these formulae or explaining what the specifications meant. However, the overall attainment of pupils in the present Year 11 is an improvement on 2001, demonstrating that progress made by the pupils in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory.

159. The attainment of students in the sixth form in the A-level courses in 2000 was above the national average point score in both design and technology and in home economics. In 2001 the AS-scores for design and technology were below the expected scores for these students. The students in the present Years 12 and 13 are working at levels above those indicated by the 2001 results, as exemplified in a very good lesson on the development of a camera and another in food studies where students had to re-design a recipe to reduce either the salt, fat or sugar and leave the product still edible. Good design and craftwork were seen in a Year 12 design and realisation lesson where students had to design a book or magazine stand. There were some good attempts at brazing and some useful experiments at metal bending. However, the students

lack knowledge of engineering terms and vocabulary. A boy did not know that a long length of hinge was called piano hinge and a girl did not know what the main constituents of brass were. The progress overall of students in the sixth form both in A level and on the GNVQ courses is satisfactory.

160. The progress of pupils with special educational needs reflects the progress of their peers. A partially sighted girl in a Year 12 graphics class was doing particularly well. Some evidence was seen in an electronics class of differentiated learning with evaluation sheets for the less able but this was not a common feature. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit greatly from the help of the support teachers. The gifted and talented pupils are not identified on the lesson notes and are not often distinguishable in the class. Staff know who they are but opportunities for extended tasks are rarely available. Girls were doing well in a Year 12 design and realisation lesson and in an electronics lesson in Key Stage 3. Overall, girls do better than boys. They are more mature, their concentration levels are higher, they take more care with their work and their folders are of a higher standard.
161. The teaching of the subject was a least satisfactory in all lessons seen and in over a half it was good or very good. Lessons are generally well planned, although the department did not have its own lesson planning sheet and some important information was sometimes missing, like what had gone on in previous lessons. Teachers are at least competent in their subject areas and many have good subject knowledge as, for example, in a Year 11 textiles lesson. Almost all lessons have clear objectives but they are not always made clear to the pupils. Key words were on the walls of many classrooms but in no lesson did any teacher refer to them. Levels of expectation are good overall in Key Stage 3, as are the pace and productivity. In Key Stage 4 expectation levels, pace and productivity are satisfactory. Time is used well and some double lessons were divided into sections to keep the interest of the pupils. Some teachers use ICT well but ICT is not used often enough to enhance the standard of folder work. Good practice in a Year 8 graphics lesson on isometric drawing was not built on sufficiently. Pupils work is assessed and monitored efficiently but there is no department marking policy which is adhered to by all teachers: the exercise books in food studies were marked on every page but the textile folders in Key Stage 3 had very little teacher input. Homework is set in some lessons but very limited use is made of the pupils' planners. In the sixth form teaching was of a good standard and the students responded well. However, the pace of the lessons is not as good as in the best lessons in the other key stages.
162. The response of almost all pupils is positive. Pupils in Year 10 said 'This is the best lesson of the week'. The pupils are adept learners but quite teacher dependent. They follow instructions well and do what is required. However, there is very little work of an inspired nature and there is a lack of exemplar material on show, which would give pupils ideas to develop. No work on display gives National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades to stimulate pupils and show what is possible. In some lessons too great a proportion of the time is given to the design and development stage at the expense of practical experience: in one resistive materials lesson the teacher was demonstrating how to join two pieces of plastic together with only one lesson left of the module. The response and enthusiasm of the pupils suffered.
163. A very experienced and committed teacher, who is well supported by a second in department and teachers in charge of specific areas of design and technology, manages the department. They work well together as a team. The head of department has instigated a good system to monitor teaching and learning, which involves all post holders in the department. However, he is in charge of a large department of many facets on two sites and he has a heavy teaching load as well as responsibility for GNVQ courses across the school. Insufficient time is provided for him to oversee the department in the necessary detail. There have been some very good innovations in recent times to try to increase the GCSE results with shorter projects and these are effective so far. The GNVQ courses are beginning to motivate the less able in Key Stage 4 and they provide a valuable qualification for students in the sixth form.
164. Since the last inspection teaching has improved. There has been an improved take-up for A-level courses. There is an increased use of ICT. The curriculum has been broadened, with more product development and control technology. Lesson planning has improved since the last inspection. There has been a review of roles and responsibilities within the department.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Leadership is enthusiastic and committed to raising standards further.
- Good quality marking and assessment practice.
- Very good provision for special educational needs pupils.
- Good examination results.

Areas for improvement

- More use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Standardising the format for schemes of work.
- Identifying more opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in the schemes of work.

165. Standards at age 14 are above the national average. Standards reached by pupils in National Curriculum Teacher Assessments at the end of Year 9 have increased steadily and have been well above the national average for the last two years. The difference between boys' and girls' results is decreasing. All pupils at both key stages learn to understand and use key words with confidence, interpret graphs and maps and write answers in sentences or paragraphs. All pupils demonstrate skill with graph interpretation and extract information from charts and tables. Lower attainers produce satisfactory written work and show ability and interest with creative tasks. Higher attainers produce detailed written work and very good detailed, annotated posters/cartoons. Given broadly average levels of attainment on entry, pupils achieve well in the first three years.
166. At age 16 standards are good. Between 1998 and 2000 the GCSE results followed a consistently rising trend, with examination results higher than national averages. In 2001 the trend fell; girls achieved well above average but well below average results for boys resulted in nearly half of all pupils gaining grades A*-C. This is well below average. There is no evidence of pupils underachieving as nearly all candidates have gained grades A*-G in the last four years. Although girls' results are better than those for boys, the figures are not significant. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 are also good. Higher attainers make good progress and produce detailed coursework with evidence-based conclusions and evaluations. Lower attainers provide fewer linkages between information and only brief statements for analysis. In all GCSE classes pupils are constantly advised to add detail to work and to understand the command words for questions. This is helping pupils to recognise the elements of questions and to understand the need to explain their answers fully.
167. Teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. The particular strengths of teaching in geography are the enthusiasm of the teachers, which motivates pupils, and the very good behaviour management strategies used by teachers, enabling them to provide good pace and varied tasks in almost all lessons.
168. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan carefully to enable all pupils to meet the demands of the lessons. In Years 7-9 there is very good support for special needs pupils and low attainers, with targeted literacy support, organised peer support and good individual encouragement. A Year 9 lesson on national parks included group work to discuss problem solving. The teacher organised the groups to ensure that all pupils were included and that low and high attainers shared their ideas. In a Year 7 lesson on grid references, the teacher created an atmosphere of excitement and, by her own role play, convinced pupils how easy the work was and how good they were. This led to pupils of all abilities eagerly volunteering to mark grid references on the board and receiving class applause. Pupil confidence grew by leaps and bounds during the lesson. In a Year 8 lesson on coastlines, very good writing outlines were provided to enable low attainers to successfully complete work on photograph analysis.
169. Careful attention to pupils' literacy development is a feature of many lessons. In a Year 7 lesson on persuasive writing about Doncaster, the teacher used a brainstorming session with pupils to create spider diagrams of factual information and then discussed adjectives with them and how to use them to make their writing more interesting. In a Year 10 lesson a form of bingo game was used to end a lesson; this involved selecting key words from a long list and recognising the answers read to them to complete a 'card'. This clearly made words and definitions exciting for the pupils and there was great enthusiasm to achieve a correct 'house'.
170. In all lessons skilful questioning by teachers contributes to good learning and enables pupils to think things through in greater depth. The frequent positive acknowledgement given to pupils' responses encourages them to participate confidently in learning.
171. Departmental leadership is good and characterised by enthusiasm for the subject and a commitment to raise standards. The quality of teaching, marking and assessment is good. Target setting is based on a range of data and pupils' performance is monitored carefully across Years 7-11. There is a move to encourage pupils to evaluate their own performance, which is in its early stages at present.

172. Since the last inspection there have been many improvements. There are improved achievements for pupils at all stages and of all abilities. Teaching is now mostly good and marking has become a department strength. Pupils' progress is good, assessment is good and well used, and individual pupils are now tracked across years 7-11. Pupils in Year 9 now do a piece of school-based fieldwork and much pupils' work is displayed very well.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Well-qualified specialist teachers working supportively together.

Areas for improvement

- Further development of the monitoring and evaluation procedures in the department.
- Continuing to develop the applications of ICT to support teaching and learning.

173. At the end of Year 9, results in National Curriculum assessments were above average in 2000. Teachers' Assessments of pupils show that the majority were attaining above the national expectations for their age. In 1999 results were above average. Results in 2001 were higher than those in 2000. At the end of Year 9, standards in the work observed during the inspection were above the national average. These standards match those in recent assessment results. Pupils of all attainment levels know about how the First World War started and the ways in which soldiers were recruited. They have a well-developed sense of chronology, can use a range of source materials competently and are able to write at length on a number of historical issues. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson on the conditions of life in the trenches in the First World War when pupils were able to use resource materials successfully in order to imagine they were soldiers writing letters home.
174. At the end of Year 11, results in GCSE examinations in 2000 were above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* to C was above the national average, whilst the proportion obtaining grades A*-G was in line with the national average. Boys did better than girls. In 1998 and 1999, results were above the national average. Results in 2001 were lower than those in 2000. At the end of Year 11, standards in the work observed during the inspection were above average, with boys doing better than girls. These standards match those in recent examination results. Pupils of all attainment levels show good knowledge and understanding of topics such as the history of medicine and conflict in Ireland. They successfully research a wide range of contemporary documents in order to analyse and explain historical issues from a range of perspectives. Year 11 pupils of all attainment levels demonstrated good knowledge of the problems in Ireland in the 20th century and were able to explain the divisions between Protestants and Roman Catholics. They successfully used source materials to recognise and interpret bias, especially when discussing the views of English historians on the Irish question.
175. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 for pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of topics such as the Roman Army, the dissolution of the monasteries and religious changes in 16th century England. Pupils of all attainment levels make good progress in researching primary and secondary sources to inform their understanding of historical issues. This was demonstrated by Year 7 pupils discussing why the Roman army was so successful and Year 8 pupils completing a personal information file on Queen Mary.
176. Achievement across Years 10 to 11 of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils of all attainment levels make good progress in developing historical knowledge, understanding and skills. They are building on previous achievements and are developing skills to use source materials to support arguments and evaluate the reliability of historical evidence. Higher-attaining Year 10 pupils demonstrated this when discussing the implications of the first Olympic games for the development of Greek medicine.
177. Teaching and learning overall are good. The teaching in eight of the nine lessons observed in the main school was good whilst in the ninth it was very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use confidently to introduce and explain topics and engage pupils in

debate. This ensures that pupils are enthusiastic about the subject, show good levels of interest and concentrate throughout lessons. Lessons have a clear structure, with aims and objectives shared with pupils, and teachers use a good variety of appropriate approaches. Teachers manage pupils well and make good use of time and resources so that lessons are conducted in a relaxed but purposeful learning environment. In the lesson where very good teaching was seen, a range of challenging activities very quickly enthused pupils and ensured their maximum involvement. The marking of written work is good and includes helpful suggestions to enable pupils to improve their work. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good and benefits from in-class support where provided. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. They participate in all aspects of lessons and work well together on a collaborative basis. Good relationships are a feature of history lessons.

178. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of history leads a strong team of well-qualified specialists working together in a supportive way. Monitoring and evaluation procedures in the department are satisfactory. Resources and accommodation are good. In one history classroom, particularly attractive displays bring the subject to life.
179. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The textbook and resource provision has improved, particularly for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. There has been some development in the application of information and communication technology in the subject but this is an area for further improvement. Another area for development is to continue to extend the monitoring and evaluation procedures of the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- Some good technical support on both sites.
- A developing good team on the lower school site.
- Some good facilities on both sites.

Areas for improvement

- Non-compliance with statutory requirements at both key stages.
- Insufficient teaching and technical staff to meet existing and near future needs.
- Low overall usage of the school's computers.
- Insufficient access for pupils in other subjects.
- Health and safety concerns on both sites.

180. In recent years, the Teachers' Assessments of the Year 9 pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding have shown slightly more reaching the national standard of Level 5 than in the country as a whole. While the school has not yet become secure in these assessments, they may also show some improvement from year to year; they do not show that girls are achieving significantly better, or less well, than boys.
181. During inspection week, inspectors also assessed the levels of the pupils in Years 7 to 9 in ICT – through their computer-based work, including in other subjects and that displayed on the walls, and in lessons. In just over half of the lessons seen the pupils were not attaining up to national standards. Even by the end of Year 9 very few can use word processors accurately, speedily, and appropriately: some younger ones may take half an hour to produce a few lines of text, and those lines tend to contain many errors and to be in a colourful, pretty typeface that is hard to read and does not relate to what they are typing. Similarly, they meet spreadsheet software in certain maths lessons, and are able to follow step-by-step instructions with some accuracy – but they do not, on the whole, learn what a spreadsheet is and very few gain enough understanding to be able to develop their own (for example, for hobbies at home, or for work in their other subjects). On the other hand, there were design and technology lessons where ICT used as a tool for learning brought most pupils in the classes concerned to a good level of ICT competence. In one case, a Year 8 class used computers to produce high standards of isometric drawings; in another, a Year 7 class developed good skills in programming - computer control – as they worked on their model pelican crossings.

182. The school is in the process of developing its ICT work with pupils in Years 10 and 11; so far no group has reached the stage of external assessment of their skills, knowledge and understanding. In only one lesson seen in Year 10 – where the pupils are working towards the Key Skills qualification – was the work up to an appropriate standard; in Year 11, where only a few pupils follow a specific ICT course through the year (Foundation level GNVQ), very few pupils are near that standard. Certainly most are rather better at using word processors than in the lower school, but there are still few who can type with more than a few fingers on both hands and at a reasonable speed and with few errors; on the other hand, most have at least some idea of how to drop pictures into their text documents, some know what scanners can do in this context, and a few know about columns and footers. Overall, most, however, have little idea of professional layout or of how to choose the most appropriate picture for a given document aimed at a given type of reader - although their daily reading matter presumably involves such thinking. In Year 10, some useful work is starting on searching the Internet for answers to specific questions, but few pupils are yet able to choose from different sources successfully the 'best' answers to questions.
183. The pupils' unsatisfactory attainments in ICT are not due to not liking ICT. Indeed, they rarely have negative attitudes, and the new pupils in Year 7 are often highly enthusiastic. Also, even when bored, they do not misbehave, apart from one or two in Years 10 and 11 – and even these cause little disruption to the work of others.
184. The pupils' unsatisfactory attainments are not due to problems with teaching, either. In fact, the quality of the ICT teaching in Years 7 to 11 is almost always satisfactory; often, it is good or very good. Particular strengths are these, all keeping the pupils interested and motivated:
- moving the lessons along at a good pace;
 - using a good variety of tasks;
 - calling on a range of ICT, audio-visual, print and other resources (including sometimes using the technical staff to help with larger groups).
185. The main area for development as regards teaching skills is that for few lessons do the teachers have clear, explicit learning objectives that take account of the needs of the individual pupils. Without those it is not easy to plan a lesson - not easy to decide the best tasks and resources to use to meet those needs; not easy to see that the pupils need to develop their knowledge and understanding of ICT as well as their skills; not easy to assess how each of them progresses from stage to stage within the lesson (or even over a longer period) or how to challenge them in class and for homework. Because of all this, while the quality of teaching is satisfactory to good in individual terms and the pupils learn soundly or well in lessons, they do not consolidate what they learn and their attainment does not rise through the years as it should.
186. The main cause of the pupils' lack of consolidation and resulting low attainments in this subject is that they have low contact with computers. As yet, there are few situations in the other subjects studied where all the pupils use ICT as a tool for effective and enjoyable learning; nor do many of them use the school's (good) facilities outside of lesson time. Both these are barriers to the pupils extending their skills, knowledge and understanding in practical and applied ways, and barriers to their growing appreciation that ICT can help them in a large number of contexts, outside school as well as inside. For such reasons, and others (for instance, the fact that in most classes some pupils have to share computers), the school does not yet provide what the National Curriculum requires for the pupils of Years 7 to 11. There is, however, some good practice. In particular, in the other subjects, some ICT-based work in design and technology, mathematics and science and much of that with learners with special educational needs deserve mention.
187. Because of the split site, there is also some splitting of the management responsibilities. The person in overall charge of ICT in the school has a heavy teaching load, yet must keep an overview of its teaching and assessment as a subject in its own right, of its use in other subject areas, and of the training of staff in the potential of computers as tools for successful teaching and learning; there is also the need to monitor and supervise the work and development of the many people who contribute to ICT teaching on the two sites, and the work and development of the technical support staff (who are able but also over-stretched). This heavy load has arisen because there are too few specialist people to meet even the current demand on either site (though at the lower school there are the beginnings of a strong team).
188. Another difficulty is that, although the number of computers is appropriate – indeed, it is a strength - they are not yet well enough deployed to allow efficient and effective use by all. The

school is advised also to consider with urgency the problems of overcrowding in at least one ICT room; the adverse effects on the pupils and the computers of room temperatures that are too high; and the hazards of the ergonomic weaknesses of the furniture.

189. The most important advance since the last inspection in 1996 is that no longer is the school short of computers; indeed, there is now a good network. The quality of teaching was then satisfactory to good – and it still is. Otherwise there has been no progress and, in particular, attainment remains low while ICT as a subject and ICT in the other subjects are still to be developed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is good.

Strengths

- Teaching, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Standards achieved by pupils at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- The level of challenge in lessons in Years 7-9.
- Issues relating to the organization of the curriculum.

190. Standards achieved by students at the age of fourteen are marginally below national expectations. In 2000 the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or better in National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9 was below the national average. By the age of sixteen, however, standards in modern foreign languages are above national expectations.
191. In 2000, in French, GCSE results were below the national average. In 2001, however, there was a significant improvement on the school's 2000 results. The trend since the last inspection is for results to be well above national averages, with the exception of the 2000 results. The difference between boys' and girls' performance is much less than is the case nationally. In German, in 2000, three-quarters of pupils gained A*-C, which was well above the national average. In 2001 nearly two-thirds of pupils gained A*-C. In both years the number of pupils entered for the examination was low. In Spanish, in 2000, nearly two-thirds of pupils gained A*-C which was above the national average. In 2001 over half the pupils entered gained A*-C. If the combined results for French, German and Spanish are taken into account there has been a significant improvement over the school's 2000 results in the number of students gaining A*-C in a modern foreign language.
192. The standards of work seen in Year 9 match national expectations. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, however, standards achieved by pupils are above national expectations. Pupils are well trained from Year 7 in the recording and memorizing of vocabulary. They are constantly exposed to the challenging use of the target language by teachers. By the time they reach Year 11 they have particularly well developed listening skills, while their breadth of vocabulary gives them the knowledge to speak and write the language with confidence. At the start of Year 11 pupils are able to give extended replies to oral questions. In written work more able students can already go beyond personal responses to use language descriptively. Lower-attaining pupils can use the three main tenses with reasonable accuracy.
193. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in developing listening skills. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 4. The development of listening skills is still good but oral and writing skills also develop well at Key Stage 4.
194. Teaching is good overall. It is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7-9. In Years 7-9 most teaching is satisfactory, while in Years 10 and 11 it is always good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use the target language effectively in almost all lessons. The level of challenge is high, with the result that all pupils develop good listening skills. In the best lessons teachers insist that pupils use the target language as a means of communication in the lesson and this leads to a high level of oral competence. Lessons are well planned. All teachers ensure a firm basis of vocabulary before using this knowledge to practise skills. New vocabulary is always introduced in a lively manner, which guarantees that pupils concentrate in this key part of the lesson. All teachers ensure that pupils develop good habits for the recording and learning of vocabulary and, as a result, all pupils have a good range of vocabulary.

195. Relationships between teachers are almost always good or better. This creates a good working atmosphere in lessons and gives pupils the confidence to make an active contribution. Homework is set regularly and always builds on work done in lessons.
196. In the majority of lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, the level of challenge is high. These lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations. In the majority of lessons in Years 7 to 9, however, the level of pace and challenge is less high. In Years 10 and 11 teachers have clear targets for pupils based on examination criteria. In Years 7 to 9, on the other hand, formative assessment based on National Curriculum levels is not yet fully part of departmental practice. Lesson objectives are usually stated in terms of what teachers will teach rather than what pupils will learn, so pupils are often not clear about what they are expected to achieve by the end of each lesson.
197. In Years 7 to 9 many classes are shared between two teachers. Because most teachers are based on two sites some distance away from each other, communication between them is often difficult. This affects the quality of lesson preparation and the continuity and progression of learning. In Years 10 and 11 the broad band and mixed ability groupings make it difficult for teachers to meet the needs of all pupils and prevents standards from being even higher.
198. The department is well led. This a professional group of teachers, who are mutually supportive in spite of some difficult working conditions. Delegation in the department is effective. The department has achieved a high level of consistency in its working practices. Marking of pupils' work is consistent and helpful. Many teachers use marking to point out to pupils how they can improve the quality of their work. There is a high level of consistency in teaching. The department is well resourced and accommodation is good. The department has recently revised its schemes of work and these have already led to improved standards but there is no long-term planning which prioritises what action is necessary to raise standards further. Departmental policies state clear principles but do not give enough detailed guidance, for example, on formative assessment at Key Stage 3.
199. At the last inspection modern foreign languages had a good report. Since then the school has changed from a 13-18 to an 11-18 school. There have been problems of adjustment but the department has still made satisfactory progress. The main weakness is that A-level results have declined. On the other hand, pupils have made notable progress in developing good standards of written work. The department now gives greater prominence to languages other than French so the problem of poor take-up of a second modern language in Year 10, identified at the last inspection, has been largely overcome.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

Strengths

- Pupils and students are involved in, and benefit from, a very wide range of musical opportunities.

Areas for improvement

- Support to improve some unsatisfactory teaching.
- Consolidation of the early success of the performing arts through strategic planning.

200. Although fewer pupils opted for GCSE music in 2001 than in 2000, there is a growing interest and participation in performing arts subjects and activities. Examination results for GCSE music in 2001 compared favourably with those in 2000, and for both years they exceeded national averages. The rich variety of instrumental tuition provided by Doncaster Music Service is popular with pupils; almost one fifth of pupils take instrumental lessons, and many achieve success at the higher grades of Associated Board examinations.
201. Many pupils are pleased to be involved in the department's extra-curricular activities. A Year 10 pupil described enthusiastically how performing on her brass instrument "makes you feel so much better inside, lifts your mood", and that it "brings you forward and makes you feel more confident".
202. Choral and orchestral rehearsals are well attended; pupils arrive punctually and they perform well, making a rich and pleasing sound under the able direction of teachers. The school

orchestra includes a full range of orchestral players, who were able to give an animated performance of Herold's *Clog Dance*. The conductor ran the rehearsal briskly and with good humour and was deft in his judgements about when and how to correct inaccurate or insensitive playing.

203. The department's very good teaching is characterised by high expectations, rapid pace, excellent relationships with pupils, clear planning, extension of the most able, and effective inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties. The teacher of a Year 8 music class supported pupils well as they worked on their composition of a keyboard piece in ternary form. Pupils made good progress at all levels, and there was general delight and applause at the performances of a pupil of high ability, and of a pupil who had been supported throughout the lesson by a learning support assistant.
204. Where teaching is good or better, pupils learn well and make good progress. Throughout the department, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; they are courteous, respectful and appreciative of the good provision of this department. The small class sizes in Years 7 to 9 allow teachers to meet the learning needs of individual pupils.
205. The performing arts department has made a good start at this school. There is great potential, however, for further expansion and improvement. The department does not use the performance management process to improve the minority of lessons that are less than satisfactory because of insufficiently clear learning objectives, lack of pace and challenge and the teacher's poor subject knowledge. Specialist dance teaching, possibly through a dancer-in-residence, will be required if the performing arts course is to become strong. There is a need for more rigorous strategic planning for the department, taking careful account of staffing, pupils' needs and efficiency.
206. Since the last inspection there has been good progress. A performing arts department was set up four years ago in order to broaden access to this area of the curriculum, and a new head of department was appointed. The head of department's vision, expertise and commitment have been major contributory factors to the growing popularity of the department.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good leadership and management of the department.
- Teachers' commitment to the social and moral development of students.
- Extra-curricular provision.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.

207. Standards of attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Attainment of both boys and girls is in line with what might be expected nationally. In Key Stage 4, the percentage A*-C grades gained in 2000 by pupils following the physical education course are below national averages. However, the improved percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 2001 to 61 per cent and the standards of work seen support predicted grades, which suggest that the general trend is now towards above average attainment. Comparison of pupils' standards of achievement on entry to the course and the standards achieved in the GCSE examination show that pupils make good progress through Years 10 and 11. Standards of attainment of pupils in core physical education lessons are in line with national expectations.
208. Standards of work seen during the inspection were satisfactory. These standards reflect good teaching with good response from pupils. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to attainment standards on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is good. While higher grade GCSE results were below national averages, results in previous years and 2001 show that the trend is towards above national average figures. Pupils' attitudes contribute positively to standards. Teaching contributes effectively to learning.

209. By the end of Year 9 pupils make satisfactory progress. In the course of the year, students now develop competence in basic gymnastic, rugby and hockey techniques. Pupils' development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups when developing basic techniques through Years 7 to 9. However, activities do not always allow pupils to develop their observation and assessment skills so that they can be clear about what they can do and are capable of. By the end of Year 11 pupils make good progress. Pupils' continued good progress in the development of basic techniques, as in work on the trampoline, now enables them to transfer basic bounce techniques into more advanced movements and sequences. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils. The progress of some pupils is restricted by a lack of consistency among teachers in the setting of challenging tasks and insufficient attention to their observation and assessment skills.
210. The overall quality of teaching is good. In several cases the teaching was very good. The strengths include good planning based on a secure knowledge of the subject, organisational skills, positive interaction with pupils and a commitment to pupils' moral and social development. This means that pupils are able to learn basic techniques through appropriate activities and in an environment which encourages learning. Although procedures for monitoring students' progress are now in place, greater use needs to be made of assessment in order to ensure that teachers have a clear understanding of the progress students are making. There is also a need to make more use of this information in both curriculum and lesson planning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They enjoy physical education and have a responsible attitude and approach to their learning. Participation levels are good. Pupils concentrate and therefore remain on task. They are able to work effectively as individuals but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Behaviour is good. Pupils develop good relationships with their peers and the teacher. They are able to take responsibility both within lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
211. Leadership and management in physical education are good. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in providing content which meets the needs of all pupils, in raising standards of basic techniques in major team games and in sharing good practices as a single department, teaching boys and girls physical education. The head of department has a clear vision for the future, which means that development planning is focused on raising standards. Further development of teaching and learning so that students are able to assess their own performance against success criteria, the further development of literacy skills and planned strategies for the development of pupils' numeracy and ICT skills and strategies to consistently include non-participants in learning would raise standards. There is a need to develop monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning so that the department is clear about pupils' progress. The department has a strong philosophy of care for its students and a focus on the social and moral development of the pupils. The department is well organised and the department handbook provides guidance on schemes of work, lesson planning and safety matters. Both indoor and outdoor facilities are good. There are good resources with good systems for maintenance and storage. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements.
212. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities, which enhance learning. Provision is very good, with most team and individual activities being offered. Take-up is very good, with an open access policy in place. The standard of performance in most team and individual competition against other schools is very good. The school regularly wins local leagues and tournaments. Individual pupils' performance has been recognised by selection at local, regional and national levels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The leadership of the department.
- The vigorous ongoing developments in the department.

Areas for improvement

- Making the subject more relevant to contemporary society.
- Developing self-assessment, and independent learning.

213. On entry to the school the standards of pupils in religious education have been just below those expected from the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus but assessments and work seen during the inspection show that by the end of Year 9 standards meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. At this stage pupils of all attainment levels have at least a satisfactory or better knowledge of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. The best work of pupils in each year group in the lower school is done when they are allowed to develop their ideas through extended writing or oral discussion. When lessons are limited to the textbooks and copying, standards decline, although levels of presentation of work are consistently good. There are no significant differences between the attainment levels of boys and girls. Achievement across Years 7-9 is at least satisfactory because of the orderly progression of work.
214. In Years 10-11 attainment improves and is good. New GCSE courses are just being established for the whole year groups and initially, with a few exceptions, both the relevance of the content, such as contemporary moral issues, and the quality of teaching are having a good effect. Pupils of higher and average attainment become particularly involved in the work and discussions. Pupils with special needs succeed better when topics and case studies with a practical and personal application become the basis of their work. It is too soon yet to predict the final outcome of these new courses but, where the teaching is good or better, everything points to a high success rate generally.
215. Since the last inspection there have been far-reaching improvements, especially in Years 10-11. The headteacher has actively supported a range of initiatives by the head of department. As a result, modern, good quality resources are being used. In Year 10 all pupils study the subject and statutory requirements are fully met. Two-thirds of the pupils are working towards a full GCSE course, whilst the remainder and all of Year 11 are following the 'short' GCSE syllabus.
216. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and is often good, very good or even excellent. The head of department is particularly highly skilled and is a good role model for the other five teachers. Across Years 7-9 teaching is very consistent. The preparation generally follows the modern text books. Class control is secure and short term tasks ensure that pupils have clear objectives. The use of artefacts is increasing and some very attractive displays of pupils work can be seen. Across Years 10-11 teaching is usually good. The head of department is skilful at involving most of the pupils when discussing topics such as abortion and euthanasia. The marking and assessment are generally consistent but some is minimal and the results do not appear to influence what is taught subsequently. In fact, no examples of pupils being involved in their own assessment were seen. This points to two major needs for consideration, namely, how the pupils can have greater responsibility for their own learning and how more independent learning can be developed. Homework has been set regularly and some set concerning care for the environment was both appropriate and demanded creative thought. The quality of learning is directly related to the quality of teaching. Pupils have good attitudes towards the school generally and this carries over into most lessons. Therefore, where the content is relevant and challenging and the teaching is well paced, pupils in every year group respond well. They show in their written work that they can enter into situations and write imaginatively. Also, pupils in Years 10-11 confidently take part in class discussions which pose very difficult human problems; these topics can then become the basis of ongoing work. Discussion of issues of life and death and environmental priorities produced very high quality teaching and learning. Pupils with special educational needs in the upper school benefit from being in small classes but they often find it difficult to apply the topics to their own situations and lifestyles.
217. The head of department is a very good teacher and provides a quality of leadership which is recognised by all concerned. This has resulted in a reliable management system. She has been developing the department diligently since the last inspection and is alert to new developments, which she appraises and operates as appropriate. She is inducting a new colleague to the profession diligently. She has drawn up plans for the department to monitor teaching methods and to spread their best practice amongst her colleagues. The application of ICT is at a very early stage of consideration, and is not satisfactory. This also applies to the development of the schools' newly emerging literacy and numeracy policies. The department has moved forward but the need for a greater variety of teaching methods across the teaching staff based on relevant case studies is evident.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2000.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	3	33	63	0	17	0.3	1.6
Chemistry	9	11	47	0	6	0.2	0.9
Biology	2	50	53	0	6	0.5	1.0
Physics	4	25	53	0	8	0.5	1.1
Home Economics	12	50		0		0.7	
Geography	3	100	70	0	15	2.3	1.6

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	38	87	89	42	45	6.0	6.0
Chemistry	37	84	89	22	42	4.4	5.9
Biology	74	88	88	31	34	5.1	5.3
Physics	26	65	88	31	41	3.9	5.7
Economics	29	69	88	21	36	3.5	5.4
Design and technology	10	90	92	30	29	5.4	6.0
Physical education	16	94	91	44	25	6.0	5.0
Art and design	12	100	96	58	45	7.5	6.4
Music	3	33	60	0	20	3.6	5.7
Performing arts	10	100		50			
Classical civilisation	4	100	94	0	46	4.0	6.4
Geography	32	100	92	47	37	5.7	6.1
History	16	75	89	6	34	3.6	5.4
Religious studies	2	50	91	0	35	1.0	5.6
Government and politics	5	100	88	60	35	5.3	7.6
Sociology	19	95	88	37	37	5.8	5.5
Psychology	33	88		21			
German	5	100	92	60	41	7.2	5.9
French	22	73	91	9	39	3.5	5.7
English Literature	44	86	96	20	36	4.5	5.9
English Language	28	89	90	7	29	4.1	5.2

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. In mathematics and biology, results have been at or above national averages. Results in physics and chemistry have been below these. Teaching in mathematics, chemistry and biology is good. It is satisfactory in physics.

Mathematics

The quality of provision for mathematics in the sixth form is satisfactory.

Strengths

- A-level results in recent years have been at or above national averages.
- The standard of teaching is good.
- High-attaining pupils achieve the highest grades possible.

Areas for Improvement

- Development of teaching methods to enrich mathematics and increase the use of computers in A-level courses.
- Review of recruitment to A/S-level courses.

218. The inspection covered Advanced (A) level, Advanced Supplementary (A/S) level and re-sit GCSE courses. The teaching of the application of number, leading to the key skills qualification, is not reported upon because of the timing of the inspection.

219. Standards achieved in the A-level exams in 2001 were above the national average of recent years. This has reversed the declining trend, observed over the previous three years, in which results moved from being well above the national average to being in line with the national average in 2000. Analysis of pupils' individual performances indicated that, for some, results were below expectation. The policy of open access to sixth form mathematics has placed on the A/S course many students who lack the mathematical aptitude to progress successfully. At both A and A/S levels, able students achieve very well. In 2001 all four further mathematics students achieved the highest grade possible. Of those students re-sitting GCSE mathematics to improve their grades, about one third achieved grade C. There are no significant differences in the performance of male and female students or in the performance of students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

220. The standard of A-level work seen in folders and lessons is good. High-attaining students work fluently, showing well-expanded answers when working with co-ordinate geometry and the laws of motion. They use clear freehand diagrams to develop their mechanics and trigonometric solutions. Year 13 students showed very good understanding of the quotient rule for differentiation and were able to perform complex algebraic substitutions and simplification in their heads. Those following the further mathematics A level showed excellent understanding of their statistics work and were able to identify mistakes in their own working by comparing their calculated result against what they felt was most logical. Many students, new to the A/S course, studying trigonometrical identities did not display the flexibility of mind to recall the basic techniques required. In Year 12 there was a reluctance to tackle a solution containing a complex algebraic statement.

221. Standards observed in GCSE re-sit groups are low. Students were able to solve two-stage linear equations with some success but another group demonstrated poor number skills, as students revised addition and subtraction of simple fractions.

222. The teaching of A-level mathematics to sixth form students is good. The high quality of teachers' subject knowledge ensures insightful delivery of new concepts to students. Very good student-teacher relationships within the classroom and the willingness of teachers to assist students at any time provides the students with confidence to seek help whenever it is needed. Regular assessment of students' work ensures that common problems are identified early and addressed. Following homework on mechanics, containing multi-stage solutions, the teacher was able to guide students through the methodology by skilful questioning. By Year 13 students have fully accepted responsibility for their own progress and monitor this against their expected target grades. The predominant style of teaching is that of demonstration of technique and practice. Whilst this is very effective in progressing through the course and developing

understanding, there is little opportunity for enrichment of the subject. Calculators are used wisely and efficiently. However, there are no planned opportunities for use of computers as tools or as extension activities.

223. The teaching of GCSE groups is good. Teachers are aware of the needs of students and the low skill base from which they start. Care is taken by teachers to use appropriate levels of language and to reward success whenever it occurs. Good support was given to a student with English as an additional language producing good progress in his understanding of mathematics and sufficient confidence to explain his solution to the class.
224. The head of department has an extremely heavy workload and responsibility as a member of the senior management team. He delegates much to the second in department, which results in satisfactory management of the department. However, some strategic features are late in implementation, such as the embedding of the use of computers into courses and the analysis of exam data to ensure there are no disadvantaged groups of students.
225. Since the last inspection the school has maintained A-level results at or above national averages, introduced the new A/S course and improved results in further mathematics. The school needs to develop its use of computers in A-level work and seek more opportunities to enrich the A-level experience of mathematics. A review of the entry policy and courses offered to Year 12 is needed, to provide greater opportunity for students to gain appropriate awards.

Physics

Overall, the quality of provision in physics is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Subject specifications are clearly followed.
- Relationships are good.
- Students' attitudes to work are good.

Areas for improvement

- Results are below the national average.
- A narrow range of teaching strategies is used.
- More opportunities are needed to develop students' independent learning skills.

226. In 2000 A-level physics results were below national averages. The average point score has fallen over the period from 1998 to 2000. The 2001 A-level results show a rise on those of 2000.
227. The standard of work of current students in Year 13 is targeted towards the subject specification. Student files are well organised and show good notes taken during lessons. Students remember their work and were able to contribute to a lesson on transverse and longitudinal waves and another on interference patterns. The work seen in lessons and in student files was of an appropriate A-level standard.
228. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. Their work shows progression from GCSE. Students showed an understanding of speed and acceleration calculations and skill in setting up electrical circuits to investigate specific heat capacity.
229. Teaching is satisfactory overall but is over-reliant on the use of dictated notes or work copied from overhead projectors. Where teaching showed strengths, the lesson was planned so that straightforward examples and concepts were used as a foundation for more challenging work later in the lesson. Explanations and demonstrations were clear, logical and concise, as seen in a lesson examining interference patterns of waves. A strength is that all topics begin with clear explanations of the essential science related to each topic at a conceptual level. These ideas are then developed into mathematical models. Where teaching was less strong, whilst teacher knowledge was good, and lesson content accurate and appropriate for the topic, there was, however, a slowed pace, a lack of flair and inspiration in delivery and a need to give greater thought to student activity and interaction. Students did not always know why they were carrying out practical work rather than just following instructions as, for example, in work on specific heat capacity. Where demonstrations are used the work is not always taken to an appropriately challenging level.

230. The issue of subject specification details for each topic enables students to track progress and ensure that file content is appropriate. Written work demanded of students consists of notes in class, homework and coursework. The department has produced support booklets, which provide essential background information on topics and related examination questions. These are used for homework. This is marked and written and oral feedback is given. This gives students the opportunity to learn examination techniques. The department makes regular use of registers, homework records, test marks and targets.
231. Students are attentive and show a will to learn but they do not ask enough, or thoughtful enough, questions of their teachers to seek clarification of their understanding. Relationships in the classrooms are good. The atmosphere is relaxed and supportive but students are somewhat passive in their work.
232. There is little evidence of students undertaking independent work or individual research, for example, in the form of presentation notes or extended writing. Students are not sufficiently encouraged to become more responsible for their own learning, to make greater contributions to the learning of the group and to investigate a wider range of sources of information. The curriculum, whilst covering the requirements of the specification, is not enhanced by visits or other interesting extra-curricular opportunities. Students say they enjoy physics and feel they have been helped in choosing the subject and in moving on. There are opportunities for key skills. The department as a whole has carried out preliminary curriculum mapping exercises. Currently, the department is not formally contributing to or logging key skills for students.
233. The overall standard of teaching and learning in the department reflects the work of experienced teachers and student effort. The subject specification currently forms the basis of the scheme of work but schemes are being developed as the course progresses. The management of the department is satisfactory but departmental planning is underdeveloped. Greater attention should be given to the monitoring and analysis of teacher, student and departmental performance currently and over time. There is a need to develop a more complete overview of physics.

Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching by well-qualified teachers.
- Good and productive relationships with students.

Areas for improvement

- The performance of lower attaining boys.
- The development and use of ICT by all teachers.

234. In the 2000 A-level examination the attainment was below the national average; nevertheless, 22 per cent of the students gained A or B grades and 84 per cent obtained grades in the range A to E. Girls did better than boys. Standards improved in 2001, when over a third of the students gained A or B grades and 91 per cent grades in the range A to E. Girls' performance was very much better than that of boys. The achievement of these students, in the light of their GCSE grades, was satisfactory for girls, but unsatisfactory for boys. Standards, which had been falling for a number of years, are now rising. At AS level in 2001 36 per cent attained a grade A or B and 83 per cent in the range A to E. Girls achieved higher than boys did.
235. In work seen during the inspection, the standards of work of the present Year 13 students are at least as high as those of the 2001 Year 13 students. Their achievement at AS level was good when compared to their GCSE grades, but again the achievement of girls is higher than that of boys. The work of some of these students is very good: for instance, in studies of reactions involving acid anhydrides and acid chlorides not only can they write down what happens, but also explain why in some detail.
236. Year 12 are only a short distance into their course. The higher-attaining students achieve well, but some of the students of average ability are taking time to adapt to the greater intellectual demands upon them in sixth form work. However, most are coping well with the more complex work. This was instanced by their response to lessons on gases, where their growing

understanding of the relationship between molar mass, volume, temperature and pressure was well demonstrated by their success in calculations.

237. Teaching is good and the students learn well as a result. The teachers have strong subject knowledge, which is used effectively to develop interest and to give perspective. There are crisp objectives, which are made clear to the students. Usually the learning from the previous lesson is rehearsed to establish a suitable starting point, but less often is what has been learned during the current lesson brought together and checked at the end. GCSE knowledge is checked and reinforced well. Strong features of the teaching are the clear explanations and the logical step-by-step development of ideas, punctuated at intervals with questions to test understanding. It is this process which governs the pace of the lesson, thus maximising learning. When work is marked this is done well, with useful comments and suggestions for improvement. However, some of students' own work that could usefully be marked is not; this is especially true of work requiring calculation. Good homework is usually set, which is demanding and often requires research. Whilst information technology is being integrated within the teaching, this is an area that is in need of further development. The assessment by teachers does provide students with a good indication of their standards in relation to AS/A2 grades.
238. The quality of students' learning is good. They take their tasks seriously and work hard at them. Their learning is enhanced by good relations with teachers. This has meant that they are not afraid to ask when they do not understand and that they both appreciate and make use of offers from teachers to give them further help out of school time. In most classes their willingness to listen and to work hard, together with the good relationships, generates a pleasant, but purposeful, working environment from which all benefit. Students are encouraged to be independent learners and many make good use of the library, both as a source of information and as a quiet comfortable place to work. Most have a good spirit of enquiry and many are keen not only to understand what happens but also how and why.
239. The department is well managed; this, together with the good teaching, has promoted the good learning. Whilst the standards attained by the more able boys are good, those reached by the average and less able are a cause for concern. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to universities for revision lectures, but it would benefit from the inclusion of more trips to firms and lectures not centred on revision. The accommodation and resources are good and complemented by an excellent library. Assessment is well done and effectively used to benefit both the students and curriculum delivery. A strong feature of the department is the way in which students and staff cohere to work towards the best possible outcomes.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching from well-informed teachers.
- Good improvement by the higher-attaining students.

Areas for improvement

- The performance of less able boys.
- The use of time for activities that students could largely complete on their own.

240. The A-level examination results in 2000 were in line with the national average. One third of the students gained grades A or B and 88 per cent grades in the range A to E. Girls' standards were higher than those of boys and their performance was above the national average. In 2001 standards declined slightly; nevertheless a quarter of the students gained either A or B grades and 78 per cent in the range A to E. The achievement of these students relative to their GCSE performance was good. Girls' standards were again higher than those of the boys. In recent years there has been a downward trend, due to the underperformance of some boys. In the AS-level examination in 2001 nearly half of the students obtained grades A or B and 88 per cent grades in the range A to E.
241. The standards of work in the current Year 13 are satisfactory. Students' achievement in the light of their GCSE grades is good for the girls and more able boys: it is satisfactory for the higher-attaining and lower-attaining boys. Students can successfully utilise their knowledge of structures and processes to produce some thoughtful presentations. These demonstrate that they are able,

for example, to compare photosynthesis and respiration in depth and evaluate aerobic respiration, rather than just to describe them; such a capability is promising.

242. Those in Year 12 are just a few weeks into their course; whilst the higher attainers are already achieving well, some of the average attainers have yet to successfully make the transition to sixth form work. Nevertheless, they are all building upon their GCSE knowledge well. This was instanced by a group working on the structure and function of enzymes, who can now appreciate the role of protein structure on charge and shape of the active site together with induced fit as an important and interesting extension of their knowledge.
243. The quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and there were some good and very good lessons. Lessons are well thought out to deliver definite objectives, which are made clear to the students. The teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and well used to enable them to produce interesting lessons taught to high levels with broad perspectives. Usually the knowledge from the previous lesson is checked to provide a suitable starting point, but less frequently is what has been learned brought together and firmed up at the end. In the best lessons students' ideas are sought and they are stimulated to develop them with skilfully placed questions. Suitably challenging homework is frequently set, requiring thought and research. However, time is wasted in some lessons where students perform activities which they could easily do themselves out of school, with learning and understanding checked afterwards. This was exemplified in lessons where groups of students made posters to illustrate facts; whilst this was a useful exercise it could have been better done individually out of lesson time, for it required little teacher input. The marking of test questions, based upon examination papers, is both regular and good. Students are given advice on how to improve and what went wrong; assessments are related to A/A2 grades and compared with predictions and targets. At present information technology is underused and it is an area that would benefit from greater emphasis.
244. The quality of learning is good. The students work hard and most are keen to learn, although some are happier to be told and reassured by questioning than they are to reason for themselves. Learning is greatly helped by their good relations with teachers, which results in a productive two-way traffic. Thus, individual progress is well monitored and supported with suitable targets for the future. Where students have problems with understanding they are invited to sort them out individually with the teacher in the teacher's own time. The teachers promote independent learning and for this the library is an excellent resource. It is well managed, large and comfortable. Access to the Internet, videos, CD-ROMs and periodicals is offered, together with a good selection of books.
245. The subject is well managed and there is a good learning ethos. The knowledge of the teachers is effectively utilised to present it in sufficient depth for students to access high grades. The programme is complemented by a field course together with visits to and from the school. Students and staff work well together towards good and realistic expectations. There are sound entry criteria embracing both the GCSE performance in science and also in subjects outside this, thus ensuring a realistic probability of a successful outcome.

BUSINESS

The focus was on economics but the advanced vocational course in business studies and GNVQ courses were also sampled. Standards are below average but rising in 2001. Teaching is good but ICT is not used enough to support learning. Standards are above average in economics. GNVQ advanced students achieve well in applying theoretical study to real situations. The quality of teaching was good overall and very good in economics.

Business education

Overall, the quality of provision in business education is good.

Strengths

- Teaching.
- Marking, assessment and the setting of targets.
- Students' attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Development of schemes of work to include what will be taught in each topic, and how, and when.

- Development of ICT to support teaching and learning.

246. Standards overall are satisfactory. During recent years, examination results in A-level economics have been close to the national average; they are now rising and although A-B grades remain below the national average, in 2001 the provisional results of A-E grades are a significant improvement on previous years. This performance is comparable with other subjects in the school and in line with the predictions of the department. Examination results in AS-level economics were much higher than anticipated, and provisional results are above national averages. In lessons all economics students make good progress. In Year 12 they develop skills in the interpretation of economic data and apply them to a range of different contexts. In Year 13 students analyse data, write well-structured essays and provide balanced arguments on a range of economic problems, for example, the enlargement of the European Economic Union, and whether VAT is a good tax.
247. The advanced vocational course in business has recently been introduced. Students are developing skills in analysis of material researched from textbooks. Although they are encouraged to make formal links with local companies, these are still being developed; thus their overall understanding of local business issues is adversely affected. The majority of students have yet to develop the depth of knowledge essential for higher grades, and attainment in class or in portfolio work shows average attainment. Advanced vocational students make very good use of ICT to present their portfolio work.
248. GNVQ Intermediate level students do not always find the work easy, but they have consolidated their knowledge of methods of finance and show a good level of understanding when they suggest the best method of finance for the needs of different companies. They prepare and give oral presentations to the class with little notice and are making good progress towards the acquisition of the key skill of communication.
249. Over three-quarters of all students entering for the text processing award achieve success relative to their competence at Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced level.
250. Overall, the quality of teaching in economics is very good, and in the vocational business courses it is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use effectively to develop and strengthen students' understanding. Lessons are carefully planned, with a range of activities to consolidate students' learning. Examination techniques and presentation techniques are shared with students from the start of a course and this enhances their overall performance. Relationships are strong and teachers respond well to students with differing needs and abilities: they monitor work and provide advice when appropriate. In particular, there is a high level of support for both business knowledge and key skills development for the lower-attaining students on the intermediate vocational course. Weak teaching is rare, but in some lessons less effective teaching lacks suitable pace when, for example, handouts are read to students who copy out material instead of being encouraged to summarise information. This wastes time and students fail to develop independent learning skills. This is also the case when teachers dominate a lesson, and provide answers when they anticipate a weak response. Students' work is marked promptly, there is positive support, and the level of guidance to improve future performance is good. In all academic lessons the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is under-developed.
251. Students' behaviour and their attitudes to their work are very good. They are attentive to teachers and the majority make their best effort at all times. When students are given an opportunity to collaborate, they are enthusiastic and apply knowledge well and learning is enhanced.
252. The overall leadership and management of business education are good. Staffing is stable, and the number of experienced teachers complements the wide range of courses offered. Responsibilities are delegated for vocational courses and special educational needs. Performance management procedures are developing, along with target setting for professional development. There is good use of performance data in setting realistic targets for students and these are constantly reviewed. Schemes of work for all courses within the department are under-developed: they lack sufficient detail as to what topic is to be taught in each topic to meet the needs of all students, as well as detailed planning for the use of ICT and homework to extend learning. There is a strong reliance on published tutor materials, and these have yet to be integrated into the schemes. There is a wide variety of paper-based resources for all courses,

which are used well and, although there is sufficient access to computers, these are ageing and there is a narrow range of appropriate software available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on the use of ICT across all subjects on developing key skills and on the Cambridge IT course. Standards are satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers know and understand the course requirements, but not enough use is made of computers in many subjects.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Good systems for offering key skills work to sixth form students.
- Effective delivery of basic skills for some students through the CIT course.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient specialist staff to meet existing demand.
- Insufficient access for students through the rest of the sixth form curriculum or through structured 'drop-in' to the facilities.

253. Assessment shows that those sixth form students at this school who follow the optional Cambridge IT (CIT) course achieve satisfactory success: over the years, almost everyone who has started the course has received a certificate in word processing, while about a quarter have done so in all five of the separate skills areas offered. It is not possible to assess how good these results are, as there are no national comparable data. However, in all the lessons seen in information and communication technology (IT), the students' attainment was satisfactory. On the other hand, neither the optional CIT course nor the Key Skills work newly introduced for all the students is designed to develop more than skills (for instance, in the use of spreadsheets and data-base software). The students at this school do not have as great a knowledge as do sixth formers in most schools of the basic theory of IT or as great an understanding of its uses in the world of work. For example, while most of the students have a good idea of how to set up a word processed document or a spreadsheet table for a given purpose, few can fluently explain what word processors and spreadsheets actually are or what they are for, let alone how they could use them in new ways in their other subjects or at home or at work.
254. In all the sixth form ICT lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory; sometimes it was good. Some of the teachers succeed in bringing the subject to life by at least on occasion applying the ideas of design and technology and/or of business studies; there is also generally good pace in some lessons. However, because the taught courses are heavily skills-based, some lessons tend to involve little more than "OK, log on and get on with your work"; in these cases, the teachers do not have specific learning targets for the lessons and the students learn almost by accident rather than by design. Such lessons can become boring, but it is noteworthy that in this school the sixth formers' attitudes to their work with ICT are always positive. This is true even in the case of those who would have welcomed the opportunity to study an advanced course in the subject.
255. The management of the sixth form courses in ICT is good; this is despite many pressures on the co-ordinator's time, such as developing systems, courses and learning resources (some of which are of impressive quality), and monitoring and developing the work of the various people who contribute to the subject. The co-ordinator is the only full-time specialist ICT teacher in the upper school (and also contributes to teaching in another subject). Because of this it is not possible for the school to meet all the ICT-related needs of the sixth formers as they are now, let alone to have such work develop in the other subject areas as much as it should, or to be able to offer advanced courses. The school has the physical resources for all these, and sixth formers are trusted to use the computers when they wish; however, there are not the staff to help them develop as much as in most sixth forms. Thus, progress since the last inspection is no better than satisfactory.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on physical education, although leisure and travel courses were also sampled. Standards are above average. Students' knowledge and understanding are above average and practical skills are well above average. Research skills are good. Teaching is very good and results in high achievement.

Physical education

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

Strengths

- The teaching of AS and A-level physical education.
- An enrichment programme of leisure and recreational activities.
- Extra-curricular provision.

Areas for improvement

- Lower-attaining students demonstrate weaknesses in their knowledge of physical education terminology.

256. In each of the last three years, A-level physical education results have been above the national average. This is true for the proportion of students obtaining at least grades A to E and the proportion obtaining a higher grade pass (A or B). In this year's examination, students produced practical performances and coursework which fell below national standards, but predictions for a return to the previous trend, of above average results, are supported by work seen during the inspection.
257. Work seen shows that students in Years 12 and 13 are producing work which is of above average standard. Students across all ability levels, in Year 13, are making very good progress. Students' practical performances show a good range of skills in different activities and high levels of fitness. They can observe and analyse practical performance confidently, applying learned theoretical principles. They confidently make presentations of their findings to the rest of the group, where they demonstrate a good understanding of the need for stretching activities, as part of warm-up before vigorous activities. These they could accurately relate to their own major sporting activity. The higher-attaining students demonstrate a wide technical vocabulary, which they apply accurately and effectively in both written and spoken presentations. The least competent show some weaknesses in their knowledge of specialist language and use of technology when carrying out research and presenting data and conclusions.
258. All students in Year 12 have made very good progress since they started the course and they are achieving well. The higher-attaining students have developed very well their analysis and evaluation skills, when working in pairs on an acquisition of skills task. The students have a good understanding of how to audit present skill levels of a performer in order to set appropriate tasks to enable improvement. Strategies to test improvement are very good. In discussions, all students make good use of a wide range of relevant vocabulary. Their writing demonstrates an appreciation and understanding of the relationship of skill acquisition to their chosen activity.
259. Teaching of AS and A-level physical education is very good. The most effective teaching involves high expectations and a good pace to the lesson. This results in very good learning. Teachers ensure that students understand clearly the intended outcomes of the lesson so that they know what they are expected to learn. There are regular opportunities for students to discuss their progress and to set targets for improvement with the teacher. This enables students to plan appropriately and encourages them to improve their skills in their chosen activities. Very good use is made of facilities for most major sports.
260. Students have a responsible attitude to their work and are very enthusiastic about physical education. All students see the relevance of fitness levels in improving their own performance and use opportunities through extra-curricular provision to develop this. Most are able to express themselves clearly in discussions and are able to use researched information to support their views. They have well-developed literacy and numeracy skills and effectively use information and communication technology in their research work. Work in private study time is effectively used, with good guidance from teachers to aid progress significantly.

261. The department is well led and managed. The head of department has a good vision for the development of sixth form work and consequently planning is focused on raising standards. The school has an extensive programme of extra-curricular provision as well as a very good timetabled programme of leisure and recreation activities. This enrichment programme is compulsory for all Year 12 students, where attendance and progress are monitored. For Year 13 students the enrichment programme is optional but all A-level students of PE and members of school teams are expected to take part. Many sixth form students are selected for representation in school, local, regional and national teams. This contributes significantly to their personal development and to the skill development of their chosen activities.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design and music but performing arts courses were also sampled. Overall provision for art and design is very good and good for music. Standards are above average for art and design and satisfactory for music. Teaching is very good in art and design and satisfactory in music.

Art and design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is very good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning.
- Students' skills of working from observation, their investigation and experimentation and their personal response to the world around them.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Further opportunities for students to work with other processes and materials, including printmaking and creative textiles.

262. The results gained by the sixth form students in the 2000 A-level GCE were very good and their average point score was well above the national average. More than half were awarded grades A or B, again well above the national average and amongst the very best in the school. These results reflect the rising standards since the last inspection. Those students who were entered for the new AS-level examination in 2001 were awarded results close to the national average.

263. The work being produced by the sixth form students during inspection week makes it clear that standards remain well above average. Thanks to the strong foundations of observing and recording information which were laid in the main school, students' basic skills of painting and drawing, while still developing, are, nevertheless, very good indeed. They are adept at using drawing for a range of purposes, including investigative drawing, presentation drawing, drawing to create rhythm, drawing for planning, drawing as part of a major work and drawing light with an eraser. Their methods of overlaying transparent stains over opaque and occasionally impasto acrylic paint are reminiscent of Cézanne in one of his freer, more abstract guises. The students' work is adventurous in scale and ambitious in concept. Most of it gives a personal response to the natural environment of the north of England. Students are also able to take an idea and develop it, using a variety of three-dimensional processes. Life-sized, perfectly proportioned figures, constructed by the students from cardboard, sit around tables and lounge on chairs. Much of this work, reminiscent of Antony Gormley's "Angel of the North", is suspended from the ceiling or posed as though climbing the art room walls, and creates a quite surreal atmosphere. Other work is based around the students' response to visits made to Grizedale Forest Sculpture Park and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park or their investigations into local church architecture or the contrast between new and old in town centres.

264. Allowing for the pupils' varied and often limited previous experiences of art when they arrive in the sixth form, their achievement is very good. Their use of sketchbooks as personal records of their daily lives, their highly developed technical skills and knowledge of two and three dimensional processes, and their original, personal views of the work of famous artists combine to lift the standard of their work from average when they arrive in Year 12 to well above average by the end of Year 13. There is excellent provision for those pupils who have special educational needs. It is a particular credit to the student, her classmates and her teachers that a partially sighted girl in Year 13 is producing beautifully crafted, high quality artwork as she approaches her A-level GCE.

265. Teaching and learning in art are very good and often outstanding. One of the six lessons seen was good; three were very good while two were outstanding. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject and their management of their students are particular strengths of the department. Students in an outstanding lesson, following the department's methods of exploration through investigation and experimentation, were exploiting colour through drawings and paintings of fruit placed on tissue, cellophane and other brightly-coloured surfaces, then reflected in distorting tin foil. Two teachers, working together, moved among their students, assessing their work while suggesting a range of individual solutions and modifications, acting as catalysts to increase the already taxing intellectual challenge. The students exhibited knowledge far beyond that of the average sixth former and were able to discuss their work with maturity and a degree of self-criticism. They had a clear view of how well they were doing and how they might improve. The relationships between students and teachers were mature, good natured and based on a mutual respect for each other's ability and knowledge.
266. In another lesson a student, interested in the Pointillist style of Seurat, scanned a section of her painting into a computer, then used specialist art software to enlarge the digitised image until it was broken down into its constituent colours, almost like a Seurat sketch. The student's gains in understanding of information and communication technology (ICT), of the more traditional work of Seurat and of her own, equally original work were considerable. In yet another lesson, as part of the art section of the general studies course students were invited to consider the spiritual content in art by comparing Picasso's "Guernica" with Salvador Dali's "Cannibalism in Autumn", two paintings concerned with war in Spain. The ensuing discussion visited the uses and abuses of propaganda, the varying, often fickle human condition, and Freud's basic philosophy of life. The teacher was skilled at guiding her students, who went on to discuss the limitations of and differences between spiritual values, moral values and aesthetic values. The atmosphere of discovery, industry and reflection in all of these lessons had a quality more usually found in a college than a school.
267. The curriculum in art is broad and balanced and provides opportunities for students to work in both two and three dimensions, although there is scope to enrich the learning experience by providing further opportunities for advanced level work with print and creative textiles. The systems for assessing students' work are very good and make a positive contribution to their academic development. Data gathered from the assessment of their progress is not used to set targets for students. The information given to sixth form students about their progress and the guidance on university courses, career moves and future activities are very good indeed. The students speak highly of the art department and appreciate the good relationships they enjoy with their teachers.
268. The management of the subject is very good and the head of department, who has a clear vision for the future, provides strong leadership for staff and students alike. The teachers are specialists in the subject. Teamwork is very strong and the shared commitment to succeed makes a significant contribution to the students' success. There are strategic plans for short, medium and long-term developments in the subject. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning need formalising. The accommodation is very good. The displays of work within the department and in the public areas of the school reflect the high standards that are such a feature of the department. The resources for art and design are good and enhanced by the especially strong art section in the school library.
269. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have risen and the A-level results are well above average. Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress, as do those who are gifted and talented. Teaching and learning have improved and are now very good. Critical studies play a central role in the work of the department, while opportunities presented by ICT are increasingly exploited. The management of the department has improved. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and is a great strength of the sixth form.

MUSIC

Overall the quality of provision for music is good.

Strengths

- The department involves students in a very wide range of musical opportunities.

- Many students gain a strong sense of well-being from their involvement in the life of the school.

Areas for improvement

- Improving the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The early success of the performing arts should be consolidated and strengthened in a strategic plan for the department.

270. Although fewer students opted for A-level music in 2001 than in 2000, the total number of students taking performing arts, drama and music courses is increasing strongly. Many students are attracted to this school by the good reputation of sixth form performing arts provision. Examination results for performing arts, drama and music are broadly in line with national averages and with the school's expectations. The rich variety of instrumental tuition provided by Doncaster Music Service is popular with students; many achieve success at the higher grades of Associated Board examinations.

271. Many students choose to be involved in the department's extra-curricular activities and they clearly enjoy these. At a lunchtime concert in the department, students performed a range of pieces. Afterwards, a parent observed that his daughter "would not have dreamt of standing up and performing Baroque music at her previous school, but does so readily now".

272. Choral and orchestral rehearsals are well attended; students arrive punctually and they perform well, making a rich and pleasing sound under the able direction of teachers. At a chamber choir rehearsal of *Y Fwyalchen ddu Bigfelen* the choral director used her impressive vocal skills to demonstrate sensitive phrasing and Welsh pronunciation, enabling the choir to attain a high level of performance in its first rendition of the piece.

273. The department's very good and occasionally excellent teaching is characterised by high expectations, rapid pace, excellent relationships with students and clear planning, with extension of the most able. A teacher gave Year 13 students critical guidance as they prepared a powerful and original piece about the *Miners' Strike 1983 – 84* for performance at the opening of an exhibition in a nearby town. They listened well to his succinctly direct comments, refining his advice and improving their work accordingly.

274. Where teaching is good or better, students learn well and make good progress. Throughout the department, students' attitudes and behaviour are very good; they are courteous, respectful and appreciative of the good provision of this department.

275. The performing arts department has made a good start at this school. There is great potential, however, for further expansion and improvement. The department should use the performance management process to improve the minority of lessons that were insufficiently challenging because of unclear learning objectives, lack of pace and challenge and the teacher's poor subject knowledge. At present this minority of lessons is having an adverse effect upon student recruitment to the A-level music programme. Specialist dance teaching, possibly through a dancer-in-residence, will be required if the performing arts course is to become strong in all respects. There is a need for more rigorous strategic planning for the department, taking careful account of staffing, students' needs and efficiency.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography, history, psychology, sociology and religious education. Standards are above average in geography and sociology and are close to the national averages for history and psychology. Standards are below average for religious education. Teaching is good on all five courses.

Geography

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

Strengths

- Standards on the A-level course are above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with teachers' enthusiasm evident to students.
- The subject is well led and there is a good monitoring of students' progress.

Areas for improvement

- Student group and pair work need monitoring at AS level.

- There is a need to improve planning of schemes of work with more detail and the inclusion of ICT work.

276. The provision in geography caters for 78 students at the present time. There are three groups each of AS and A-level students. Half the geography students join the school in the sixth form and groups also include some students who have not studied geography since Year 9. In addition, some students with lower grades are accepted. All students are monitored for progress and almost all progress well.
277. Standards are above average. The most recent A level examination results are above average and the point score is well above average; all students were graded A-E. AS level results are improving and are above average. The student retention rate on the AS course is good: only two students out of 39 dropped out last year and another was gained after the course started. There is no significant difference between results for male and female students.
278. Work seen indicates that students have a good understanding of their units of work. Most students start the course with GCSE grade C but some have not studied the subject since Year 9. The work seen in lessons and in samples of work indicates that they are achieving well. The best students have more confidence in group discussion but almost all students work hard to achieve good results.
279. Students show good knowledge and understanding of current topics, including plate tectonics, coastlines, HIV/Aids, hurricanes and settlement functions. The A-level students work with confidence in groups but the lower-attaining AS students still need more teacher input to encourage more sharing of ideas. There is a marked improvement in skills for these pupils and numeracy at A level is very good. Writing styles vary to include notes, flow charts, annotated spider diagrams, highlighted text and tabulation. Their writing skills support very good practical activities in the field, which are well illustrated in the classroom displays.
280. Overall teaching is very good. Lessons are mostly well structured and resources, including those made from teachers' photographs, are used effectively. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they give good support to the slower learners. Extended writing is well marked and useful advice is added to help students. Basic skills are well supported, not only by the oral group presentations seen in two lessons, but also by advice on the use of the OHP as a teaching aid. Probing questions and good encouragement from the teacher follow discussion and develop understanding whilst at the same time building student confidence. A weakness in teaching is that some tasks are not as well timed as others; students then slow the pace for some work and are pressured at other times in the lesson. This facet of teaching A and AS groups containing a wide range of ability needs thoughtful planning.
281. Students learn well. They are very attentive and respond well to the good quality teaching. They can talk about their work and make useful contributions in discussions. They use the resources provided with confidence and clearly enjoy the fieldwork and museum visits. The course provides good overlap with GCSE skills but the A-level students show much greater skills in map and graph work and develop their skills in calculations through fieldwork. Group work allows students the opportunity to listen as well as talk. In a lesson on the variety of responses to HIV/Aids contributions were thoughtful and there was good listening which developed very good recognition of the similar and different problems in developed and developing countries. Students also have the opportunity to visit the self-study unit in the library. Here they can watch videos, use the Internet and consult filed copies of news material and down-loaded copies of Geofile. This facility is a very good aid to independent learning.
282. Work in the subject is well organised into three teaching groups per year; each group has only two teachers who specialise in their teaching topics. The new schemes of work, the up-to-date nature of topics and the allied museum and field visits contribute significantly to learning. Students' performance is monitored by prior attainment and gender but not yet by ethnicity. Resources are well organised but the rise in numbers is beginning to cause problems for replacement textbooks. Teachers compare the progress of students through the different units and the time taken for them to be delivered effectively. They meet regularly to share this information and are working on developing best practice.

History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching, with teachers using their good subject knowledge confidently
- Students show very good attitudes to the subject and very good relationships are a feature of all lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Continuing to develop the use of ICT, including the Internet, in order to enhance students' learning.
- Developing the department's monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

283. Currently, 29 and 21 students follow AS and A2 courses in Years 12 and 13 respectively. At the end of Year 13, results in A-level examinations in 2000 were below the national average, with twelve out of the sixteen candidates entered obtaining pass grades. In 1998 and 1999, results were below the national average. Results in 2001 were higher than those in 2000.
284. By the end of Year 13, standards in the work observed during the inspection were average. Students understand issues such as why the unification of Germany in the nineteenth century was problematic and the ways in which Hitler consolidated his power base in Germany in the 1930s. They can research and analyse primary and secondary source materials in order to provide structured answers, express their ideas fluently and use appropriate historical vocabulary. This was demonstrated in a Year 13 lesson where students gave a convincing analysis of the degree to which Germany under Hitler was a totalitarian state.
285. Achievement across Years 12 to 13 is good, with students developing their analytical skills. A lesson on the outbreak of the First World War showed the increasing ability of Year 12 students to analyse the causes of historical events by researching contemporary documents. Students' essay work also clearly demonstrates the gains they are making in their analytical skills as well as in their historical knowledge and understanding.
286. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Of the four sixth form lessons observed, the teaching was good in three and very good in the fourth. Teachers are confident about using their good subject knowledge to challenge students, ensuring a lively class discussion. In the lesson where very good teaching was seen, the teacher's challenging questions stimulated a debate which significantly extended students' learning about the problems hindering German unification. Teachers introduce students to the views of academic historians and use good resources and learning support materials to encourage the development of their independent learning skills. Students benefit from the level of individual support which they are given and clearly appreciate this. The attitudes of students are very good. In all lessons observed very good relationships ensured a very positive learning environment, with students showing respect and tolerance for others' views.
287. The leadership and management of the department are good. Sixth form provision is well co-ordinated by the head of history, with a team of well-qualified specialist teachers working together for the benefit of students. There are appropriate schemes of work and other departmental documentation. Sixth form provision in history has made good progress since the last inspection; the significant rise in A-level results between 2000 and 2001 confirms this. Areas for improvement include developing the application of information and communication technology and the department's monitoring and evaluation procedures. Currently, the department does not provide sufficient history trips to enhance the curriculum.

Sociology

Overall, the quality of provision in sociology is good.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and very good in year 13.
- Students develop good awareness of their own learning needs.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of teaching and learning.

288. A-level results in 2000 were average, with above average results in the previous two years. Results in 2001 were lower, with an absence of A grades. The AS results in 2001 showed a high proportion of A and B grades and a very high proportion of passes. Standards in work seen are average and achievement is good, with students making good gains in examination results in relation to their predicted grades.

289. Students develop a good range and depth in their knowledge and understanding and use their knowledge well to develop good evaluation skills. Their skills in making the best use of their knowledge to answer questions are not as strong.
290. They can explain the origins of conflict in Marxism and are confident in their use of relevant terminology, including 'bourgeoisie' and 'proletariat'. They show how Marx saw the inequalities in the economic system impacting on wider society. They evaluate the Marxist view of religion and the function it performs and other perspectives that give a more positive interpretation of religion in society. They are able to place particular sociological perspectives in a wider conceptual framework, for example, in understanding that certain theories take as their starting point that structures in society determine behaviour and that there is an opposing view.
291. In classwork students classify explanations of inequalities in health into different groups, including gender, ethnicity and social class. In a study of mental health they classify different forms of behaviour to identify different views on what constitutes normal and abnormal behaviour. In coursework on education they show a good appreciation of the limitations of different research methods. In a discussion on the links between social class and health they explained the relevance of mortality and morbidity rates. In essay work on secularisation students review the perspectives of different sociologists and they assess the reliability of church attendance statistics. Both average and higher attainers are less secure in applying their knowledge of the secularisation debate to essay questions set.
292. Teaching is good overall and it is very good in Year 13. Secure knowledge is an outstanding feature of the most effective teaching and this in turn results in very effective teaching methods with a very high level of challenge. Secure knowledge ensures that students' learning occurs within a clearly established sociological framework. In class discussion about mental illness students were constantly challenged through questions to ensure that sociological perspectives were constantly at the forefront when they were giving their own responses; this was further reinforced by the teacher summarising key points on the whiteboard as the discussion progressed.
293. Knowledge of course requirements is another very strong feature of teaching and this enables students to develop a good awareness of their own learning needs. They analyse their own and model essays to gain skills in evaluation and application, with teaching giving students the methodology to improve on grades achieved through clearly demonstrating the features of a well-structured answer. Marking is thorough and critical in showing students where to improve but some of the marking of higher attainers' work does not contain a sufficient emphasis on targets for further improvement.
294. Resources are well used so that students are challenged to carry out activities in class and then give their responses in discussion. Activities are well chosen to develop students' learning; in one example students' understanding of the Marxist concept of capitalism was enhanced through challenging questions about hypothetical companies they had created as part of class discussion. The level of challenge was well matched to a high-achieving group. Students develop their own research skills by giving detailed presentations on chosen topics with the teacher effectively drawing the whole group into discussion following an individual presentation. Planning is good and lessons are characterised by pace and continuity, with good opportunities for students to participate; students themselves refer favourably to the opportunities the subject gives them to make contributions.
295. In some Year 12 teaching, activities are not sufficiently embedded within a sociological framework; in one example students gave well-argued personal responses as to what constitutes abnormal behaviour but questions did not enable them to generalise their responses to identify problems associated with identifying mental illness. In another example group work was well used to engage students in a relevant activity well supported by resources, but students were not given sufficient direction at the start of the activity to reinforce the relevant sociological concepts.
296. Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are enthusiastic about the subject and keen to participate in activities and discussion. They listen well to each other; in one very good example students took detailed notes during an individual presentation. They collaborate well in paired and group activities; for example, they reviewed their own findings after completing an activity and reached agreement on inaccuracies that needed to be changed.
297. Leadership and management are good. A very good aspect of leadership is the very positive ethos that has been created; students display very positive attitudes towards the subject, a very

high level of interest and are very keen to learn. Planning is also very good, with a strong emphasis on course requirements and developing students' knowledge of where their own learning needs to improve to achieve higher grades. There is insufficient time available for the monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the department.

Psychology

Overall, the quality of provision in psychology is good.

Strengths

- Teachers have enthusiasm for the subject and provide very good support for students.
- Students are keen to learn and display very good attitudes to the subject.
- Excellent use is made of assessment to give students a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their work and what they must do in order to improve.
- Schemes of work are carefully planned to support non-specialist teachers.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the head of department.
- The frequency with which those teaching the subject meet to share ideas and concerns.
- The number of specialist teachers of psychology.

298. Standards overall are average. In the 2000 GCE A2-level psychology examination taken at the end of Year 13, both the percentage of students obtaining A or B grades and percentage of students obtaining A to E grades were close to the national average. When account is taken of students' GCSE grades at the start of the course these results represent at least satisfactory achievement and, for many students, good achievement. The 2000 results were an improvement on those obtained in 1999 and the 2001 results continue this trend. The percentages of students gaining the higher A or B grades and grades in the A to E range in 2001 are both above those obtained in 2000. There are differences in performance between male and female students, with females consistently getting better results than males. However, these differences in performance are similar to those observed nationally and the results of both groups are close to their respective national averages. The standards reached by current Year 13 students, as seen in lessons and written work, are slightly above expectations for this stage of the course. Students have made good progress in understanding the central concepts of the subject and make good use of the technical language of the subject. They show good understanding of cognitive theory, for example, and are able to link aspects of cognitive theory to everyday experience and practice. Although Year 12 students are at a very early stage in the AS-level course, they are making good progress in the understanding of social psychology. They understand, for example, the difference between obedience and conformity and make good use of subject-specific terms and concepts in describing studies that demonstrate the tendency towards conformity.

299. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Where teaching is at its best, teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this effectively to challenge and extend students' learning. This was seen, for example, in a Year 12 lesson on social conformity where the teachers' skilful use of questioning helped to clarify students' understanding of the experiments of Asch, Crutchfield and others. The pace at which the lesson was conducted helped to ensure that students maintained high levels of concentration throughout and made clear gains in understanding the contributions of these studies to an understanding of social behaviour. Similarly, in a very good Year 13 lesson on cognitive development, the teacher skillfully probed beyond the initial response of students and encouraged them to extend and reformulate their answers. As a consequence students' contributions increased and they consolidated their understanding of the difference between iconic and symbolic modes of thought. The valuing of students' contributions to class discussion is a particular strength of teaching in the subject. Students appreciate this approach and it is a significant contribution to the good progress they are making. The teaching of the subject relies heavily on the contributions of non-specialist teachers drawn from other subjects. Due to the experience and very good class management strategies of these teachers, teaching is never less than satisfactory. However, weaknesses in subject knowledge limit the range of teaching and learning methods and lead to weaknesses in the application of theory to everyday situations. There are general weaknesses in lesson planning with the consequence that, although lesson objectives are made clear at the outset of lessons, they are rarely revisited at the end to consolidate the learning that has taken place.

300. Target setting, the use of assessment and the monitoring of students' progress are strengths of the department and contribute significantly to students' progress and achievement. Assessment is closely linked to the course criteria and students benefit from the support they get from their

teachers in lessons and through the marking of their work. Assessment criteria are shared with the students and excellent use is made of peer and self-assessment to ensure that students are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their work and what they must do in order to improve.

301. Students are highly motivated, keen to do well and, when questioned, express positive views of the subject. Although there is delay to the start of some lessons when students arrive from different parts of the school site, they are well prepared and a purposeful start is made to lessons. Students are co-operative and willing to help each other and members of staff. Relationships are very good and students listen intently to the views of others. They show a willingness to engage in independent study and work well together when engaged in collaborative activities.
302. Leadership and management of the department are good and provide a clear direction for work in the department. The head of department has a strong commitment to success and continued improvement and other teachers of the subject share this. Eight teachers contribute to the teaching of the subject. Most of these teachers either have significant management responsibilities in the school or are drawn from other subjects. Only three hold formal qualifications in the subject. Nevertheless, the head of department has ensured that schemes of work have been carefully planned to support the non-specialist teachers and syllabus topics allocated to match their expertise and enthusiasms. However, the quality of students' learning experiences is not consistently good in all lessons and the head of department does not have sufficient time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning within the subject. Because of this, strengths in teaching are not being identified and shared nor is action taken to tackle any weaknesses in teaching. Due to competing demands it is also difficult for teachers of the subject to meet regularly to share the ideas and provide the scholarship necessary to support students' learning at this stage of their education.
303. This is a very popular subject and one that makes a positive contribution to the quality of education being provided in the sixth form. Good progress has been made since the subject was introduced and this progress should continue provided there are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers to support the increasing numbers of students who are taking the subject.

Religious Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in religious studies is good.

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently at least good and usually very good.
- Students enter into their studies enthusiastically with a determination to succeed.

Areas for improvement

- Some students have relatively poor study skills, which restrict their progress in Year 12.
- A wider use of ICT for research purposes.
- Provision for all sixth form students to study religious education.

304. The number of students taking religious studies is too small to make comparisons with national figures. However, the school's records of students' attainments before they started the course show that those who have completed the course in recent years had made at least good progress from a relatively weak starting point, and so their results represent good achievement. There are no significant differences in standards attained by male and female students or those of different ethnic groups.
305. The work seen during the inspection confirms that, whilst all students achieve well, the actual standards of attainment vary to a remarkable degree. The single student in Y13 is working at undergraduate level and shows a high degree of analytical skills. His ability to compare and contrast complex philosophical arguments is impressive and reflects both his home background and the quality of teaching he receives. In his studies of the philosophy of religion he could comfortably move historically from Augustine, Anselm and Calvin through to Hick when examining the origins of evil. Similarly, an essay covering the ontological arguments of Anselm, Descartes, Barth and Malcolm reveals a refreshing vigour and enthusiasm as he has grown, with some assurance, to draw upon various authorities critically and arrive at reasonable personal conclusions. In Year 12, however, the 12 students are just embarking upon the process of both

developing the necessary study skills and acquiring the conceptual framework of religious discussion. The issue of acquiring study skills was illustrated in both the essays and the organisation of the files of some students. The importance of developing and using the 'key skills' component of the sixth form studies cannot be overemphasised. The Y12 group have a high level of commitment and have enthusiastically made introductory studies of religious experience from the works of Durkheim, Jung and Smart but the lack of general prior knowledge is evident. This issue was further noted in written work about the prophet Isaiah and the 'Holy City of Jerusalem' and in oral work about the aspects of religious experience such as mysticism. At present they feel intellectually insecure about their ultimate success at A/S level but satisfactory or better progress is being made throughout the group.

306. Overall, teaching is very good. Although only one of the two teachers was present at school during the inspection, there is every indication that the quality of the teaching is the major feature and strength of religious education at post-16 level. The teacher seen is experienced and has a very good knowledge of the subject at this level. The students enjoy the quality of their relationship with her and are aware of her total commitment to their success. The Year 13 student has an Oxbridge type of experience, which is mutually demanding for the teacher and the taught. This invigorating academic situation is a privilege for both of them, and one which is yielding very good outcomes. The Year 12 students respond openly to this high quality of relationship in the teaching process. They spoke of it as a new experience, indeed discovery, in their education. Her careful preparation is sufficiently flexible to enable her to respond to the students' initiatives and thoughts, even though this does at times take her to the boundaries of her knowledge. It is, however, this quality of interaction which represents the best of her work and caused the students to talk of her as their teacher and friend. In Year 12 the serious deficit of the students' background knowledge and any other problems are tackled with a supportive pertinacity by the teacher; hence the cycle of improvement is maintained. There is no doubt that the work of the lower-attaining students is at times inaccurate and confused and the pattern of these errors needs to be identified and clear corrective summaries need to be produced by the two teachers. The teachers are constantly looking for new teaching materials and much has been invested in improving the resources. This has enabled new general texts which are appropriate to Y12 and two CD-ROMs about morality to be bought. The potential use of the Internet has not yet been explored.
307. Teaching is well organised. The didactic or explanatory elements are very clear and carefully sequenced but at times not enough attention is given to the major points made in the lesson so that issues can be drawn from students and developed and reinforced accordingly. The marking of essays is of an appropriate level.
308. The progress which students make can be gauged by the consistently high level of results over the previous two decades, but the challenge of developing students' skills and compensating for lack of initial knowledge in such a short time in Y12 is evident.
309. The subject is very well managed. The head of department and her colleague, whom she taught as a pupil, work closely together and share similar views on the development of the courses being taught and how to maximise the progress of their students. They search for new materials but there was no evidence of the school taking the students to intensive A-level study weekends, which would be particularly beneficial to such a small post-16 group of students.
310. The school's commitment to and the quality of this provision are beyond question: the staff's single focus is to constantly re-evaluate their work for the sole benefit of their students.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English and French. Standards are below average in English and average in French. The quality of teaching is good in both subjects.

English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching, which offers all students a good range of support.
- The progress made by students, many of whom enter the sixth form with low predicted grades.

Areas for improvement

- To increase the percentage of grades A and B and A-E attained by students in their A levels.
- To involve all students in the valuable discussion and question and answer sessions which take place in most lessons.

311. The attainment of students in their A levels in 2000 was below the national average in English language and well below the national average in English literature. In English language the percentage of pupils attaining grades A and B was significantly below the national average, while the percentage attaining grades A-E was in line with what is seen nationally. In English literature both the percentage attaining grades A and B and the percentage attaining grades A to E were below the national average. There was no difference in 2000 in the percentage of male and female students attaining A and B grades, although more female than male students attained grades A to E. In 2001, there was a significant improvement in English language in the percentage of students attaining grades A and B and in English literature an improvement in the percentage of students attaining grades A and B and also grades A to E. In the A/S levels, taken for the first time in 2001, the percentage of students attaining grades A and B in both English language and English literature was higher than was attained in the full A-level examinations and all students in both courses attained an A to E grade. A high proportion of students have opted to continue their studies into the second year of their sixth form course. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in both subjects is below what is seen nationally.
312. Since the last inspection report there has been a gradual improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining A and B in English literature, while the percentage attaining A to E has remained stable overall, with some fluctuations from year to year. In English language, the percentage attaining A and B grades has shown no improvement overall, while the percentage of passes at grades A to E has fluctuated from year to year but has declined overall.
313. Students show familiarity with their texts and higher-attaining pupils show understanding of their themes. All pupils understand the importance of being able to select relevant and significant quotations and are able to do this effectively. In their written work, most students do not make sufficient use of textual references or quotations in order to justify and exemplify their ideas, although higher-attaining students do this well. In making notes and preparing for their written assignments students make use of an appropriate range of methods, using diagrams and charts to clarify their ideas. When they are provided with additional printed materials by their teachers, most students make effective use of these by annotating them and adding their own thoughts. Higher-attaining students show good evidence of 'reading around' the subject in some depth; for example, a student preparing an assignment on Shakespeare's Richard II had read some of the historian Macaulay's work on this king. Average and lower-attaining students lack confidence in their own opinions and conclusions and prefer to rely heavily on the ideas given to them by their teachers. Students use language which is specific to the subject at least satisfactorily and often well, especially those taking English language, which has a complex and highly specialised vocabulary. The spelling of many students is careless and inaccurate and clear evidence was seen of their guessing spellings rather than referring to a dictionary.
314. The achievement of students during their A-level courses is at least satisfactory and in English literature it is good. The students who took their A levels in 2001 entered the course with predicted grades which were lower than the national average and they made at least satisfactory progress in meeting these. A higher percentage of students than predicted attained a grade A or B in English literature and these made good progress.
315. All teaching seen during the course of the inspection was good. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which all teachers plan to offer a range of learning activities and tasks to meet the needs of all students, a significant proportion of whom find the course challenging. Such activities support the progress of students because they are relevant, stimulate the interest and commitment of students and frequently require students to work collaboratively in order to maximise understanding. On these occasions students work hard, learn a great deal from sharing the ideas of others and make good progress. Good use is made by teachers of the work that students produce in collaboration with others by displaying it in classrooms, where it is used as an ongoing notebook or reference source for students who are preparing assignments. Teachers make good use of questioning to probe the understanding of all students and to encourage pupils to think hard and extend their understanding. Frequent use is made of discussion as a valuable learning tool and most students respond well to such opportunities, learning a great deal from hearing a wide range of views. On occasions, teachers take

insufficient steps to include all students, especially those who seem uncertain or lacking in interest. Teachers provide very clear explanations of language which is specific to the subject and are good role models for its consistent use. This does much to reinforce students' understanding of the need to use this specialised language and they make good progress in this area. Teachers successfully identify opportunities for students to promote their key skills in the use of information and communication technology, especially in the areas of word processing and desktop publishing.

316. English in the sixth form is well led and managed. The head of department has put thought into identifying the reasons for the very low percentage of students attaining an A or B grade in English language in 2000 and has ensured that all staff have undergone additional in-service training in teaching those areas where students' weaknesses were seen to exist. There is good monitoring and support of sixth form teaching and the results of this are carefully documented and shared with individual teachers. There are good resources for teaching English in the sixth form, which means that students are able to study a wide and stimulating range of texts.

French

Overall, the quality of provision in French is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Good teaching based on good subject knowledge.
- All students have good listening skills.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not have enough opportunities to work independently in lessons.

317. The main focus was French but German was also sampled. Results in German at A level are based on small numbers so they are not statistically significant. In general, however, results have been above national averages.
318. Standards in French are broadly in line with national expectations. In 2000 results were below national averages. There was, however, an improvement in results in 2001, when the average point score rose. A-level results have declined since the last inspection but, with the exception of 2000, have remained close to national averages. AS results in 2001 were similar to A-level results.
319. In lessons all students develop good listening skills due to the challenging use of the target language by teachers and good reading skills through regular practice and because of their good range of vocabulary. Written skills are in line with expectations. The most able students in Year 13 have good mastery of structure, grammar and vocabulary so that they can present a complex argument cogently. In Year 12 more able students can already put forward a reasoned argument with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Less able students are still at the stage of making personal responses.
320. Teaching is good overall, sometimes very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use the target language effectively in lessons so that students are being constantly challenged to improve their listening skills. Teachers have high expectations of their students. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and the reading and listening tasks are always challenging. Teachers have worked hard to produce good quality support material for students. There is a tendency for lessons to be too dominated by the teacher. In all lessons observed, opportunities for students to work out their responses or practise skills either individually or in groups were missed.
321. Management of modern foreign languages in the sixth form is good. The monitoring of pupils' work is thorough. There are good departmental and whole-school procedures in place, for example, for supporting pupils who are causing concern. The students confirm this. Students have clear targets. Teachers regularly indicate to them the criteria for achieving particular grades. Work is thoroughly marked and areas for improvement identified. Students feel that they are well supported and that they can always approach staff if they have problems.