

INSPECTION REPORT

**SHELLEY HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM
CENTRE**

Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107771

Headteacher: Mr J Fowler

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Kearney
18006

Dates of inspection: 18 – 22 March 2002

Inspection number: 243557

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	13 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Huddersfield Road Shelley Huddersfield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	HD8 8NL
Telephone number:	01484 222940
Fax number:	01484 222945
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Priest
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18006	S Kearney	Registered Inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9843	S Drake	Lay Inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
4926	T Aspin	Team Inspector	<p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>Mathematics</p>	
27983	M Sewell	Team Inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p> <p>English</p> <p>Media Studies (sixth form)</p>	
12356	R Dickason	Team Inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Physics (sixth form)</p>	
12885	J Hunt	Team Inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p>	
31693	T Hanafin	Team Inspector	<p>Art and design</p>	

8682	M Trevor	Team Inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31863	A W Cornelius	Team Inspector	Geography	
27407	W Stoneham	Team Inspector	History Economics (sixth form) Business studies (sixth form)	
3793	J Ratcliffe	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages	
16950	C Orr	Team Inspector	French (sixth form) German (sixth form)	
20490	P Wilson	Team Inspector	Music	
30800	E Colley	Team Inspector	Physical education Sociology (sixth form)	
7602	E Milroy	Team Inspector	Religious education	
20380	N Pinkney	Team Inspector	Chemistry (sixth form)	
27503	M Foulds	Team Inspector	Biology (sixth form)	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	15
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	22
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	26
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	31
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	34
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	35
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	43
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	46
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	51
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	86

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shelley High School and Sixth Form Centre is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 13-18. It is located in a mainly rural setting, south-east of Huddersfield, and within Kirklees Local Education Authority. It is a much larger than average school with 1401 pupils on roll, broadly balanced between boys and girls. The number of students in the sixth form is 349 which is much larger than average and the school is popular and oversubscribed, with a four per cent increase in numbers since the last inspection. The school serves a community of several villages that lie in a wide area at the foothills of the Pennines. There are close links with primary and middle schools within the Shelley Family of Schools. Although the full range of social and economic backgrounds are represented in the school, the majority of pupils come to the school from socially advantaged families with well established roots in the area. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There are 17 pupils from minority ethnic groups of whom 11 speak English as an additional language to a well developed stage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. There are 57 pupils with statements of special educational needs; this is above average and has increased since the last inspection. Attendance is well above average compared to other schools and the number of pupils excluded from the school during the last year is well below average. Pupils' standards of attainment when they enter the school at the end of Year 8 are above average although the full range of attainment is represented in the school. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities project. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2001, seven months prior to this inspection. Other characteristics of the school have not altered significantly since the previous inspection in 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shelley High School and Sixth Form Centre is a good school. Standards are in line with those of similar schools and the quality of teaching is good. The positive ethos in the school is strongly supported by very good relationships. The new headteacher has clear vision for the school and has the support of a talented and committed staff, parents, governors and students. The school provides satisfactory value for money when the standards and quality of teaching are considered against its operating costs.

What the school does well

- Standards of work and examination results are generally above average across the school.
- Teaching is good in all years and this supports good learning for pupils.
- Relationships across the school are very good and significantly help pupils to learn more effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because the overall provision is very well managed.
- The curriculum offers very good equality of opportunity and access to pupils in Years 9 to 11 and meets the needs of a wide range of students who wish to continue their study in the Sixth Form.
- There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and monitoring attendance; this results in a positive approach to learning that is understood by both pupils and parents.

What could be improved

- The quality of provision in English, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure that all pupils have a coherent experience of the highest quality and all statutory requirements are met.
- The monitoring and evaluation of all areas of school performance so that the strategic direction of the school is clearly based on rigorous analysis of accurate information about areas of strength and development.
- The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning, pupil progress and the strategic direction of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in 1997. Development has been restricted by a financial deficit. The operation of a financial recovery programme has taken significant amounts of time and energy. Within this context, the school has successfully maintained a good reputation amongst parents, pupils and the local community. Standards and the quality of teaching have also been sustained. Action has been taken on both of the key issues but neither has been met in full. There has been some improvement and clarity brought to the roles and responsibilities of middle managers although development of this needs to continue. The provision for ICT has been improved but the school does not meet statutory requirements for this curriculum area and the use of ICT by pupils is not having sufficient impact on their progress. In recent years the school has made insufficient efforts to monitor its progress and effect action fully on the main key issues from the previous report in 1997. However, recent changes in the management structure at senior level indicate that the school is on the cusp of change. The new headteacher has strategies in place that will ensure that development of key areas of school performance will be prioritised within a more flexible financial recovery programme.

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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C
A-levels/AS-levels	B	B	N/A	

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

Shelley High has been operating consistently at a high level of performance with GCSE examination results sustained at well above average levels compared to all schools. The average points score in GCSE examinations in 2001 is in line with that of similar schools when comparing pupils with similar prior attainment. The trend of pupils' performance in Shelley over the last three years shows slight improvement. However, it is below the national trend of improvement when compared to the performance of pupils in all schools, although the school is starting from a higher level of performance than most other schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades in 2001 is well above the national average and in line with that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G is above the national average and the proportion gaining one or more grades A*-G is well above the national average. Both are close to the average for similar schools and the progress made by pupils, based on the average points score in 2001, is close to the average for similar schools.

In 2001 GCSE examinations, pupils performed better in science and statistics than in their other subjects when the average points score is considered. The work seen during the inspection confirms that pupils currently in Year 11 are attaining similar standards to the examination results in 2001 in the majority of subjects. There has been a pattern of sustained improvement over the last three years in business studies, drama, German and sociology for the number of pupils gaining grades A*-C, and a falling pattern in geography and music. The pattern is inconsistent across all other subjects reflecting the need for more rigorous monitoring of overall performance across the school. The performance of boys and girls is similar over the last three years across many subjects but there are inconsistent patterns in some subjects such as design and technology where girls' examination results indicate serious underachievement. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 achievements are good in science, physical education and business studies based on work seen during the inspection. In all other subjects pupils' achievement is satisfactory except in ICT where it is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in provision.

The results of national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. They are in line with the national average when compared with schools in similar contexts based on the data for pupils eligible for free school meals. The trend in the school's average points score across the core subjects for the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend. This does not reflect the rising trend for pupils' attainment when they enter the school and indicates some areas of under achievement by pupils. National tests taken by pupils at age 11, and school data, indicate that pupils enter Shelley High with attainment above the national average. There has been a fall in the average points score in each of the three core subjects since the last inspection, from well above average in 1998 to above average in 2001. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils do not achieve their full potential at the end of Year 9 largely due to the disruption caused by the transition from the middle school at the end of Year 8. Work seen in the majority of subjects in the current Year 9 is in line with national expectations, although in mathematics it is well above reflecting the standards when pupils enter the school, and in science and history it is above. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in Year 9 in ICT and religious education because of weaknesses in the provision. Pupils make good progress in Year 9 in mathematics, science and art.

In 2001 the average points score for students entered for two or more A levels or AS equivalent is slightly below the national average when compared with all maintained schools and with all post 16 providers. Examination results in 2001 fell below those of the previous year, from an average points score of 18.8 to 17.8. However, the trend of results over the last three years is broadly in line with the national average. Very small numbers entered for vocational courses and for less than two A levels or AS levels make comparative judgements difficult. Examination results in 2001 are well above average in English literature and English literature and language combined, and in design and technology. They are above average in chemistry, general studies, geography and in the vocational course in art and design. They are average in biology, economics, German, history, sociology, physical education and business studies. They are below average in art and design, communication studies, computer studies, English language, French, mathematics and physics. From work seen during inspection week, standards are better than the previous examination results in mathematics, physics, biology, art, geography, ICT, and sociology. When compared with attainment at GCSE results are mostly in line with the predictions made for students. Achievement is good in physics, English, biology, art, design and technology and geography.

The school uses prior attainment data to set targets for individual pupils. The predictions are extended to include a challenge factor to encourage pupils to aim for higher grades. Targets set across the whole school tend to be cautious and do not always reflect sufficient challenge. For example, the average point score target for GCSE in 2002 remains similar for 2003. This does not reflect the rising attainment of pupils as they enter the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school and inside lessons is good.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships in the school; the personal development of pupils is good.
Attendance	Above average.

There were some concerns expressed by parents and pupils about a small number of incidences of bullying. The inspection team judge that the school's procedures for dealing with these isolated cases are good and the recent review of the behaviour policy is having a positive impact.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching of pupils in Years 9 to 13 is good. There is some very good and excellent teaching in many subjects. Excellent teaching is seen in all years but particularly in the sixth form. In Year 9 and 11 the quality of teaching in English is satisfactory and in mathematics and science it is good.

Strengths of teaching are teachers' knowledge of the subject, which allows them to prompt pupils to aim for higher standards, and provides pupils with a very sound understanding of examination requirements. The impact of this is seen in the strength of pupils' oral skills that are well developed through good use of question and answer sessions in many lessons. There is generally good class management and few lessons are disturbed by unsatisfactory behaviour so pupils are able to concentrate, listen attentively to instructions and develop a purposeful approach to their work. Very good relationships in the school provide pupils with a security that encourages them to take risk and accept challenge as was seen in some of the very best lessons, particularly in the sixth form. In some of the weaker lessons pupils were passively fed information and the lessons were heavily focussed on knowledge acquisition that failed to develop pupils' basic skills. In a small number of lessons the behaviour of some pupils was unsatisfactory and resulted in a lack of progress.

The strategies for developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory but require further attention and monitoring. There is currently inconsistent provision across subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught and make very good progress. Pupils identified as having particular talents and gifts, benefit from extension activities in several subjects although this support is not consistent across the school because it is a recent development. A particular strength of pupils' learning is their very good response in the majority of lessons. The majority of pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy school and are happy. This is reflected in their enthusiasm and interest and contributes significantly to their achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comments
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory across Years 9 to 11 and good in the Sixth form. The school offers a good range of courses to meet the needs of different pupils. Statutory requirements are not met in ICT, religious education and in some subjects where ICT is an important component.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school offers a well managed programme of support and pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Although there are only a small number of pupils involved they are monitored and they benefit fully from the support provided through the good pastoral system.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is unsatisfactory. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Teachers know pupils very well and pastoral support is good. The procedures for monitoring pupil progress require development.
--	--

The school works well with parents through a wide range of strategies although this is not always the perception of parents themselves, as reflected in the number of negative responses to the parent questionnaire.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership of the school is good. The new headteacher and senior team have a clear vision for future developments. There are several middle managers that provide good leadership and management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory but they do need further training in order to fully understand their role in the strategic development of the school and their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. There is insufficient information collected about classroom activities, and other areas, to provide the school with a clear picture of the areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The deficit budget is supported by a clear recovery plan. Value for money is satisfactory.

The deficit budget and staff illness have created pressures on staffing arrangements in recent months. There are several new appointments arranged at senior level that will provide an opportunity for the new leadership to restructure the management arrangements in the school. The accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources across the school are unsatisfactory. Best value principles are applied well to spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Children make good progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve the best. • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements. • Information about pupil progress. • Liaison with parents.

The inspection agrees with all the positive comments made by parents. It judges that liaison with parents is good. Homework arrangements and the information about pupil progress is inconsistent in quality across the school.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

SHELLEY HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The school's sixth form is large, with 349 students enrolled. The majority of students in Year 11, continue their education at the school after the age of sixteen. Shelley sixth form is the only school-based sixth form facility in south Kirklees and serves the needs of students from surrounding villages and as far away as Barnsley. The school operates an admission target of 6 GCSE awards at grades A*-C but has a flexible approach with individual students. The courses offered include a wide range of 27 GCE 'A' Levels (A2 courses) with a small number (5) of Advanced and Intermediate Vocational courses. The majority of students (76 per cent) choose to study the new Advanced 2 courses although the numbers embarking on vocational courses is increasing. There are opportunities for students to take GCSE (or GNVQ equivalent) examinations as a retake or an additional course. Approximately 10 per cent of students leave by the end of Year 12 and go into employment. The percentage of students who go into higher education at the end of their sixth form courses is well above average at nearly 75 per cent. The attainment in the sixth form has been very close to the national average over the last three years. This is for students entered for two or more A levels or AS equivalents when the average points score is compared with other schools and further education providers.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form at Shelley High is successful and cost effective. It provides the majority of students with an educational experience that supports their academic and social development. In recent years standards have been maintained at levels that are above average although there was a slight fall in standards in 2001. The quality of teaching is good and often very good or excellent. Subject teachers know their students very well and the advice given to support learning is mostly good. Leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory and the pastoral team encourage the development of students' confidence and self esteem. The main strengths and areas that could be improved are:

Strengths

- Students achieve good results in examinations.
- The school provides a very wide curriculum that meets a diversity of need and provides the majority of students with good continuity from Year 11.
- The quality of teaching is good and often better than this; this ensures that students learn effectively and make good progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, ensuring that students' learning is vigorous and well founded.
- There are very good, mature supportive relationships between students and teachers that encourages an atmosphere of challenge in the majority of lessons.
- Students are enthusiastic about their learning and are committed to success in their studies.

What could be improved

- The more formal communication between tutorial and subject staff to ensure a better use of assessment data to support the progress of students.
- The monitoring of teaching to ensure that the very good practice is shared more widely.
- The planned provision and use of ICT to increase students' skills of independent learning.
- The role of the sixth form in taking responsibility for its common life, the management of sixth form social areas and giving greater support to work in the main school.

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
English	Good. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and relationships are very good.
Mathematics	Good. New courses are well planned and teaching is a strength.
Biology	Satisfactory. Teaching is good and students are prepared well for examinations.
Chemistry	Good. Examination results are above average.
Physics	Good. There is good assessment to support students and teaching is often very good.
Design and technology	Good. There is some excellent use of ICT to enhance students' design work.
Business Studies	Good. There is a wide range of courses available and standards of work recorded by students in Year 13 are a strength of the subject.
Art and design	Good. Standards are above expectations and students have very positive attitudes to the subject.
Music	Satisfactory. Although teaching is good and the subject is well managed, recruitment to the course is low.
Geography	Good and often better than this leading to very good learning.
History	Good. Good teaching is helping students to learn well, especially in Year 13.
Sociology	Good. Students have good attitudes and achieve well in the subject.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Teaching is good and many students have a positive response but the provision for developing skills across all subjects has some areas of weakness.
French	Satisfactory. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory there are some weaknesses that are restricting the learning of students.
German	Satisfactory. Course material is well planned and students have good attitudes to the subject; they often lack confidence in speaking German.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Attendance is very well monitored. Advice to support learning is good. Procedures for assessing students' progress are satisfactory.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory. The systems for monitoring and evaluating activities are unsatisfactory. There is good reflection of the school aims in the work of the sixth form.

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">• Teachers are accessible when students encounter difficulties.• Students enjoy being in the sixth form.• Courses are suited to their talents.• They are helped and encouraged to study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of extra activities.• How the school listens to their views.• Information about their progress.• The advice provided by the school or career staff.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Standards at Shelley High and Sixth Form centre are higher than average at all stages. The school has been operating consistently at a high level of performance since the last inspection. The new headteacher is determined to put in place strategies that will ensure continued improvement so that all pupils work to their full potential.

- 2 Pupils enter Shelley High from two partner middle schools at the end of Year 8. Although there is generally good pastoral liaison between the three schools, the transfer of pupils' attainment data is less secure. This creates a difficulty in determining accurately the attainment of pupils as they enter Year 9. The results of national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in the middle schools indicate that standards are above average and show a slight increase in standards each year. These results are supported by comparative data collected by all three schools for all pupils in Year 7 and when they enter Shelley High in Year 9. The intake is fully comprehensive and includes pupils of all abilities although the proportion of higher attaining pupils has been increasing in recent years. In the current Year 9 approximately 80 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above in English at the end of Year 6 in national tests. This is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels across all three subjects is more than normal with approximately 30 per cent at or above level 5. Numerical and scientific skills are better than literacy with more than 40 per cent of pupils achieving level 5 or more in science and more than 30 per cent in mathematics. From the limited data available, comparisons of pupils' progress across Years 7 and 8 in the middle schools indicate satisfactory achievement and this reinforces the view that attainment on entry to Shelley is above average with a significant proportion of pupils achieving at higher levels than normally seen. The school does not have reliable data to indicate pupils' attainment in all subjects when they enter the school. However, some subjects are aware of this weakness. For example, the physical education team meet regularly with colleagues in the middle schools to share their schemes of work and exchange information about pupils' levels of attainment, while in art samples of pupils' work are transferred between schools.

- 3 The results of national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. They are in line with the national average when compared with schools in similar contexts based on the data for pupils eligible for free school meals. There has been a slight fall in the average points score across the three core subjects since the last inspection, from 35.9 in 1998 to 35.1 in 2001. The average points score in mathematics has been sustained at around 36.3 but there has been a slight fall in both English and science. The fall in standards is significant when considered within the context of the national rise in the average points score from 32.7 in 1998 to 33.5 in 2001, and the rising pattern of pupils' attainment when they enter the school. This supports the evidence that there is some underachievement by pupils in Year 9. For example, pupils' achievement in some groups in English is below expectations and some pupils with attainment levels just below average are not making enough progress in mathematics. In science, some underachievement of higher attaining pupils was seen when teaching did not meet the high expectations exhibited in other groups. Comparisons of attainment data for higher attaining pupils indicate that the school is adding value to the standards achieved by these pupils in Year 9 in mathematics and science. For example, in the

last two years more than 50 per cent of pupils achieved at level 6 or more in mathematics compared with just over 30 per cent of the same pupils gaining level 5 or more in national tests at the end of Year 6. While it is difficult to establish how much value is added during the two years in the middle schools, inspection evidence of pupils' work confirms a rapid improvement in the standards of higher attaining pupils in Year 9 in mathematics and science. Although there is overall little difference between the drop in standards of girls and boys across the school, there are some interesting differences in some subjects. For example, girls' standards in art and history are significantly better than boys and this continues into examination results in GCSE while in design and technology, the reverse is true. The school does not rigorously monitor the achievement of pupils of different gender in order to identify unusual patterns and implement strategies to redress the balance. These inconsistencies in pupil achievement across subjects reflect a lack of classroom monitoring to ensure an overall quality of teaching that meets the standards set by the very best teaching in the school.

- 4 Teacher assessments of the attainment of pupils in the majority of other subjects have been reported to parents over the last three years in line with statutory requirements. The reliability of these assessments cannot be assured across all subjects. For example, they are unreliable in art, design and technology, history, ICT and religious education. The school recognises this weakness and plans to improve the use of assessment information across all subjects in Year 9 as part of the overall plan to improve transition arrangements at the end of Year 8. It is impossible to show where standards at the end of Year 9 show a valid improvement trend in the last three years in the light of unreliable data. Inspection evidence from the scrutiny of work and lessons also indicates that some pupils do not achieve their full potential at the end of Year 9 largely due to the disruption caused by the transition from the middle school at the end of Year 8. The school recognises this factor affecting pupils' progress and is currently negotiating for all pupils to sit national tests at the end of Year 8 before entering Shelley High. This will provide a firm benchmark on which to base targets for pupil progress and overall school performance. Work seen in the majority of subjects in the current Year 9 is in line with national expectations, although in mathematics and music it is well above and in science, modern languages and history it is above. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in Year 9 in ICT and religious education because of weaknesses in the provision. Achievement is good in Year 9 in science, music, history and art while in mathematics it is very good. In all other subjects it is satisfactory.
- 5 Shelley High has been operating consistently over the last three years at a high level of performance with GCSE examination results sustained at well above average levels compared to all schools (44.8 compared to 38.6). The average points score in GCSE examinations in 2001 is in line with that of similar schools when comparing pupils with similar prior attainment. However, the trend of pupils' performance in Shelley over the last three years is below the national trend of improvement when compared to the performance of pupils in all schools. Since the last inspection the average points score at GCSE has fallen slightly by 2.6 per cent while the national trend has increased by nearly 6 per cent in the same time, although the school is starting from a higher level of performance than most other schools. Since the last inspection the performance of boys has been maintained and girls' performance in the school has fallen slightly compared to girls nationally.
- 6 The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades in 2001 is well above the national average and in line with that for similar schools. It has fallen slightly since the last inspection from 62.6 per cent in 1998 to 61.3 per cent in 2001 while the national

pattern has improved from 44.6 per cent to 48.4 per cent in the same time. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G is above the national average and the proportion gaining one or more grades A*-G is well above the national average. Both are close to the average for similar schools and the progress made by pupils, based on the average points score in 2001, is close to the average for similar schools. In GCSE examinations in 2001, pupils performed better in science and statistics than in their other subjects. Pupils performed less well in art, English language, German, history, mathematics and music. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades A* and A is well above the national figure in business studies, science, drama, French, geography, physical education, sociology and statistics. It is below the national figure in mathematics and music and broadly similar in all other subjects. The average points score from GCSE examination results in English language and mathematics is broadly average and in science is above average when compared to all secondary schools. This represents satisfactory achievement when pupils' prior attainment is considered.

- 7 The work seen during the inspection confirms that pupils currently in Year 11 are attaining standards above national expectations and similar to the examination results of the previous year in the majority of subjects. Standards in English, ICT and religious education are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 11 but the achievement of some pupils is unsatisfactory in ICT because of some aspects of provision. The achievement of pupils in all other subjects is good, except in music, modern languages and history where it is satisfactory. There has been a pattern of sustained improvement over the last three years in business studies, drama, German, religious education and sociology for the number of pupils gaining grades A*-C, and a falling pattern in geography and music. Standards in English, mathematics and science have remained broadly similar since the last inspection. The pattern is inconsistent across all other subjects reflecting the need for more rigorous monitoring of overall performance across the school. The performance of boys and girls is similar over the last three years when all subjects are considered but, as is the case in Year 9, there are some unusual patterns of achievement of boys and girls in some subjects.
- 8 The information about the attainment of pupils with special educational needs, when they enter the school, is extensive and accurate because of the very close links that the department has with the middle schools. Accurate early diagnosis of pupils' needs as well as the expertise of Shelley staff help pupils to settle in quickly and build on their previous attainment effectively. The precise diagnoses and the expert skills on offer results in almost all pupils making very good progress across Year 9. Confidence and skills increase so that pupils are able to take their place in general lessons and also benefit from expert individual help in separate lessons taught by the head of department and other teachers. The teaching assistants give detailed specific support in subject lessons to ensure that pupils are helped to raise their achievement. The school makes persistent efforts to support those pupils with severe and multiple difficulties.

- 9 Pupils with English as a second language are identified on entry to school. If their English language development is not at a level high enough to enable them to access the curriculum without support they are placed on the special educational needs register and advice is sought from the local education authority. Although eleven pupils are identified by the school as speaking another first language, there are currently no pupils on the register. When interviewed the pupils stated that at least one of their parents spoke English fluently. There has been no need for school to use translators or to provide parents with translated information. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in school who speak English as a second language are all making similar progress to that of their peers.
- 10 Standards of pupils' literacy when they enter the school are above average. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are generally good. The best examples of high quality oral work are seen in English, history, art and geography. Pupil's standards in writing vary across subjects but are overall satisfactory. Analysis of pupil's work indicates few opportunities for extended pieces of writing beyond English, history and science. Specialist vocabulary is well taught in chemistry, history and art. Pupils' skills in reading are average when they enter the school and are slowly improving. Pupils enter the school with numerical skills that are well above average. Improvement continues within the school and skills are sufficient to allow pupils to access the full range of subjects in the curriculum. There is unsatisfactory development of pupils' skills in using ICT.
- 11 The school uses prior attainment data to set targets for individual pupils. The predictions are extended to include a challenge factor to encourage pupils to aim for higher grades. Targets set across the whole school tend to be cautious and do not always reflect sufficient challenge. For example, the average point score target for GCSE in 2002 remains similar for 2003. This does not reflect the rising attainment of pupils as they enter the school nor does it represent any degree of adding value by way of pupil progress. Although whole school targets are translated into targets for subjects, much of the analysis carried out about the performance of different areas is completed retrospectively and very few subject leaders could accurately identify how close they are to achieving their examination targets this summer although there are only a few weeks remaining before the examination dates. This situation is true for results at the end of Year 9, for GCSE and for the sixth form examinations. The school development plan and individual department development plans do not have examination targets securely embedded as success criteria for overall subject performance.

Standards and achievement in the Sixth Form

- 12 Inspection evidence was collected for fifteen subjects and several other subjects were sampled. A feature of the sixth form is that since the last inspection the school has changed the admission policy leading to a broader spectrum of attainment present in the intake and this is reflected in the examination results. The vast majority of students enter the sixth form from Year 11 and the school has reliable assessment data for nearly all the sixth form students on entry. The sixth form at Shelley High adds satisfactory value to the standards of attainment of students. Nearly three quarters of all students who complete their sixth form course go into higher education, a figure that is well above average. Recruitment in some courses is low and while retention rates across subjects are generally good, the small size of some groups makes comparison with national statistics invalid. For example, only 5 of the fifteen subjects inspected entered sufficient students in the A/AS level examinations in 2001 to make reliable comparisons. These are English literature and language combined,

biology, communication studies, history, and mathematics. In French, German and music the number of candidates in 2001 is too small to make any comparisons and in all other subjects comparisons are made but not assured.

- 13 In 2001 the average points score for students entered for two or more A levels or AS equivalent is slightly below the national average when compared with all maintained schools and with all post 16 providers (17.82 compared to 18.5). Examination results in 2001 fell below those of the previous year, from an average points score of 18.8 to 17.8. However, the trend over the last three years is very close to the national average and this is a more accurate reflection of standards than yearly comparisons. Very small numbers entered for vocational courses and for less than two A levels or AS levels make comparative judgements invalid.
- 14 Examination results in 2001 are well above average in English literature and English literature and language combined, and in design and technology. They are above average in chemistry, general studies, geography and in the vocational course in art and design. They are average in biology, economics, history, sociology, sports studies and business studies. They are below average in A level art and design, communication studies, computer studies, mathematics and physics. There is no significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys across all subjects but there are some unusual patterns emerging and a gender imbalance in recruitment, in some subjects. The proportion of students awarded the highest grades A/B in A/AS level examinations in 2001 is higher than the national figure in chemistry, English literature, English language and literature combined, design and technology, general studies and geography. The proportion is significantly below the national figure in art and design, communication studies, computer studies, economics, history, mathematics, physics, sociology and sports studies. In AS examinations in art standards are the highest in the school with two thirds of students awarded the top two grades compared to one third nationally.
- 15 The pattern of examination results for candidates entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalents over the last three years is broadly maintained at around the national average for the average points score per candidate. There is a pattern of generally improving standards since the last inspection in A level examinations in English literature, English literature and language combined, geography, German, and sports studies. In all other subjects the pattern fluctuates. Students generally performed significantly better in recent years in chemistry, economics, English literature, English literature and language combined, design and technology, geography and history than in their other subjects. There is significant underperformance by some students in recent years in art and design, communication studies, computer studies, English language, French, design and technology, mathematics, science, physics and sociology. The pattern of examination performance for boys and girls is similar over recent years. There are concerns about significant underperformance by girls in art and design, chemistry, communication studies, English language, German and mathematics. There is underperformance by boys in computer studies, mathematics, science and physics. The validity of some of these comparisons cannot be assured where group sizes are small.

- 16 The inspection confirms that standards of work seen for students in the current Year 13 are well above expectations in geography, above expectations in biology, chemistry, history and physics and in all other sixth form subjects inspected they are in line with expectations. The achievement of students is very good in geography, good in physics, biology, business studies, sociology and mathematics and in all other subjects inspected it is in line with expectations. These judgements reflect the progress students are making in the subject when their previous attainment levels at GCSE are considered; a more accurate reflection of performance than some of the comparisons based on national examination data.
- 17 The standards of students in the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT are generally good. This is particularly so in business studies and history where there is considerable enhancement of the key skills of students. Students literacy skills are a strength of the work seen in music where there is suitable emphasis placed on the development of technical language. Numeracy skills across subjects are often very good and support student's learning. For example, in geography and business studies students exhibit impressive skills in handling data. This reflects the high standards of numeracy in the main school and the emphasis that is placed on statistics in both the statistics and mathematics GCSE courses. In several subjects students have poorly developed skills in using ICT. This is identified as an area for development in biology, physics, chemistry, communication studies, music, geography, sociology and modern languages. The arrangements for teaching key skills are not totally satisfactory with poor attendance to lessons by many students and a lack of rigorous monitoring of the benefits derived from the curriculum offered currently.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 18 The good attitudes, behaviour and relationships demonstrated by pupils at the time of the previous inspection have been sustained over the past five years and continue to make a positive contribution towards the creation of a relaxed, good-natured community for learning. The school is large, sprawls over a wide area, has various spacious communal areas that lead onto narrow corridors and yet pupils move around in an orderly manner, arrive reasonably promptly for lessons and generally show politeness and helpfulness towards others. It is a pleasant place in which to work.
- 19 Most pupils are very positive about the school and would recommend others to attend there. They appreciate the support offered to them by staff and like the range of activities that are available. There is particularly good participation in sporting and dramatic events, and in lessons pupils settle well, pay good attention and generally get to work with a will, happy to ask further questions if they are unsure about something. Many pupils are prepared to continue their work, over and above the homework that teachers issue, in their spare time and pay for materials for design and technology, or revision books to help them through their examinations. They generally take pride in their work and are careful with its presentation.
- 20 The vast majority of pupils behave well for the great majority of the time that they are in school. Lessons almost always progress without interruption caused by bad behaviour, while pupils' good behaviour means that teachers can trust them to, for instance, work on their own at particular projects without direct supervision, thus helping them to develop independent learning habits. In a small number of lessons the behaviour of a handful of pupils, most frequently boys but occasionally also girls, has a direct impact on the quality of learning for everyone in the class but these

incidents are few and far between, usually occurring when the quality of teaching is also less strong. Pupils' good behaviour is particularly noticeable at break times when large numbers of them are scattered freely around the building and site. There is appropriate supervision by staff to ensure good discipline but their presence is more often than not used by pupils for a chat or to seek information rather than to deal with any potential trouble. There was only need to exclude one pupil permanently in the last academic year and the number of fixed period exclusions in relation to the number of pupils is lower than the national average. All the exclusions, both last year and this, have been for very valid reasons and there is clear evidence of staff working hard with challenging pupils in an effort to help them develop self-discipline.

- 21 The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good, both among pupils and between pupils and staff, and this makes a very positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning with, in many cases, lessons conducted in a spirit of good humour and trust. In the main, pupils show respect for their teachers and they are also good at discussing ideas with each other and collaborating when, for instance, working on an experiment in science. Pupils are helpful towards each other, for example those who are proficient at using computers willingly help others who are in difficulties. They respond generously to charitable fund-raising activities and treat resources and equipment with respect. Pupils state that bullying is a rare occurrence, but isolated instances were noticed during the inspection and others were spoken of across year groups and directed towards those who are in some way different from others. However, the overwhelming atmosphere in the school is one of good-natured co-operation. Pupils undertake communal tasks, such as reception duties or tidying up their bases at the end of break periods, extremely competently, maturely accepting that a community operates more smoothly for everyone when all contribute towards it. They are also appreciative of others' skills and willing to learn from them as occurred, for instance, during an exciting lunchtime dance session in which a Year 10 girl and Year 11 boy confidently led a large group of pupils and students of all ages, who willingly accepted their authority to lead.
- 22 Pupils' attendance levels are well above the national average for those of secondary age, and the great majority arrives punctually at the start of the day. In the current school year, nearly four-fifths of pupils have attended for ninety per cent or more of possible time while only 6 per cent have attendance of less than eighty per cent. However, although the attendance of Year 11 pupils is still well above the national average, one quarter of them have attended for less than ninety per cent of possible time this year and even this amount of absence has an impact on the standards of work that they can achieve.
- 23 Most pupils with special educational needs fit well into the school and gain a great deal from their placement in classes with pupils from different levels of attainment, where they work hard to make progress. Some members of the sixth form help pupils with reading difficulties to feel valued members of the community and, in so doing act, as very good role models to younger pupils. However, there is in the school an element of misunderstanding which does not react positively to difference. A very small minority of pupils laughed at the severe difficulties of one pupil. In other lessons Year 11 boys sniggered at the condition of poor children in Madras. The school is aware of the need to widen pupils' perspectives.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development in the sixth form

- 24 In the sixth form, student's attitudes are satisfactory. They enjoy school and show an interest in their work. Relationships with one another and with staff are good. Their personal development and capacity to work independently is generally satisfactory but it is an area for development in some subjects and is recognised as such by the school. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, students offered some negative opinions but during the inspection week the great majority of those spoken with were very positive about their courses and particularly grateful for the support and help offered to them by their teachers.
- 25 In the best lessons, in a wide range of subjects, students show real enthusiasm and fire when bouncing ideas off each other, listen well to teachers' guidance and work hard to extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding. In an excellent Year 12 theatre studies lesson, students with a wide range of ability and experience made very good use of their visit earlier in the week to the West Yorkshire Playhouse, helping each other to recall details of the performance, collaborating very well to reproduce visual images that had particularly struck them and swiftly building on their teacher's prompts to improve the quality of their improvised pieces. However, in some lessons students act as far more passive learners, listening willingly and diligently taking notes but relying too much on their teachers to do most of the thinking.
- 26 Most students intend to progress to higher education and they are enthusiastic in making visits to different institutions in order to choose the right one for them. They keep up to date with their coursework and the great majority spend appropriate amounts of time on independent study, taking care with their work and trying hard to improve it. Year 13 students in a psychology lesson tussled hard with difficult concepts such as determinism and free will, persevering with their thinking and trying hard to relate specific examples to the theories already learnt. Some students demonstrate a good sense of community spirit when, for instance, regularly turning up to help a reading partner from the main school but, unlike younger pupils, the sixth formers as a whole show little sense of pride in their common room and its adjacent terrace which are too frequently littered with abandoned food wrappings and empty drinks containers. While students generally show good enthusiasm for their own work, they are less inclined to consider their responsibilities as role models to younger pupils in the school. The dress code and casual attitudes of a minority of sixth form students do little to raise the overall tone and ethos of the whole school. The great majority of students have good levels of attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 27 The quality of teaching is good in Years 9 to 11. Nearly one quarter of lessons seen were very good or excellent. There were only five lessons seen in the main school that were unsatisfactory and one lesson in the sixth form. The quality of teaching is highest in the sixth form where four out of five lessons were good or better compared to two in every three in Year 9.
- 28 The quality of teaching is good in Year 9 in the core subjects mathematics and science and is satisfactory in English. In Years 10 and 11 it is good in all three subjects. One lesson of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Year 9 in each of the three core subjects. Excellent teaching was seen in Year 9 in science and very good teaching was observed in both English and mathematics in Year 9. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen in any of the three core subjects in Years 10 and 11 and

in science there were two lessons seen where the quality of teaching was excellent. Teachers in all three subjects have very good subject knowledge and in science the management of pupils is also very good. A weakness of teaching in English is the unsatisfactory use of assessment information to guide pupil's progress and in science teachers are less secure about the development of pupil's basic skills. In mathematics teaching is consistently good, although opportunities are lost to develop literacy skills and marking is not used effectively to prompt higher standards of pupils' work.

- 29 In the majority of foundation subjects the quality of teaching is good in Years 9-11. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 9 in geography, religious education, ICT and modern languages and very good in music. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is satisfactory in ICT and modern languages. Most teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. This ensures that pupils acquire a good basis of information about the subjects upon which they can build. It enables teachers to challenge pupils through targeted questions that prompt higher levels of understanding in pupils. In art, a strength of the teaching is the very good management that keeps pupils involved in their learning and actively enjoying their work. Very good management in music helps the overall pace and productivity of pupils and, in Year 9 in particular, they are able to concentrate and work with independence on their musical activities. Similarly, in physical education in Years 10 and 11, very good pupil management encourages more intellectual and physical effort in their GCSE lessons.
- 30 The teaching of basic skills is less secure in several subjects reflecting the weaknesses in the implementation of the literacy and numeracy policies across the school. These subjects include English, mathematics, science, physical education, religious education and ICT. Homework is also identified in several subjects as an area of development. These subjects include geography, design and technology, religious education, ICT and history. This reflects the concerns voiced by parents that the homework policy and arrangements are not monitored sufficiently well to ensure that homework is contributing effectively to pupil's learning in all subjects. The quality and use of assessment information is unsatisfactory in art, design and technology, ICT and English and less well used in geography, religious education, modern languages, music and physical education. This results in pupils not being sufficiently aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to make improvements. This again reflects the concerns of parents about the quality of information they receive about their children's progress. However, in science there is a very good system of collecting and monitoring pupil's progress and this is having a significantly positive impact on the rate of learning of pupils. Although the quality of teaching in religious education and ICT across the school is at least satisfactory there are significant weaknesses. There are sixteen teachers involved in teaching religious education, yet there is no teacher with a specialist qualification. The knowledge and understanding of many of these teachers is unsatisfactory and results in unsatisfactory learning in some areas, as pupils are not sufficiently challenged. In ICT seventeen staff are involved in the teaching and all have major teaching commitments in other subjects. Few have the expertise to reliably assess pupil's work and overall co-ordination of pupil's progress is unsatisfactory.

- 31 The separate teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and sometimes excellent. All teaching assistants are well trained and many develop further skills while supporting pupils. For example, in ICT pupils identified as having difficulties with aspects of the mainstream provision are withdrawn from some subjects and given intensive basic support with their ICT work. Pupils make good progress because teaching is very expert, well targeted and precise. It is frequently provided on a one-to-one basis. The provision is made up of units and leads to a recognised AQA qualification. Currently about 40 pupils are registered for the provision across Years 9, 10 and 11. Since September 2000 84 pupils have completed the programme. With pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties the school is less secure, but is already giving valuable help through the mentoring system and the newly established Enhanced Resources Area. In this new facility, pupils are given the opportunity to control their own behaviour such as how they manage 'bad moods' and to consider the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils make significant gains in learning and parents testify to their improved attitudes to school as a result. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons in nearly all subjects. Teachers take care to ensure that all pupils are fully included and their needs are met through individual education plans. Teachers ask advice of the co-ordinator when necessary and there is good liaison with the special needs team to ensure regular and thorough monitoring of pupil's progress.

How well are students taught in the sixth form?

- 32 The quality of teaching offered to sixth form students is good and a significant proportion is either very good or excellent. Such good quality teaching leads to good learning and contributes considerably to the good progress made by students. Six lessons were seen in which the quality of the teaching was excellent. These were in theatre studies, media studies, geography, mathematics, design and technology and English. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. The quality of teaching is good in all subjects except modern languages where it is satisfactory, and in art, English and mathematics where it is very good.
- 33 Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding which they impart effectively; the majority of lessons, across the subject range, are well planned and well structured. In ICT, for example, lessons include a range of learning activities and interactive group work that impact positively on student's understanding. In physics, targets set in lessons, ensure good use of time but in English, where teaching is less consistent, some lessons lack pace. Much work is challenging, as seen in the projects carried out in design and technology and there are high expectations, especially noted in art, physics, history and business studies. Relationships between teachers and students are particularly good and mature interaction during lessons enhances learning. In sociology, for instance, good question and answer sessions are particularly effective in drawing out students' understanding and extending their knowledge. Another example was seen in an excellent Year 13 geography lesson, where the teacher employed a team approach to a case study exercise on the Dorset coast; a very mature discussion teased out key words and to be considered, and periods of reflection, followed by exchange of views, culminated in high levels of knowledge, understanding and application.

- 34 Good use is made of resources in modern foreign languages and of external resources in art. In biology the nature trail and associated ponds are utilised well. For instance, in one very good Year 13 biology lesson, in preparation for an imminent residential field course, students explored sampling techniques at the waters edge and on the grassy banks. There is good individual support for students in the sixth form especially in art, and key skills are being well developed in history and vocational business studies. In a number of subjects, students benefit from the sharing of teaching between specialists. This is especially effective in geography, where the two very good teachers with different styles and perspectives bring excellent teamwork to the classroom.
- 35 Homework is an area of concern in mathematics, design and technology, German, French, music and geography. There is a need to improve the independent learning skills of some students and to extend the curriculum through self-study programmes. The quality and use of assessment information, marking and day to day feedback on how well students are doing is also a weak area in art, music, design and technology, French, German and English.
- 36 At a time of national instability of the curriculum for post 16 students, the teachers are working to the best of their ability. In addition, however, many have had to cope with a reduction in teaching time. This is partly responsible for too many lessons seen being too teacher-directed, and as a result, students' independent learning skills are generally under-developed. In sociology, there is a need for more extension work, and in biology, there is insufficient practical and investigative work. Some lessons in English and in physics are too teacher dominated, and in vocational business studies, there is too little use of students working on their own tasks. The teaching of many subjects would be enhanced by the introduction of more supported self-study into the programmes of work. Whilst the teaching in ICT is good, the limited availability of the part time teacher is affecting learning.
- 37 Key skills in communication, application of number and ICT are taught both within subjects and in discrete lessons. Key skills are very well taught in art, mathematics, business studies, and history. However, this is a weakness in the teaching in several subjects including science, sociology and chemistry, and in biology it is unsatisfactory. During the inspection attendance at the key skills lessons was low and students reported finding the lessons of little value or relevance to their other subjects. In ICT the majority of students in the Year 12 key skills class showed levels of attainment that were below the level expected for their age.
- 38 The very small number of students with special educational needs are very well taught on individual programmes closely tailored to their needs. In an excellent lesson in further mathematics the teacher's outstanding subject knowledge helped a highly gifted student with severe specific learning difficulties to achieve at an exceptional level. In a lesson considering reduction formulae, the student's rapid thinking and understanding was expressed orally in the main, but with excitement. The teacher's ability to follow and develop the deep level of the student's thinking led to exceptional, and rarely seen, levels of performance.

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

- 39 The school aims to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to all students that they will find interesting, demanding and challenging. There is satisfactory breadth and balance in the curriculum in Year 9 and good in Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form. The curriculum is reviewed regularly by a group comprising of senior staff and governors and they receive advice from curriculum managers and working groups. However, the school is not meeting statutory requirements in some areas. In Year 9 the requirements of the National Curriculum are not fully met. There are weaknesses in the provision for religious education and ICT. In religious education there is inadequate cover of the locally agreed syllabus, caused by an inadequate amount of time in Year 9. The school, however, plans to increase the time from September 2002. In ICT there is incomplete coverage of the national curriculum requirements relating to systems and control technology. This is recognised by the school and plans are in place to address the matter.
- 40 The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is very fluid and responsive to need. In order to ensure that the school is providing a socially inclusive curriculum all pupils wishing to withdraw themselves from a subject in Years 10 and 11 have their applications scrutinised by a committee to ensure the application is in the interests of the pupil. This is good practice and helps ensure appropriate match of courses to pupil aptitude. Pupils study the subjects of the national curriculum in addition to sex and health education, careers and citizenship and religious education. Recent developments include optional subjects such as short courses in technology, a single award in science, a certificate course in French and German and other short courses used as enrichment beyond statutory requirements. These are seen as appropriate developments.
- 41 The governors have recently agreed a statement regarding the principles and aims on which the school curriculum is based and this is available to all parents. The school operates so that the total curriculum time available across Years 9, 10 and 11 is 24 hours and 35 minutes. This is slightly below the recommended time in Years 10 and 11. The lessons are of 59 minutes duration and the timetable operates over a two week cycle. The school intends to review the curriculum policy and its impact on the timetable.
- 42 Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a broad curriculum and a much widened experience since the last inspection in 1997. A very good course in ICT helps pupils to gain skills confidently and use them effectively in support of their learning across the curriculum. In addition commercial computer programmes give pupils opportunities to improve their basic numeracy and literacy. Pupils arrive at school early to get their practice time and take pride in their results. In Years 10 and 11 pupils can study vocationally related courses (ASDAN) that enable them to gain many skills to increase their employability. The curriculum provides good opportunities for practical activities. In the week of the inspection pupils were observed preparing a horticultural enterprise, dismantling and reassembling greenhouses, making an inventory of equipment and calculating drainage needs. They demonstrated successful completion of earlier projects that improved social areas and were actively preparing a party for the deputy headteacher who was leaving the school.

- 43 The school held a very successful training day on literacy across the curriculum in the autumn term that generated enthusiasm in various departments and resulted in a whole school literacy policy. The policy has been approved by the governors and is reflected in the documentation of most departments. As yet there is no action plan for cross curricular literacy in which specific departments are committed to various areas of the strategy, nor has the national audit been used as a focus for the identification of development areas in teaching and learning. The effectiveness of the literacy strategy varies across subjects but is overall satisfactory. It is identified as an area for development within the teaching of English, science, physical education, religious education and ICT. The current supply of books in the library is insufficient to implement the reading targets in the school policy. Standards in reading are not monitored nor is there sufficient guidance on how to raise levels of reading in the school literacy strategy. The school is at an appropriate stage in the development of the numeracy policy and its effectiveness is satisfactory.
- 44 A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. This provision is supported by the pupils and forms a powerful extension and addition to the opportunities made available in lessons. Coursework support and revision sessions are available in a majority of subjects. Sixth form students support pupils attending the cyber café after school on four days each week. A good range of sports is available to both boys and girls and school teams compete against other schools on a regular basis. Drama and music are strengths in the school, and sixth form students play a leading role in them. The annual school drama production is entered for a number of student national competitions, and students have performed at venues such as the Royal National Theatre and the West Yorkshire Playhouse. Theatre visits are regular and some students have obtained work in film and television productions. The school runs a number of musical groups, ranging from brass band to rock/pop groups. Sixth form students feature prominently in links with overseas countries. A group of students visits a school in Tanzania each year, and the school raises funds to support a reciprocal visit by a similar group of Tanzanian students and teachers in the autumn term. In recent years a big band exchange with America and a cricket tour to the Caribbean have been organised. Many subjects organise visits as part of their teaching programme, and the recent Science Week organised several lectures on aspects of science given by notable scientists. There is an annual exchange to America available to all pupils.
- 45 The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils and makes very good provision. Different groups of pupils are identified to ensure their curriculum needs are met, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Several initiatives are in place, supported by the Excellence in Cities programme, to extend the curriculum and provide challenging work for those with exceptional talent or very high overall attainments. The policy of the school is to identify pupils with marked aptitudes and to use different approaches to teaching and learning in the curriculum although this is not seen in all subject areas and the current provision is not yet rigorously monitored. Pupils who are losing interest in school or have behavioural difficulties are identified early and where necessary alternative strategies are used to help them learn. Regular meetings of pastoral and curriculum teams are used to identify those with social and intellectual problems and make sure that they are included in all aspects of school life.

- 46 The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The programme is contained in the social science course in Year 9 and in tutorial time. In Years 10 and 11 it is covered in the Life Skills course along with modules of work on careers, citizenship, health education and ICT, and also in tutorial time. The topics covered are appropriate in both these arrangements. In the sixth form the only provision is in tutorial time and appropriately in subjects. This is not monitored and so the school has no way of knowing what each student's experience is and how effective the provision is. These arrangements are currently unsatisfactory and have been identified as an area for development by the school. In the six lessons observed during the inspection the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory. The fragmented nature of the programme in all years requires teachers to teach pupils for only a short period of time and this prevents them from forming adequate and informed relationships in order to help their progress. Lessons are not taught by specialists and teachers have had insufficient training so that in some lessons pupil's learning is restricted. For example, a Year 10 lesson where pupils were producing a job advertisement, taught by a member of the art department, had more emphasis on artistic presentation rather than details about jobs. The quality of tutorial time varies across the school but is generally unsatisfactory and contributes very little to the provision for pupil's personal, social and health education.
- 47 The provision for careers education is good. Careers is on the school timetable for all pupils in Years 9 to 11. School staff work in concert with visiting careers staff from the local careers partnership. This is a very supportive service for the pupils involved. There is an annual careers convention for all pupils in the school but essentially focussed on Year 11 pupils, along with parents and carers. Approximately 500 people attend and it is a successful meeting. The local authority is helpful in giving good support to the careers co-ordinator and others as well as the Calderdale Careers Partnership. The school also organises work-experience for pupils in Year 11. This is reported to be well received by pupils. Staff from school monitor the pupils and ensure the placements are appropriate and helpful.
- 48 The community contribution to the curriculum is satisfactory and is represented by work experience and visits in many subject areas. The rural location of the school makes it difficult to involve the community in the life of the school but there are good links through the Shelley pyramid of schools. There are already good pastoral links with the partner middle schools and these are being actively developed for the improvement of curriculum continuity. On-going discussions between the school and the middle schools are taking place so as to improve assessment systems and the transfer of pupil information. The arrangements for Year 9 when they enter Shelley are reported as being good by parents. The school has good links with universities.

Sixth Form

- 49 The quality and range of learning opportunities in the sixth form is good. However, the school does not fulfil the statutory requirements to provide a programme of religious education or a daily act of collective worship. This was an issue at the last inspection and no move has been made to rectify the situation. The sixth form curriculum provides a good range of AS level, A level, ACVE and GNVQ courses. Students can choose from 27 AS level subjects, all of which proceed to A level. AVCE courses in business education (double award) and art (single and double award), intermediate level GNVQ courses in business education and leisure and tourism, and an advanced level GNVQ course in business education are offered. The requirements of Curriculum 2000 have been implemented successfully. The curriculum is well planned to allow students to follow a coherent programme of study from Year 12 to

Year 13. Prior to entry to the sixth form students are provided with a good level of information and guidance in the selection of their options. Most students follow four AS level courses in Year 12. In Year 13 most students progress to follow three of these to A level, but a significant proportion continue to study all four. Students may also complete the study of an AS level subject in Year 12 and select another in Year 13. Overall the drop-out rate from courses is low. The timetable allocation of four periods per week in each subject is seen as inadequate by some subjects. This is particularly the case in practical subjects like the sciences, or sociology where group sizes are large, and in mathematics where the course content is very different to that experienced by students in their GCSE course. The school is considering an increase in the allocation next year to five periods per week for Year 12 but with no increase for Year 13. This decision is linked to an area for development seen as critical to the learning of sixth form students in several subjects; the extension of course materials to include more opportunities for students to work independently through the application of ICT and other research based tasks, perhaps involving more self study packages and more effective use of homework assignments.

- 50 The sixth form curriculum effectively meets the needs of students of wide ranging abilities and talents. The normal entry requirement for students to have six GCSE passes at Grade C or better for admission to advanced study is flexible where students with lower grades demonstrate clear commitment and potential. The range of ability of students who enter the sixth form is broad and covers a wider range of attainment than at the time of the last inspection. Students with special educational needs are very well supported and this enables them to participate fully in their chosen subjects. The school works hard to make specific provision for those pupils who want to stay on in the sixth form. Individual programmes are devised to meet specific needs and the school uses its teaching and curricular provision effectively to ensure that these students have full and equal access and opportunity. For example, one very gifted student with serious communication difficulties has very good provision in German and further mathematics, together with effective learning support, leading to exceptional performance.
- 51 General studies is currently offered as an optional subject. However, when interviewed Year 13 students saw themselves as 'guinea pigs' and found their work in general studies frustrating in Year 12 and so few of them chose to continue with the course in Year 13 and the course had to be abandoned. There is no planned programme for personal, social and health education and current arrangements are unsatisfactory. Some aspects are covered in the tutorial sessions and others in subject areas but there is no over-view of the provision. Students feel that there is inadequate time allocated to sex and health education. The school makes satisfactory provision for key skills (communication, use of number and information and communication technology) with one period in every ten-day cycle offered in each area. Many subjects include work in these areas for assessment purposes. Most students successfully develop the skills that they need to cope with their courses through advice and support from subject teachers. However, many students feel themselves to be working at a lower level than in their main subjects and attendance at these sessions is low. There is a lack of rigorous monitoring of this provision both in the discrete lessons and across subjects. Students make full use of the computer facilities and the library to support their work, and become good independent learners in some subjects although this is identified as an area for development in several subjects. There are severe constraints on access to computers during students' free periods, and this hinders their learning.

- 52 There are no formal arrangements for students in the sixth form to do work experience and career advice is organised through tutorial time. The career advice concentrates mainly on higher education opportunities and, while satisfactory, does need review in the light of students' views about the quality of the provision. When surveyed during the inspection approximately 40 per cent of students expressed concerns about the career advice they are given. However these views were not always shared by students later interviewed in the week of the inspection.
- 53 In the sixth form examples of moral, social and cultural development are good but opportunities for spiritual development are less developed. Several examples seen in lessons were linked to vocational aspects, for example, business ethics and cultural styles of production. The effects of science on society were explored and moral teaching included the impact of atomic development, genetic engineering and structural safety. In sociology the different class cultures were discussed. In art, the sixth form field visits to the Yorkshire coast focused on the beauty of nature, large-scale landscapes and the exquisite shapes of rocks, shells and fossils. In A-level physical education the social and moral effects of negative reinforcement were discussed. In general studies topics such as euthanasia and abortion are explored but there is no provision for religious education or a daily act of collective worship.
- 54 In the survey presented to sixth form students nearly 40 per cent of them expressed concerns about the limited range of enrichment activities available in the school although this view was not shared by many of the students interviewed during inspection week. Parents also expressed similar concerns at the inspection meeting and in their returns to the questionnaire. The overladen curriculum introduced in 2000 squeezed out many opportunities for enrichment activities. The school recognises this and, now that curriculum arrangements in the sixth form are more secure, plans to improve and extend the provision.

Personal development

- 55 The provision for social, moral and cultural development is good. It is good for pupils' moral, social and cultural development but unsatisfactory for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness.
- 56 Pupils enjoy positive and supportive relationships and involve themselves willingly in a variety of fund raising activities. They discuss issues such as environmental care with maturity and sensitivity and the Shelley Environmental Project has been responsible for the creation of a nature trail and a wildlife garden for primary schools. The school promotes the cultural traditions of its area and its development in its work on citizenship and Excellence in Cities. Exchanges and visits abroad provide a European and African dimension to the work enhancing cultural links and ethnic understanding. Pupils have the opportunity of being involved in year councils and the school council. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory, although individual good examples were seen. For example, in one thought for the day, during form time, Year 11 listened to a Radio 4 Thought for the Day in an appreciation of experience linked to the Wisdom Of Soloman. This good use of form tutor time was not typical of other similar tutor groups where time was taken with administrative matters. Opportunities for spiritual experience during assembly time were hampered by the cramped venue but one good cultural example was observed on the needs and difficulties of the developing world.
- 57 In some areas of the curriculum provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, in art there are opportunities for pupils to explore

the meaning and significance of religion with pupils making expressive responses with spiritual dimension; moral issues such as drug abuse, conflict and crime are depicted in artwork; pupils work together on joint social products, and practices in India, China and Egypt relate to the appreciation of different cultures. In Year 9 pupils were informed of the cultural and moral work undertaken by Medicins Sans Frontieres in modern languages. In Year 10 reggae music enhances the cultural understanding of West Indian music. In Year 11 a boy was so enthused by his resolution of an algebraic problem, which he had predicted, that he was quite overcome by his achievement. Lord of the Flies was used in a GCSE drama group to illustrate bullying and deprivation. In history pupils reflected on a wealth of social, ethical and moral dilemmas, for example, Hitler's treatment of minorities and Custer's last stand. Pupils generally had a good appreciation of well-known work and that of their peers.

- 58 The school does not have a rigorous planned programme for this area of the curriculum and there is little monitoring of the existing provision across subjects. The development of pupil's spiritual awareness was identified as an area for development in the last inspection and the school has failed to move forward on this aspect of its provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 59 As at the time of the previous inspection, the school provides good levels of support for its pupils, with many staff members prepared to go to great lengths in their efforts to find the right type of help for individuals. Heads of year and, whenever possible, form tutors move through the school with their group of pupils, which means that they grow to know each other well. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to if they seek help or advice and they trust their teachers sufficiently well to, for instance, report to them any concerns they may have about their friends. The good relationships that pervade the school mean that teachers have realistic expectations of pupils, and pupils, in return, co-operate with school routines and procedures thus helping to create a supportive and harmonious community.
- 60 The pastoral systems in this large school are highly organised which means that it is unlikely that pupils will 'slip through the net.' The procedures start well before pupils move up from their middle schools, with good transition arrangements that are appreciated by pupils and parents alike. The arrangements to promote good behaviour and discipline have recently been updated but they are still based on the philosophy of 'two thirds praise, one third constructive criticism.' Staff are generally consistent in their application of rewards and sanctions, and pupils consider that these are issued fairly and to good effect. There are good lines of communication within school so that everyone who needs to know will be aware of those pupils who may create problems for themselves and others. There is good liaison with parents if pupils are causing concern, and also if they behave particularly well or work consistently hard. When problems occur a close eye is kept on individuals and efforts are made through, for instance, support from the learning mentor or adaptations to the curriculum, to help all pupils to succeed. This is a more recent focus with national funding directed specifically towards those who find it difficult to conform. There are clear-cut strategies to combat bullying and other harassment that are usually effective. The arrangements to ensure good attendance are very good, with the result that attendance levels are well above the national average and there is very little truancy or selective missing of lessons by pupils. However, the form period at the beginning of the day is too often used for general chat rather than, for instance, as a time for purposeful discussion or when most pupils are expected to read while their form tutor carries out administrative activities. This year the school has

introduced 'Progress Files' in which pupils will monitor their own performance and which, combined with their records of achievement, will help to keep track of their growing maturity. However, these are at a very early stage, and much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is on a more informal basis, through form tutors' good knowledge of the individuals in their care.

- 61 Arrangements to ensure child protection are highly organised and wholly appropriate. Staff know who is the named person with responsibility for this area, and any concerns are recorded and kept in a suitably confidential manner, with appropriate liaison with outside agencies as necessary. The same is true for the procedures relating to pupils who are in the care of the local authority. The arrangements to ensure health and safety are also good, with regular risk assessments and checks of equipment carried out. For example, the school has identified the hazard caused by uneven paving stones around the building and has plans in place to rectify the problem as soon as funds allow. Staff who need to know are aware of those pupils who have specific medical needs, and there are good arrangements for treating those who have accidents or feel unwell. The midday supervisors are vigilant and on good terms with pupils, and teachers oversee pupils' departure at the end of the day to ensure that they leave the site safely.
- 62 Much work has been carried out in recent years to improve the school's procedures to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress and then use the information thus gleaned in order to guide teachers' planning. Overall the procedures are satisfactory but they are not yet used sufficiently consistently throughout the school to ensure that all pupils are achieving their potential.
- 63 Starting with commercial tests when pupils enter the school in Year 9, there is a clearly mapped out cycle for monitoring and reviewing pupils' progress across the full range of subjects. Pupils, parents and form tutors meet twice a year on Review Days, when the timetable is collapsed and each individual has a one-to-one interview with their form tutor which culminates in the setting of targets to achieve during the coming months. Using the results of national and other tests, a profile of each pupil is built up, which depicts their attainment levels so far and then uses this information, with the addition of a 'challenge factor', to forecast the levels that they should achieve in GCSE examinations. These individual results are then used to produce a profile of each teaching group in order to raise the teacher's awareness of the potential of each pupil in the group. The results of the monitoring also mean that it is clear if a pupil is falling behind predictions in one or more subjects at which point an 'Achievement Alert' is issued and that individual is even more closely monitored.
- 64 There is clear guidance for teachers about how to use the assessment information to enhance learning but not all departments have a clear understanding about how to assess pupils' work consistently in the first place. The result of this is that, for example, in mathematics, science, art, history and physical education assessment is carried out in a very thorough manner with teachers using available data gained from marking pupils' work, carrying out regular checks in lessons and adapting the work according to different pupils' strengths and areas for improvement. However, in design and technology teachers' assessments of pupils' standards of work are in some instances exaggerated and in others too stringent while in information and communication technology teachers' assessments are, again, unreliable; in English some teachers assess work very well whereas others seldom do so. This variation across and within subjects, together with some departments' unwillingness or misunderstanding about how to interpret the information presented to them, means that the school does not yet have in place sufficiently secure systems to identify

which pupils are not achieving as well as they might and then to use the information to guide curriculum planning and the strategic direction that the school should take.

- 65 The work of pupils with special educational needs is very well monitored on a day to day basis. All statutory requirements are met with respect to termly and annual reviews and school is fully conversant with the new requirements for additional provision. Almost all parents are very closely involved in the support of their children and appreciate the work that the school is doing in helping pupils to play a full part in school life.

Sixth form

- 66 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance in the sixth form are very good. An electronic system registers students in and out of school, and teacher's record attendance in lessons. Information is fed back to tutors who take appropriate action. Attendance arrangements are flexible but all students are expected to attend all lessons, their personal tutorials and the weekly assembly. The home/school agreement, to be signed by students, parents and tutors, clearly sets out these obligations. Whilst attendance in the sixth form is not analysed independently, the good attendance in lessons, observed during the inspection, would suggest that procedures are effective.
- 67 The procedures for advice, support and guidance in the sixth form are good. There is a well-organised programme of informative events for Year 11 students who wish to move on into the sixth form. A 'show-case' evening is followed by personal interviews and the opportunity for 'taster sessions' in the subjects and courses available. Most students feel they are given helpful advice on what to study. Students entering the sixth form benefit from a two-day induction course that provides further guidance, and continued support is provided through a well-structured tutorial system. Students attend tutorials weekly and the small group size facilitates good individual support. A well-devised two-year programme effectively monitors attendance, some aspects of academic progress, key skills and careers research, as well as providing pastoral care. Staffing is restricted to a dedicated team of tutors to help assure the quality of student support. A satisfactory careers programme begins in Year 12 and concentrates principally on higher education, since this is the route followed by most students. Presentations are given for those considering a 'gap year', whilst students intending to move straight into work are supported by the Careers Service, who are present in school three days per week. Although those students on vocational course benefit from periods of work experience, there is no organised provision of this for other members of the sixth form. Better links with Further Education would be beneficial for a number of students. A high proportion of students returning the questionnaire did not feel well informed about careers. This would suggest a need to self-evaluate the quality of provision.
- 68 Overall, the schools use of assessment data to monitor the academic performance and progress of students is unsatisfactory and a high proportion of students who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, do not feel well informed about how well they are doing. There is no clear policy on, or monitoring of, departmental assessment processes, and although they are generally satisfactory, there is some variation in quality. For example, it is particularly good in physics where there are high standards of marking linked to A level grades and where there is well structured monitoring; it is less than satisfactory in English because of inconsistencies across the department, and in art, where insufficient assessment and diagnosis take place. However, almost all departments set target grades for students, and there is good

individual support for their learning needs. The school uses data provided by the local education authority to forecast grades, and tutors monitor progress, relative to these, twice per year in both year groups. More use needs to be made of national benchmarks and more information needs to be made available to departments to ensure a whole-school system is in place.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 69 Parents view the school in a generally positive light, although the percentage return to the inspection questionnaire was much reduced this time compared with last. However, the school does itself regularly question parents about its performance and so many may feel that they have sufficient opportunity to air their views direct, rather than through a third party. The questionnaire certainly indicates that parents feel comfortable approaching the school if they have any queries, and also that the great majority of their children enjoy attending the school. The school has a good reputation in the surrounding area and many members of staff send their children to the school, which is a good indicator of their support for it. At the meeting held prior to the inspection, parents were particularly positive about the pastoral support offered to pupils as they transfer from middle to high school and then throughout their time at Shelley. However, some parents voiced concerns about whether all teachers expect enough of their children, and a surprising number do not consider that the school works closely with them. Inspection evidence shows that some parents' feelings, that their children are not being given sufficiently challenging work, have some validity but that the staff try hard to work in partnership with parents.
- 70 The quality of information provided for parents is good. The two prospectuses, one for the main school and one for the sixth form, clearly set out the school's values and expectations and contain much useful information, including the different methods through which the school keeps in touch with parents. The governors' annual report provides a good retrospective view of the past year. Throughout the year, on a monthly basis, the school issues a well-produced and lively newsletter 'First Friday' which is a good mixture of pupils' work, interviews with members of staff, information about events and also good guidance for parents about, for instance, what the 'Prior Attainment' charts in pupils' planners actually mean. This is also the channel through which the school feeds back the results of its questioning of parents' opinions, and explains what action it will take in order to improve things. Teaching staff provide parents with appropriate amounts of information about what their children will be learning and this is then summarised at the end of the year in pupils' records of achievement. These written reports have been improved since the time of the previous inspection and now give a clear indicator of pupils' levels of attainment and targets for improvement in each subject.
- 71 Twice a year parents have the opportunity to discuss with form tutors their children's progress, and these review meetings are well attended. Parents and staff vary in the use that they make of pupils' planners as a means of communication, but there is evidence that they are used to good effect by some families. The school keeps parents suitably informed about concerns, or cause for celebration, while at the same time encouraging pupils to become increasingly independent and to cope, within reason, with their own difficulties. Parents are very supportive about, for instance, funding their children's extra-curricular activities and collecting them from sports events, and also play their part in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The Parents Social Committee raises useful funds through a variety of events, which have most recently been used to good effect for staging in the drama theatre, video

cameras and a new school minibus. School staff and parents have built up a good relationship over the years, that enhances the quality of education available for pupils.

- 72 The school complies fully with the requirement to involve parents in the decisions made about their children who have special educational needs. All but a few are closely involved. Parents expressed their gratitude at the inspection meeting, for their close relationships with the school. Several transition reviews were observed during the inspection in which pupils' career aspirations and possibilities were discussed. Both pupils and parents report the good progress that is made through these close links. Pupils' new targets and modified individual education plans are discussed fully with both pupils and parents, and are taken on board in a good spirit of partnership.
- 73 Parents with sixth form students have similarly positive views about the school to those held by parents who only have children in the main school, but a large percentage of the returns mentioned concerns about lessons cancelled at short notice. A good percentage of students returned their questionnaire with some quite negative views expressed but when inspectors spoke with students during the week, the great majority were very positive, yet appropriately critical, about the courses they have chosen to pursue, and the support offered to them by their teachers, which includes teachers providing extra lessons to ensure that students receive enough tuition to enable them to complete their courses. Students were particularly negative about the range of enrichment activities that is available to them, and school staff agree that these are not good enough. The reduction in such activities has been a direct result of the school's straightened financial circumstances and the demands made on teachers by the newly introduced AS level courses. The school hopes to be able to increase the opportunities for students in future years.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

- 74 Shelley High School and Sixth Form centre was previously inspected in 1997 when it was judged to be a very good school. The inspection identified two areas for development; to introduce more coherence to the management structure and to the programme for the development of pupils' skills in ICT. Since then the school has met with some difficulties including the sudden discovery of a deficit in the budget of approximately £302,000. A recovery plan was agreed with the Local Education Authority that is due to finish in 2004. Financial constraints in the intervening years have resulted in a restriction on school development and the school has done well to have sustained standards, and the support of parents and pupils. There have been some changes in staffing particularly at senior level and the leadership of the school passed to a new headteacher in September 2001 after seventeen years of leadership from the previous headteacher.
- 75 The overall quality of leadership and management of Shelley High is good. In the short period of time that he has been in post the new headteacher has acquired a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Shelley High is his third headship and he brings significant experience of leadership with him. This is evident in the actions he has taken in the two terms prior to this inspection. He has consulted extensively with staff, governors, parents and pupils and has formulated some key areas for the educational development of the school. Amongst these is a review of the behaviour policy, an application to the Department of Education and Skills to allow pupils to sit for national tests at the end of Year 8, preparation for an application for specialist school status, the implementation of a school uniform to

replace the school dress code, and plans to improve the accommodation for the sixth form. He has identified areas of particular difficulty such as religious education and given intensive support including teaching in the subject himself. His plans include the appointment of a co-ordinator for ICT, a key area for development identified in this report. He is enthusiastic in articulating his focus of 'making a good school into an excellent school' and is determined to view the full inspection of the school as a positive approach to improvement and as an opportunity for change.

- 76 The governors are keen and very supportive of the school. Many have been linked to the school over several years through having children as pupils in the school. Some of them have close links within the Shelley Family of Schools and other key organisations operating in the closely knit local community. Attendance at meetings and governor training events is good. There is an appropriate committee structure and meetings are held regularly. Personal objectives have been negotiated with the headteacher and the chair of governors joins the senior team as a member of the school's strategy group. Some governors are linked to specific areas of the school such as special educational needs and the development of literacy skills, enabling them to observe the performance of these aspects of the school more closely. In recent years the work of the governing body has been primarily focussed on maintaining the running of the school within the constraints of a serious financial deficit. The school development plan lacks clarity and has not been based on rigorous review. In some areas the governors have failed to follow up concerns raised in curriculum meetings about weaknesses in school performance. Minutes of meetings indicate a tendency to react to external factors such as the curriculum changes in the sixth form rather than a clear prioritisation of educational developments specific to the needs of Shelley High. Overall, the effectiveness of the governors is satisfactory with some weaknesses in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities; ICT requirements of the National Curriculum are not met; there is no daily act of collective worship for all pupils and requirements for teaching religious education are not fully met. Governors have not taken sufficient action since the last inspection in addressing the weaknesses identified as the key issues for improvement.

- 77 The senior leadership team has changed significantly since the last inspection and plans to restructure for September 2002 are already being implemented by the headteacher. The current arrangements provide good leadership across the school. Job descriptions are clearly defined and individuals within the team respond well to the responsibilities assigned to them. The schools' strategy group meets regularly and new ideas are debated with input from other colleagues in the school. Recent concerns have focussed strongly on provision in the sixth form and for pupils with special educational needs. It is not clear how this group prioritises areas of educational need. There is little evidence of rigorous critical analysis of different areas of school performance based on data collected in classrooms, scrutiny of pupils' work, pupil and parent questionnaires and other monitoring systems. There is a cycle for reviewing the school development plan that is appropriate yet the effectiveness of the impact on school improvement is less clear. For example, the provision for ICT is judged by the previous inspection to be unsatisfactory and five years later it is again judged to be unsatisfactory. Similarly, the programme for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness was criticised in the last report and it remains an issue. Although the school is committed to equality of opportunity, there is no consistent monitoring of provision in different subjects to ensure that all policies are in place.
- 78 The middle management structure in the school involves curriculum leaders, subject heads, staff with responsibility for the pastoral welfare of pupils and many with specific areas of responsibility across the school such as inclusion and careers. The quality of leadership and management of this group of staff varies from good to unsatisfactory. Leadership is good in two of the core subjects of mathematics and science but is unsatisfactory in English. There is a clear link between the underachievement of some pupils in English and the rate of development of literacy skills, particularly reading, across the school, and a failure to monitor effectively. In mathematics there is very good monitoring of teaching which leads to effective action to ensure continuous improvement and in science the procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils are very good. The management of ICT is also unsatisfactory and this has a significant negative impact on pupils' learning across the school because the skills of ICT are not sufficiently developed to enhance learning in other subjects. The co-ordination and leadership of religious education has been unsatisfactory and pupils in Year 9 are not experiencing their entitlement. The spiritual appreciation of pupils is restricted by this weak provision and the lack of a daily act of collective worship. There are weaknesses in the leadership in art with a temporary appointment in place for the last two years resulting in a cautious approach to development of the subject. In all other areas leadership and management is at least satisfactory and often good. There are very high levels of commitment to improvement by all staff in history, music, business studies and physical education. The school has worked hard to improve the quality since the last inspection by producing useful documents such as the middle managers' handbook but there remains inconsistency across the school. Pastoral staff provide satisfactory leadership but their role in monitoring the academic progress of pupils and the overall quality and breadth of experience of each pupil needs further development.
- 79 Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are excellent. Close liaison with subject teachers benefits all. Subject teachers are made aware of specific needs and how individual education plans will impact on their learning in general lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to make learning accessible through updating pupils' individual education plans and maintain close contact with the co-ordinator through regular meetings. Very good monitoring of individual progress occurs on a regular basis. However, pupils overall success at the end of year 11 is not reviewed sufficiently to help long term

modification of planning. A team of valued and well trained teaching assistants are close colleagues, and work successfully in lessons to help pupils make progress. A very good feature is the training teachers and teaching assistants receive, for example on the teaching of reading, ICT and support of pupils with behavioural difficulties. The task now is to help teachers manage the teaching and improve the learning of those pupils who are of below average attainment but not listed as having special educational needs. The school has expert experience of multi-sensory approaches to help pupils and this expertise needs to be shared more widely.

- 80 The management of pupils with English as an additional language is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures early identification of their needs. If these needs are perceived as acute they are placed on the register of pupils with special educational needs and extra support is made available. At present there are no pupils on the register who need extra support for English as an additional language.
- 81 Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory when the constraints of the deficit budget are considered. The school has moved forward on both key issues, and has generally sustained standards and Shelley's good reputation with parents and pupils. There is a clear opportunity for further, and more rapid, improvement with the recent changes in the management of the school.

The strategic use of resources

- 82 Soon after the publication of the previous inspection report, the school was faced with a totally unexpected and large financial deficit. Working in close collaboration with the local education authority, the governors, managers and financial administrator have succeeded in developing, and sticking to, an agreed programme of repayment. This financial albatross has hung around the necks of all those involved in the school's management for five years, with two more years to run. It has meant that they have not been able to put in place curriculum developments or on-going refurbishment of the building as they would have wished to do. It is a credit to all those connected with the school that they have succeeded in moving towards a balancing of the books, while maintaining staff, pupil and parents' morale.
- 83 The school's strategic financial planning is satisfactory as is the way in which it applies the principles of best value. The development plan is relatively short term, is not strictly costed and the success criteria are more related to activities being completed than to improvements in educational standards. However, it is clear from the way in which the school is weathering the storm of financial deficit while maintaining high standards that its educational priorities are soundly based on financial reality. Staff are consulted about what they think should be the school's priorities, and the results of parental questionnaires are also used to direct the managers' strategic thinking. Office staff regularly review the value gained from contracts and have recently, for instance, changed that for grounds maintenance in order to achieve a better quality service for the same outlay as before. What the school needs to do now is to be much more rigorous in its evaluation of the educational outcomes of its financial decisions, and more focussed in basing its spending decisions on precise educational targets.

- 84 There are efficient administrative systems in place to help the school run smoothly and ensure that the majority of teachers' time is spent on teaching. Departments are responsible for their own budgets and the bursar keeps them, senior managers and governors, regularly informed about levels of spending. Issues raised in the most recent audit report, conducted in autumn 1999, have been dealt with and none of them was of major significance. Indeed, the report notes 'considerable improvements' in the area of budgetary monitoring and control, in comparison with that at the time of the 1997 audit report. Data about, for instance, finances, attendance and pupils' progress are kept electronically so that they are readily accessible and easy to add to. The funds allocated to the school for specific purposes, such as those to enhance the provision for gifted and talented pupils and those who might otherwise be excluded from education, are used well. This can be demonstrated by the very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs which results in them making very good progress during their time at the school. As extra funding has arrived, so has the school adapted the curriculum for more vulnerable pupils so that, for example, a considerable number now benefit from extended work experience which helps them to realise the importance of studying standard subjects while in school.
- 85 The staffing of the school has some unsatisfactory aspects. In most subjects there is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum and the school's needs. However, the teaching of religious education involves sixteen staff, none of whom are subject specialists. Also, the teaching of information and communication technology involves sixteen staff, a number of which have relatively restricted skills and experience. The secondment from school of the head of the art department for an initial two terms has been extended over time and is now well into its third year. Whilst the temporary department head has worked hard to provide continuity of leadership and management of the subject, the development of the art department has been hindered by this uncertain and unsatisfactory arrangement. Secretarial and office staff work hard to provide good support and contribute to the smooth running of the school administration despite some shortage caused by the deficit budget.
- 86 Where necessary, the school is able to rely on a trusted and regular pool of supply teachers. Staff who are new to the school are briefed well and newly qualified teachers follow a good programme of induction to support their work and development. Arrangements for the professional development of staff support the school's development plan and training needs identified through Performance Management. The school has good arrangements in place for its partnership with Leeds University as a provider of initial teacher training. The beginning teachers follow a well-planned programme of professional studies and are effectively supervised by experienced staff during their placements at the school.
- 87 Funding for learning resources is below average and their availability for teaching purposes is unsatisfactory. In a significant number of subjects, particularly mathematics, modern foreign languages, religious education and art, there are insufficient books. In the library the ratio of books to pupils is unsatisfactory although the books are modern and well kept and the library itself is very attractive. The ratio of modern computers to pupils indicates that pupils have access to fewer computers than is the case in most schools and because the transmission of information across the network is slow the computers are less useful than they could be. In science, religious education and music there is insufficient ICT equipment and in the ICT department the situation is unsatisfactory.

- 88 In modern foreign languages there are good audio and video systems in classrooms; in music equipment levels, including keyboards and percussion, are good. The physical education department is well equipped and in history the availability of books and other equipment is good; it is satisfactory in geography. In art lack of specialist equipment such as printing equipment limits choice for pupils. The design and technology department is well equipped, particularly with ICT equipment, but some consumable materials are in short supply.
- 89 There is a clear and effective procedure for allocating funds to curriculum areas. Allocations for ICT and the library are made first, following this departments receive a sum based on pupil numbers with a weighting for practical subjects and the time needed to teach the subject. Allocations are reviewed by the Finance Committee, on which each Head of Department is represented, and scenarios in which weightings have been altered have been assessed. Contingency funds are available to support special cases such as new courses; there is also a contingency fund to support cross-curricular developments. The departments receive funds in two tranches, for the lower school at the beginning of June, and when sixth form numbers are known in October. This procedure is well organised.
- 90 Accommodation is good overall and adequately meets the needs of the curriculum. The single storey building is spacious and generally clean. There is little evidence of graffiti around the school. Most subject areas are well catered for, allowing the curriculum to be delivered effectively. Several curriculum areas, however, have small and inappropriately designed rooms with limited circulation space, particularly in mathematics, design and technology, and some science areas. Links with the local business community have produced positive results with the sponsorship of practical teaching areas for food technology. Display areas are well used across the school adding to the positive learning environment in many curriculum areas. In the near future, as the school roll continues to expand, some curriculum areas will come under pressure, with additional accommodation required.
- 91 The building is 27 years old, with a need for refurbishment and decoration obvious in some well-used areas. The school has established a priority list for dealing with these issues, with plans to decorate Year 10 and 11 social areas and some classrooms and to upgrade lighting in subject areas. Health and safety issues are regularly checked. External areas in need of urgent attention include the outdoor physical education areas, with drainage problems, and the main driveway. The buildings are well managed by the senior caretaker who is responsible for repairs and maintenance across the site. A significant element of the maintenance is carried out 'in house'; an important cost saving exercise in the light of the deficit budget burden carried by the school.

Sixth form

- 92 Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. There is good reflection of the school's aims and values in the life of the sixth form and the school is fully committed to equality of opportunity for all students. In common with sixth forms nationally the school has faced the management of many unprecedented curricular changes since the last inspection in 1997. The enhanced and broad curriculum is well managed by subject teachers. In a constantly changing situation the school has managed to hold its ground and increase the number of pupils entering the sixth form. Standards in examinations have been sustained close to the national average within a context of more flexible admission requirements. The increased pressure of AS levels has been satisfactorily managed but the separate provision of key skills and general

studies taught by staff, some of whom are perceived as having less knowledge of the individual topics than the students themselves, has been resented. No students take general studies in Year 13. The separate provision of key skills is not valued sufficiently by students who see themselves repeating experiences at a lower level than that of their main subjects. There has been insufficient monitoring of the quality of provision in these areas and in others such as the personal, social and health education of students, where students report a lack of guidance relating particularly to sex education. Relationships are very good and students appreciate the care and guidance they are given by tutors and subject teachers. However, the exchange of information on students' progress is not close enough between tutors and subject staff for all to get a full picture. The procedures for monitoring and supporting student's academic progress are unsatisfactory. Pupils are given good advice on the nature of sixth form life when they apply but, in spite of the good care and support they receive, not enough take adult responsibility for governing the common life of the sixth form and managing its social areas. Few take a mature view of their impact as role models on the life of the main school.

- 93 Governors are generally effective in their role, although they do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities in religious education and the daily act of collective worship in the sixth form. The sixth form is the focus of a strand of the school development plan, although budget restraints have prevented the implementation of some of the targets. In these circumstances the school has been unable to move forward sufficiently on some of the issues raised in the last inspection report. In particular the weaknesses in the provision for ICT continue to have a negative impact on student's learning in several subject areas in the sixth form since students lack regular opportunities to develop skills of independent study through using internet access and other applications of ICT. There has been satisfactory leadership from governors and senior staff in shaping the educational direction of the sixth form. However, there are unsatisfactory aspects in the way in which the school has monitored and evaluated performance in the sixth form, diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses and taking effective action to secure improvements. There is a real opportunity in recent appointments made at senior level in the school and in the co-ordination of the sixth form, to ensure a more focused approach based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all areas of provision in the sixth form, to ensure continued success in recruiting students and raising standards.
- 94 The strategic use of resources in the sixth form is satisfactory. The school offers a wide range of subjects and, although class sizes are unusually large in some areas such as law, it is also prepared to run much smaller groups, such as in French or music, in order to provide for the needs of students. In one exceptional case, the school is running a highly effective course for a single student, using funds that are specifically designated for that student's support. The costs related to running the sixth form are precisely identified and monitored in order to ensure its viability and make certain that it is not taking funds away from the main school. Due to the school's financial circumstances, planned developments in the sixth form have not progressed as swiftly as the staff and governors would have liked. However, their decision to spend on advertising its facilities to a wider public has proved successful in attracting more students to join the sixth form, thereby increasing the school's income and, thus, the possibilities of running the broad range of courses now on offer to students who have differing aspirations and needs. As in the main school, the management pays satisfactory attention to the principles of best value.
- 95 Well-qualified and experienced teachers generally teach sixth form courses. The match of teachers to the demands of the course is excellent in French and very good

in design and technology, mathematics, chemistry and geography. It is good in all other subjects except history, where it is satisfactory. Though ICT is taught by a well-qualified teacher, it is unfortunate that he is available to students for only two days per week. Staffing for English is good, though ten different teachers teaching the A-level course causes problems of co-ordinating delivery. The arrangements for the professional development of teachers are generally good. However, teachers of modern foreign languages have been unable to attend the training for A/S and A2 courses provided by the examination board.

- 96 The availability of resources for learning for post 16 courses is unsatisfactory. The ratio of modern computers to pupils indicates that pupils have access to fewer computers than is the case in most schools and because the transmission of information across the network is slow the computers are less useful than they could be. Pupils studying physics and other subjects in the sixth form do not have sufficient access to computers in a quiet area in which they can study because computer rooms are frequently used for teaching. There is insufficient datalogging equipment for use in teaching biology and physics.
- 97 The ratio of books to pupils in the library is unsatisfactory and the availability of books for sixth form use in physical education, physics and art is limited, although some subjects, for example business studies, sociology and geography keep a good stock of reference books in their teaching areas. Books for biology do not meet the needs of the course that is being taught although there are plans to buy more books next year. The design and technology department is well equipped but some consumable materials are in short supply. Some laboratory equipment for biology is old, water baths for example, and will soon need to be replaced. Nature trails and ponds are a valuable resource for biology and are well used. A well organised procedure is used across the school to allocate funds for resources to departments.
- 98 Accommodation is good and meets the needs of the sixth form curriculum. The areas used by the sixth form incorporate discrete sixth form teaching areas and study areas and the accommodation shared with the whole school. There are variations in the provision of specialist rooms: art has two additional post 16 studios, science has discrete laboratory provision, with several subjects such humanities and music, providing study areas\research areas, often with additional ICT facilities. Some AS groups are too large to teach in specialist rooms provided, with subjects such as chemistry and sociology having to utilise non-specialist rooms. Access to computers is variable, as pressure on the school and discrete sixth form ICT facilities is increasing rapidly.
- 99 The large sixth form applies considerable pressure on the small rooms available for their social use and for collective and individual learning. The common room is small, with the quiet study room consistently overcrowded during the working day. As the school roll continues to expand, pressure will build in some areas regarding the suitability and quality of sixth form teaching spaces. The buildings are well managed by the senior caretaker who is responsible for repairs and maintenance across the site. A significant element of the maintenance is carried out 'in house'; an important cost saving exercise in the light of the deficit budget burden carried by the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 100 In order to maintain and develop further the standards of attainment and achievement, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:

1. Ensure greater consistency of provision in English by:
 - bringing the standard of all teaching to the level of the best
 - developing the strategies to support pupils' reading skills
 - reviewing the procedures for assessing pupils' work
 - rigorously monitoring the performance of the department to ensure a cohesive experience for all pupilsParagraphs 101 – 110

2. Improve the provision for ICT by:
 - reviewing the curriculum to provide a more coherent and continuous programme for all pupils
 - improving the quality of teaching of ICT and ensuring specialist provision for all pupils
 - managing the different experiences pupils have across the curriculum, so as to provide continuity and a well managed programme to raise standards and improve progress
 - bringing the ratio of computers to pupils closer to the average and thereby providing regular and frequent access by pupils to computers
 - providing all pupils with the statutory requirement in ICT at all stagesParagraphs 156 - 162

3. Improve the provision for religious education by:
 - increasing the time available in Year 9 to provide a more coherent and continuous programme for all pupils
 - ensuring specialist provision for all pupils in Year 9 to 11
 - providing all pupils with the statutory requirement in religious education in the sixth form
 - extending the role of the subject in the development of pupils' spiritual awarenessParagraphs 187 - 196

4. Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating all areas of school performance particularly:
 - teaching and learning in all subjects so that the overall quality rises to that of the very best in the school
 - the provision for pupils' spiritual development so that there is a clearly planned programme reinforcing pupils' experiences across all subjects
 - the inconsistencies of pupils' experiences in English, religious education and ICT

and link the information gained to a more coherent approach to development planning:

- with clear links between whole-school and departmental plans
- ensuring that plans show clearly how future improvements will be implemented by explicit indications of targets, costs, time-scales, responsibilities, success criteria and staff development needs
- improving the rigour of review by collecting a wider range of information from all areas of school performance
- placing the school development priorities securely within the framework of a financial budget that balances the need to recover the longstanding deficit while continuing to support educational priorities
- providing training for governors to ensure they fully understand their statutory duties and their role in monitoring and evaluating performance across all areas of the school

Paragraphs 28 – 39, 55 – 58, 101 – 110, 156 – 162, 187 – 192, 74 - 81

5. Make rigorous use of assessment data including national benchmarks:

- to identify possible areas of strength and weakness at whole-school, subject and classroom levels
- to improve and extend the system for setting clear targets for progress for all pupils based on these analyses
- to use assessment information more effectively to determine the needs of individual pupils and direct the teaching towards meeting those needs.

Paragraphs 62 - 65

Sixth form

In order to maintain and develop further the standards of attainment and achievement, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:

1. Ensure better use of assessment data to support the progress of students by:

- comparing the grades of students at entry with those achieved one and two years later to identify underachievement and any value added
- strengthening communication between pastoral tutors and subject teachers to provide a fuller picture of progress and achievement
- formalising arrangements or systems for sharing assessment information

Paragraphs 68, 92 - 93

2. Monitor teaching and learning more closely to ensure that best practice is shared widely by:

- observing lessons within subjects and tutorial periods in Years 12 and 13
- recording the features of very good and excellent practice to develop full records of what succeeds and what does not.
- sharing these examples with all staff across the sixth form

Paragraphs 92 – 94, 33 - 39

3. Provide better opportunities to use ICT by:

- increasing overall provision and access to computers,
- identifying opportunities within courses where some core skills components can be taught

Paragraphs 33 - 39

4. Enable the sixth form to take more responsibility for its daily life and its leadership role within the school by:
 - developing responsible student roles within the sixth form and in the main school
 - raising expectations about the level of care of the social areas so that they are managed effectively
 - involving students in the development planning for the sixth form.
- Paragraphs 25 – 27, 92 - 93

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 9 - 11	152
	Sixth form	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		79

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 -11							
Number	4	30	72	41	5	0	0
Percentage	3	20	47	27	3	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	6	22	35	15	1	0	0
Percentage	8	28	44	19	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than one percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y9 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1052	349
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	71	17

Special educational needs	Y9 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	54	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	101	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	53

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	171	169	340

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	108	127	126
	Girls	149	134	136
	Total	257	261	262
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (72)	77 (78)	77 (72)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (31)	51 (56)	44 (43)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	122	129	111
	Girls	147	142	127
	Total	269	271	238
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (72)	80 (83)	70 (79)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	42 (38)	57 (58)	34 (42)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (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	197	160	357

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	117	184	190
	Girls	102	152	161
	Total	219	336	351
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	61 (64)	94 (95)	98 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	44.6
	National	39.0

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	63	69	260

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	16.6	19.32	17.82	1.60	2.25	1.89
National	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	17	88
	National		n/a

International Bacculaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Bacculaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	5
Indian	1
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	1,364
Any other minority ethnic group	17

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	31	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	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: Y9 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	84.19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

Education support staff: Y9 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	699

Deployment of teachers: Y9 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	84
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y9 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25
Key Stage 4	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	3,775,844
Total expenditure	3,720,013
Expenditure per pupil	2,797
Balance brought forward from previous year	-257,019
Balance carried forward to next year	-201,188

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,401
Number of questionnaires returned	111

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	42	7	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	40	8	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	59	11	3	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	48	24	5	2
The teaching is good.	23	59	8	2	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	50	12	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	43	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	5	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	20	53	13	7	7
The school is well led and managed.	20	52	7	2	19
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	54	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	57	9	3	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 satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teachers have sound subject knowledge that effectively helps pupils to build up their own knowledge and understanding.
- Relationships are very good; pupils show enthusiasm for the subject in most classes.
- There is a shared commitment by the team to improve.
- Standards in speaking and listening are above average.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment including marking and the use of assessment information to plan appropriate work for pupils.
- Monitoring the work of the department in order to ensure a cohesive experience for all pupils.
- Closer monitoring of pupils' progress in order to identify underachievement.
- Developing pupils' reading in a systematic manner to incorporate a wider range of literary experience.

101 Standards in English on entry are above those expected nationally. Standards achieved in the national tests taken in Year 6 are reflected by the school's internal testing of spelling and comprehension on admission to Year 9. These tests indicate that standards on entry have been rising steadily over the last three years but also reveal the range of attainment is very wide. Standards in English at the age of 14 in the 2001 national tests, where the proportion of pupils achieving both level 5 and level 6 is above national expectations, are above average when compared to schools nationally but average when compared to similar schools. There is a difference in performance between girls and boys that reflects the national picture, with a greater proportion of girls achieving the higher grades than boys. Since the last inspection, the general trend in standards between 1998 and 2001 has been maintained. Inspection evidence indicates an inconsistent picture between groups of pupils, but overall confirms that standards in English are broadly in line with national expectations at the age of 14. Achievement at the age of 14 is satisfactory overall based upon the results from the Key Stage 3 tests. However, standards seen on inspection indicate that achievement in the current Year 9 is not uniform across all teaching groups, with some pupils underachieving with respect to their previous attainment. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs represents good achievement up to the end of Year 9 relative to their achievement on entry.

102 In the 2001 English language GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C is slightly above national average and slightly above average when compared to similar schools. The number of pupils gaining A* - G is close to the national average and girls significantly out perform boys which is a reflection of the national picture. More girls achieved the highest grades A*/A than girls nationally. The trend over the last three years has been steady. In the 2001 English literature GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C is above average when compared to schools nationally. The number of pupils gaining A* - G is close to the national average. Again, girls significantly out perform boys. However, this difference has reduced considerably as a direct result of the department's strategies focussed on raising

boys' achievement. Achievement at the age of 16 in both English and English literature is satisfactory. There is an inconsistent picture with pupils in some groups making very good gains in achievement and others making barely satisfactory progress. Close analysis of GCSE Year 11 folders reveals that the pupils' achievement compared with their predicted grades varies across teaching groups. In some groups pupils are achieving in line or better than their predicted grades, whilst in others pupils are seriously underachieving. The school's own assessment system confirms that nearly one fifth of all pupils in the A* - C range are underachieving by more than one grade. There is also considerable evidence of pupils who are working below GCSE grade C not reaching their full potential based upon their previous standards at the age of 14.

103 Standards in speaking and listening at the age of 14 are above average. In a lesson where pupils worked enthusiastically in groups they discussed the characters in the play 'Macbeth'. As a result of the high quality discussion the pupils wrote realistic stage directions for their scripts. In another lesson on 'Macbeth' pupils were able to read and select the appropriate quotations to support their answers. In this lesson pupils' of all abilities read and understood Shakespearian language describing 'sleep' and were able to see the relevance of some phrases today. Standards in reading are in line with expectations at the age of 14 but there are inconsistencies in the provision for reading between groups as reading is not monitored.

104 The standard of writing seen during the inspection indicates that attainment at the age of 14 is in line with expectations for girls but below expectations for boys. Boys are still writing short pieces, frequently marred by grammatical and spelling errors. The department has employed strategies to raise standards for boys but these are not used consistently across teaching groups with the result that standards are variable. A good example of improving boys writing was in Year 9 where pupils were writing about rocks. A boy in this group wrote thoughtfully, yet clearly expressing his understanding of poetical devices including alliteration:

'I am rock,
Brutally forged,
But beautifully shaped,
Captured the seas waves
In it's hard rugged form,
Thinking. Waiting'.

In some classes pupils write confidently in a wide range of styles that thoroughly reflect the course requirements. However, in other groups writing tasks are short, unfinished, unrelated and fail to provide continuity and progression. As a result little learning takes place.

105 Standards in speaking and listening at the age of 16 are above average. In a very good lesson on 'An Inspector Calls' pupils achieved very sensitive and empathetic interpretations. A lower attaining pupil who struggled to express herself orally, made a realistic and lively interpretation of the character of Mrs. Birling. This was a truly inclusive lesson where contributions from all pupils were really valued and as a result huge leaps in learning took place. Generally, the high levels of insight expressed by pupils orally in lessons, are not always reflected in their written work. Standards in reading at the age of 16 are in line with expectations. In one poetry lesson pupils relied too heavily on the teacher's preparation of a statement sheet in order to find parallels in two poems. Most pupils do not read for pleasure nor do they borrow books from the library or use websites regularly for research. The standards in reading are

inconsistent between groups. There are insufficient strategies to promote good reading habits to all groups, which results in pupils' reading experience relying on variable teacher input. At the age of 16, pupils' attainment in writing is close to and frequently slightly above national average. Presentation is often excellent and shows a high level of commitment to the subject. There is evidence of pupils of all abilities drafting and redrafting their work and using ICT as a tool for improving presentation. Higher attaining pupils are producing pieces of writing of exceptionally high quality and are achieving the highest grades in GCSE examinations. However, there is a huge difference in standards between groups. Some teachers are focusing on the outcomes of writing rather than the process, and this is one of the reasons that the transition between GCSE and 'AS' level is slow. Some higher attaining pupils' work sensitively explored the Shakespearian text and showed an awareness of literary criticism. On the other hand, the work of average attaining pupils indicates that they are highly reliant on worksheets, dictated notes and heavily annotated texts. The responses to literature are generally of a higher quality than either the creative writing or the response to media. The strategy of submitting a written rather than an oral response to literature does not allow pupils to fulfil their full potential, as many pupils respond much more sensitively orally than in writing. Lower attaining pupils at both 14 and 16 years are still experiencing difficulty with accuracy in spelling and grammar which frequently affects the clarity of their writing and hinders understanding. This is much worse for pupils in some teaching groups than others, where marking is less effective and therefore improvement is slow.

- 106 Pupils' skills in literacy are above expectations when they enter the school and some subjects are making very effective contributions to further development of these skills. For instance, in art and history pupils are expected to use the learning resource centre for research and high standards of oral work are seen in English, history, art and geography. In some subjects there are many good examples of a range of writing for a variety of purpose. In history, pupils' knowledge and understanding is recorded using a range of techniques including magazine formats, letters, diaries and newspaper reports. There are too few opportunities for extended pieces of writing beyond English, history and science. Some subjects display, teach and test the spellings and understanding of specialist vocabulary, but the majority of subjects do not recognise the need to teach specific aspects of literacy development. Teaching of literacy and the implementation of the literacy strategy as an aid to more interactive teaching is excellent in some classes but very weak in others. The best practices are observed in history, chemistry, art and some English classes. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are generally good while standards of writing and reading are satisfactory but vary across a wide range. There is insufficient monitoring of the school literacy strategy to ensure consistent high quality across all subjects.
- 107 Teaching is satisfactory overall, with nearly half the lessons graded as good or better, and only one lesson graded unsatisfactory. Nearly all teachers display good subject knowledge but their expectations of the pupils are varied. Where expectations are high and pupils challenged by stimulating materials, huge gains in learning take place. The quality of teaching is inconsistent and this has a direct impact on pupils' learning. Where teaching is good, tasks are well structured, as in a Year 11 class studying newspaper headlines. Sharp, snappy headlines were produced by pupils working in groups and all pupils, including one with English as a second language, made good progress. There is insufficient opportunity for excellent teaching practices to be shared. The planning currently covers curriculum content but fails to incorporate assessment criteria and clearly defined learning objectives. These omissions have compounded the lack of continuity and progression between groups. Some teachers plan carefully for individual pupils, and address the needs of both the more able and

lower attaining pupils', unfortunately this is also not consistent practice. The department planning is better for pupils aged 16 but for pupils aged 14, it does not embrace the national literacy strategy or provide a cohesive and comprehensive framework to support the work of all teachers in the department.

- 108 The marking and assessing of pupils' work varies from group to group. Some teachers mark regularly to identify weaknesses, in other groups this is not the case. Some teachers offer lengthy diagnostic comments whilst others simply tick the work. There is no consistent approach to day to day marking despite a departmental policy. The good practice used by some teachers of sharing assessment criteria with pupils, and using this shared understanding is having an impact on learning. There is little evidence of the use of previous assessment data to influence lesson planning and this is a contributory factor to underachievement in some groups. Most pupils behave well in lessons. Warm, businesslike relationships are generally a feature of English lessons. In lessons that are well planned, the pupils respond in a very mature manner and concentrate well. There is a direct link between very good attitudes and very good teaching. A good example was in a lesson on Ted Hughes' poem 'Work and Play' where the teacher's careful planning enabled pupils to read empathetically and produce more sophisticated interpretations.
- 109 The management of the English department is unsatisfactory. The head of department generates enthusiasm and a love of literature that inspires colleagues and pupils. However, the department lacks clear direction and overview and this has resulted in an inconsistent approach to teaching and learning. The management of the transfer of pupils from middle school is weak and pupils lose momentum, for example when they were observed rereading the same texts. The department has failed to analyse pupils' attainment on entry and, as a result, there is no clear understanding of pupils learning needs. The good practice of sharing assessment criteria with pupils is inconsistent between groups. Pupils frequently are unable to express an understanding of their own learning and what they need to do in order to improve. Homework is set and marked regularly and, in some groups, is of a high quality which extends learning. The department has no strategies to improve reading and this has an impact on standards of literacy not only in English but also in other areas of the curriculum. The role of coordination of Years 10 and 11 needs to be extended to include frequent monitoring of the GCSE course to ensure continuity and progression. At the time of the inspection pupils in six out of twelve groups were underachieving in comparison with their predicted GCSE grades. The head of department must ensure as a matter of urgency monitoring at all levels. This will include the monitoring of teaching, frequent scrutiny of pupils' work and tracking pupils' progress. A cohesive approach to the use of assessments and assessment data to inform and review planning needs developing to identify areas of underachievement.

- 110 There has been some improvement since the last inspection. The development of the use of ICT has begun and many pupils use the new facilities regularly, however, this is inconsistent between groups. The use of ICT needs to be written into the schemes and then monitored to ensure a good experience for all pupils. Book stocks are better but much more needs to be done in order to promote higher standards in reading. The library has a book stock much lower than national expectations. After a brief period of unsettled staffing the department is now in a position to consolidate and share its good practice. The team is well qualified, hardworking and shares a commitment to improve standards. This commitment needs clear direction in order to focus on raising standards in English for all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- the well above average standards attained by the end of Year 9.
- the well above average numbers of pupils gaining Grades A* to C in GCSE mathematics and statistics.
- the good teaching.

Areas for improvement

- the standards of attainment, quality, quantity and presentation of work in lower sets in all years.
- the consistency of the quality of marking and record keeping and its use in planning work for pupils.

- 111 Pupils enter the school with standards in mathematics that are above those expected nationally for their age although the range of attainment is very wide. There has been a steady rise in the attainment of pupils entering the school over recent years, and their numeracy skills are higher than their skills in literacy. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 standards are above average in comparison with all schools and, although average when compared with similar schools, results are very close to an above average grade. Standards have been maintained at a similar level since the last inspection. There is a very slight drop in standards in 2001. This is due to the breadth of prior attainment in that particular year group. Those with high attainment do particularly well and results in mathematics are better than results in English and science. Some teachers over estimated pupils' attainment in the teacher assessments in 2001, but this does not usually occur. The pattern of performance of boys and girls is similar.
- 112 Standards in GCSE examinations in mathematics have remained at a similar level over the last four years. In 2001 the average points score for pupils awarded GCSE grades is broadly in line with national data for all secondary schools. Well above average numbers of pupils attain grades A* to C although in the last four years this proportion is lower than in English and science. An above average number of pupils take the examination and achieve A* to G grades. The proportion of pupils awarded the higher grades of A* and A is nearly 5 per cent below the national figure for 2001. A significant number of pupils, particularly those who achieve E and D grades in GCSE examinations do not achieve well enough, when previous performance in national tests is taken into account. In 2001 pupils perform less well in mathematics than they do in their other subjects and the pattern of performance is similar for boys and girls.

- 113 Standards in GCSE statistics have varied over the past four years and are well above average in 2001. Few pupils ever attain grades less than A* to C. This GCSE course is only allocated half the teaching time of other subjects. It is provided to extend those pupils with high attainment in mathematics that can study independently and wish for a further challenge. The proportion of pupils awarded the higher grades of A* and A is nearly 14 per cent higher than the national figure for 2001. There is an imbalance in the number of boys and girls studying statistics with very low numbers of girls entered for the examination in 2001.
- 114 The standards of work seen in the current Year 9 show that attainment in mathematics is well above average. Pupils with average and above average attainment on entry to the school achieve well in all aspects of mathematics. They progress rapidly in algebra skills and manipulate formulae with confidence. Attainment in graphing skills and data handling is particularly high. Attainment in work in shape and space is above average; for example pupils use the trigonometry formulae to calculate angles and sides of right-angled triangles. Pupils develop a systematic approach to investigation work. Those with the highest attainment quickly attain levels in all aspects of mathematics that are equivalent or higher than a grade C in GCSE. Those with the lowest attainment and pupils with special educational needs, develop basic numeracy skills well. Some pupils with attainment that is just below average do not make sufficient progress in their learning. A significant proportion of pupils are poorly motivated, do not do enough work in lessons and work is often untidy and unfinished. Mental arithmetic skills are sufficient to support the work pupils are doing and do not impede learning.
- 115 The standards of work seen in Year 11 reflect the pattern set in Year 9. The pupils that are in higher mathematics groups make good progress in their learning in all aspects of mathematics, and in particular in algebra, data-handling and more complex statistics. They produce well-written course-work that makes good use of their literacy skills. They apply their knowledge and understanding to different problems well. Pupils with low attainment, often with special educational needs, who work in small groups develop their basic numeracy skills and gain confidence in handling number. Again there are too many pupils who do not learn as quickly as they should in some lower sets, due to the lack of classroom management skills of a few teachers. Sometimes pupils in these sets find it hard to solve problems because their mental arithmetic skills and basic number skills are not good enough. For example, pupils could not calculate speeds because they could not see that 45 minutes was three-quarters of an hour.
- 116 The standard of work in the statistics course is well above average. Achievement is consistently very good. Pupils select this course knowing that it is very demanding. They are well motivated to study independently. They learn how to listen carefully and then apply what they have heard and practice their skills at home. Work is presented exceptionally well and the pupils understand the need for accuracy. They become very adept at drawing conclusions from their data analysis.
- 117 Numeracy skills are used well to support other subjects. For example, the pupils' skills in statistical analysis are particularly useful in science and geography. In religious education they use their knowledge to graph data such as divorce rates. In food technology they measure accurately using scales and adapt recipes. In art and design the pupils use their knowledge when using scale and proportion. In some subjects, for example history and physical education, there are missed opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge. The most recent guidance on the use of a National Strategy to improve literacy and numeracy skills has yet to be

implemented throughout the school although a good start has been made to raise the awareness of all staff of the numeracy element of the strategy. Teachers have undertaken the relevant training including some visits by teachers of mathematics to see how the National Numeracy Strategy is used in primary school to improve mental calculation skills. Few teachers are using these techniques in classrooms yet. In mathematics opportunities are lost to develop literacy skills. For example, key vocabulary is not identified and used consistently in lessons. Little attention is given to developing both speaking and listening skills and pupils understanding by getting them to explain their methods and strategies used to the whole class. Writing skills are developed well in GCSE mathematics and statistics coursework. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning in mathematics, for example in the development of graphing skills and algebra.

- 118 The quality of teaching in Years 9, 10 and 11 is good in both mathematics and statistics. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed. All teachers have very good subject knowledge. This means that lessons are well structured to take pupils through all the small steps needed to understand a topic. Explanations are clear and presentation using white-boards is extremely well done, so that the pupils both hear and see explanations. The objectives for lessons are clearly identified and communicated to the pupils in most lessons so that they know what they are expected to learn. In a few lessons the pupils are allowed to continue to talk when the teacher is explaining the work. Similarly pupils who choose not to do very much work are ignored as long as they are not disrupting the class and this restricts their learning. Marking is not used sufficiently to identify weaknesses in understanding or correct laziness and poor presentation. Too much work is checked by pupils, and not marked or corrected. Where teaching is most effective, classroom routines are clearly established and there are high expectations of performance and the amount of work to be completed. This means that pupils remain on task and do not waste time. Homework is given regularly and makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. In all years' provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good. For example, in a lesson in Year 9 extension work involving the solution of quadratic inequalities by a graphical method was provided for those who could cope with the solution of simultaneous linear inequalities. Classroom assistants who work alongside those with special educational needs give very good support. The provision of small groups for those with the lowest attainment makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning in these sets.
- 119 The leadership of the subject is good. The subject manager maintains a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and keeps abreast of national initiatives. The management and organisation of data, information and resources is sometimes a little disorganised and leads to some inefficient use of time. Teacher performance and test results are analysed carefully and action taken as a result to improve standards. However, there is a lack of rigorous monitoring of marking in the department. The need to improve standards of attainment of pupils in some lower sets has been identified and is being followed up. Targeted groups have been allocated to those with the firmest control and a new modular GCSE course has been introduced for these pupils in Year 10 to keep them motivated. Some very good records are kept by some teachers and used extremely well to track individual weaknesses in subject knowledge and adapt lessons. However, these procedures are not consistent for all staff. Planned programmes of study are constantly updated to cover new courses or national initiatives and show where ICT can be used effectively to support learning.

- 120 Since the previous inspection the well above average standards in Year 9, and in A* to C grades in GCSE mathematics and statistics examinations have been maintained. Minor difficulties with staff changes have been overcome. Provision for and use of ICT to help pupils learn has been improved. The department has continued to be well managed. There is still a shortage of books, although provision has improved. Satisfactory progress has been made.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- The high quality of the best teaching.
- Management of the teaching programme.
- The assessment and target setting system.
- Teaching of investigative work.

Areas for improvement

- Reducing underachievement by some pupils.
- Reducing variation in teaching quality.
- Monitoring of teaching to spread the best practice and improving use of ICT.

- 121 In tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 the proportion of pupils achieving both level 5 and level 6 is above average in comparison with national results: in comparison with similar schools they are about average. Between 1998 and 2000 the proportion of pupils gaining these levels is well above average but declined to above average in 2001. This decline is a comparative one because, although the pupils' results improved, they did not do so as quickly as the national results. Overall, results are better than at the last inspection and show the same pattern of improvement as the national figures, except in 2001. Girls' and boys' results are very similar and standards achieved in science are very similar to those obtained in English and mathematics.
- 122 In the 2001 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades is well above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. Boys' and girls' results are very similar and both boys and girls do better in science than they do in their other subjects. These results have been maintained for several years reaching a peak in 2000. The number of pupils gaining an A* to G grade is close to the national average while the proportion of pupils awarded the highest grades A* and A is nearly six per cent higher than the national figure. Overall, pupils' achievements in science between Year 9 and Year 11 are satisfactory when compared with their prior attainment.
- 123 During the inspection the standard of work seen in Year 9, in lessons and pupils' books, is above average. The higher attaining pupils achieve a good standard in work about reflection of light, and their work about lenses and the eye is very detailed. In a lesson about acceleration higher attaining pupils achieved a high degree of understanding of the practical techniques, and their limitations, used to measure speed and acceleration. Pupils have a very good understanding of ideas about the frequency and amplitude of sound waves and about movement of heat. Work about oxygen and pollution is above average and pupils' understanding of chemical reactions is often very good. Pupils' practical and investigative skills are above average, for example, in a lesson about balanced forces pupils made accurate

recordings and were able to identify the pattern shown by the results. However, in a lesson about making quicklime, a high attaining group capable of high quality work, produced work that was about average, level 5 in the science national curriculum: this group was underachieving because the teacher's explanations were not clear enough.

- 124 Generally, in Years 10 and 11 pupils' achievements are also above average. However, they range from very high to well below average. In lessons about energy in food, and measuring speed and acceleration, the achievement of the highest attaining pupils is very high. Pupils have excellent practical and investigative skills and an excellent understanding of the scientific principles they are learning about. Pupils' knowledge of plastics, enzymes, waves and frequency calculations is above average. Some of the less able pupils have an understanding of the geological time scale that is below average but which represents good progress on their part. However, in lessons about chemical reactions and food supplies pupils did not reach the level of understanding of which they are capable; they are underachieving. Throughout the school, boys and girls do equally well and the achievements of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- 125 The development of pupils' numerical skills is good. Graphs and calculations are done carefully and accurately. Those of the highest achievers are particularly good and their speaking skills are also very good. They explain what they have learned fluently and they use their scientific vocabulary well. Written work is done well by the higher achievers, it is well presented, accurate and fluent. Other groups of pupils have literacy skills that are below average. Some pupils are hesitant when called on to answer questions and written work is not always well organised. Pupils' skills in using ICT are not sufficiently well developed to enhance their work in science.
- 126 Teaching throughout the school is good overall but varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. In Year 9 well over half of lessons are good or better and only one is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 a high proportion are good or better and a significant number are very good. The good or better teaching is well organised and attention is paid to improving pupils' literacy. Teaching is challenging and demanding and pupils learn difficult ideas about energy and forces as well as developing clear understandings of the reasons why practical procedures are used and what their limitations are. In these lessons pupils gain in confidence because teachers encourage and support them as well as providing very clear instructions and explanations. Question and answer sessions are used very effectively to check on pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think for themselves. Classroom management is very good. Teachers have a very good command of their subject and of the means of teaching it. For example, in a lesson about alcoholism pupils were skilfully involved in a decision-making activity and made good progress. In these demanding and interesting lessons pupils behave well, work hard and are interested in learning about science. They are careful and responsible practical workers. They are willing to offer explanatory answers to questions and take responsibility for their work because teachers foster and encourage these things. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported both by teachers and by teaching assistants.
- 127 Less successful aspects of teaching, seen in a minority of lessons, include explanations that are not clear enough, so that pupils are not sure what to do or how to do it. Summaries are not used to consolidate what has been learned and in these lessons pupils, sometimes of high ability, do not achieve the levels of understanding of which they are capable: their motivation and attention decline. Some boys are

easily distracted and do not take practical work as seriously as they should. Not all teaching pays sufficient attention to the implementation of the literacy strategy for the school.

- 128 Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. It is no longer true that some mixed ability groups have attitudes that are too relaxed; physics has been made a more attractive choice at advanced level and plans exist, in the scheme of work, for using ICT. However, ICT is still not used sufficiently frequently in lessons. The department does not have enough dataloggers to enable all pupils to use them and the section of the National Curriculum for ICT that requires the use of dataloggers cannot be taught.
- 129 Management of the department is good. Teaching plans include coursework, use of ICT and investigative activities and are very good, although inconsistent use is made of strategies to improve pupils' literacy and the school policy for improving literacy needs to be monitored. The science curriculum plan provides many opportunities for pupils to develop socially and morally through studies of topics such as pollution, scientific developments such as those concerned with genetics and evolution and through co-operative and safe practical work. The system for recording pupils' progress and setting targets for them is excellent; the consequence is that teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and their progress. High quality revision guides ensure that pupils know exactly what they must learn for examinations. Monitoring and sharing of best practice is not systematic or used to improve teaching in the minority of lessons where teaching can be more effective. The department does not have enough ICT equipment and pupils do not benefit from the opportunities for independent learning provided by such equipment; in this area resources are unsatisfactory. There are sufficient books and equipment. The science technicians make a strong contribution to the success of the pupils by careful preparation of teaching material and careful conservation of resources, so that pupils have what they need, particularly for practical activities. The condition and layout of some older laboratories militates against flexible use for a variety of teaching activities and does not support efforts to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- The staff are committed and work very hard to create a lively and interesting learning environment.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils are able to develop their work in a good range of media.

Areas for improvement

- Planning for Year 9 does not ensure a consistent approach across all groups, including opportunities to use ICT.
- Assessment is infrequent so that pupils do not have a clear enough idea of their progress and how they can improve.
- Available assessment data is not sufficiently well used and the work of the whole department is not systematically monitored.

130 The standard of pupils' work on entry in Year 9 is below expectations, on the basis of work seen. Pupils are able to make written appreciations of art and higher attaining pupils reach the expected standard of drawing. However, basic art-making skills remain under-developed. Pupils' achievement is good, so that by the end of Year 9 they reach national expectations. Overall, girls gain higher standards than boys. Teacher assessments for 2001 show that standards are above average. However, this was a year when new assessment and reporting arrangements were put in place nationally, without training or exemplar material being made available. The school can not guarantee the reliability of the data.

131 The GCSE course is a very popular choice. In 2001 about a third more pupils studied art than the national average proportion. In the GCSE examinations for 2001 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C is above the national average. However, the proportion gaining the top two grades is below the national average. Though girls achieve results above the national average for girls, boys achieve results that are below the national average for boys. Overall, standards at GCSE are below those that pupils achieve in other subjects. Standards have remained above average over the last four years. At the same time the popularity of the subject has increased with boys, so that a much higher proportion of the pupils entered in 2001 were boys than four years ago.

132 The standard of Year 9 work seen during inspection is consistent with national expectations. Starting from below expectations when they join the school, pupils' achievement is good as they are taught the necessary basic skills through activities such as mark making in different media and investigations into the properties of combinations of materials. For example, pupils try combining watercolour, inks, shavings of pastels and other materials in systematic experiments. They then apply what they have learned to large-scale studies of natural forms such as seedpods, shells and flowers. Pupils use sketchbooks well to record images from primary and secondary sources. They make annotated drawings and written evaluations of their work. Standards of literacy are good and pupils' use of number is sufficiently developed for their work in art. Their skills in the use of information and communication technology are below expectations because the opportunities for pupils to use it in their work are not consistently offered across the department.

Though pupils use the art of other cultures very well as source material for the development of their own work, they do not understand its meaning and significance well enough. Pupils are able to develop and produce work in a good range of media including printmaking, ceramics, batik, painting and mixed media. They collaborate in groups to produce large three-dimensional constructions. For example, groups of three or four pupils develop and construct a chair for an artist, with imaginative use of construction materials. Standards in ceramics generally do not reach those in other areas.

- 133 The standard of Year 11 work seen during inspection is above average. Achievement is satisfactory overall. While it is good for girls, there is significant underachievement by some boys. Pupils produce extended studies in sketchbooks, developing very personal responses to broad themes. Their work often reflects their backgrounds, interests and beliefs. Pupils are able to explore issues through their art, such as pollution, abortion and vivisection. In this way the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Other aspects of the art curriculum make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Some higher attaining pupils produce work beyond the A* standard. For example, a boy uses combinations of paint and print techniques to produce expressive, powerful portraits on a large scale. Others use sketchbooks well to collect images, experiment with materials and develop ideas. They make annotated studies of artists' work and relate it well to the development of their own. Overall, the attainments of girls are higher than those of boys. Their commitment to very extended projects and their attention to presentation results in generally higher standards. All pupils produce lively and varied finished pieces in a good range of scale and materials. They include relief printing, screen-printing, batik, 3D construction, painting and ceramics. Information and communication technology is well used by many pupils in the research and development of their work. In all years, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is similar to other pupils because teachers support them individually very well.
- 134 The quality of teaching is good in Years 9 to 11. In lessons observed in Year 9 it is never less than satisfactory. In three quarters of lessons it is good or very good. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is never less than good and in one lesson observed it was very good. In all years, work is planned that encourages pupils to bring their own interests and ideas to their work, so that they are interested and well motivated. A strength of the teaching is the quality of individual support teachers give to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers use discussion and questioning to help pupils clarify their thinking and they offer good technical advice to enable them to realise their intentions. Occasionally, involvement with one pupil can hinder the progress of another, waiting patiently for attention. Lessons are well resourced and teachers use skilful demonstrations and good examples of pupils' work to teach new skills. Appropriate homework is set regularly that contributes to the development of work in class. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. Older pupils show initiative, organising their own work and materials and using sessions at lunchtimes and after school to do extra work. Teachers give their time generously. Workspaces are well cared for and the display of work and resources is good. Clear labelling is particularly well used. The productive working environment relies on the good relationships between pupils and teachers. Behaviour is very good. Teachers are careful to involve all pupils, including boys, when discussions take place. However, the opportunities to review progress, reinforce teaching points and set targets at the end of lessons are sometimes missed.

- 135 Overall, the leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department is now in the third year of a secondment that was initially for two terms. In a difficult and frustrating situation, the temporary head of department has provided satisfactory leadership and management. She identified the underachievement of boys in the GCSE examination and has led the department in targeting it. Over the last two years boys' success at grades GCSE A*-C has been raised by over eight percentage points. She has improved liaison with partner schools, resulting in a shared approach to sketchbook work. However, the monitoring of the work of the department is weak and the use made of available data to raise standards across the department is underdeveloped. Periods between formal assessments are too long so that pupils and teachers often do not have a clear idea of what has been achieved and how improvements can be made.
- 136 Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The above average standards at GCSE have been maintained and progress has been made on the points raised in the previous report. Literacy initiatives have helped to reinforce pupils' knowledge of specialist terms using sketchbook glossaries, the display of key words and the use of written research and evaluations. The department now benefits from the support of a technician who helps with the effective management of the studios. The provision of computers and related equipment has improved; some appropriate work using them is planned for Year 9 and some is taking place. The areas for development for the department are firstly, planning for Year 9, to ensure a coherent short course, with more regular and appropriate assessments relating to send of key stage levels; secondly, the use made of available data to monitor the subject's performance; thirdly, systems to monitor the consistency and effectiveness of the whole department.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of graphics used in design processes.
- The use of computer aided design and manufacturing.
- Commitment of the staff towards maintaining high quality manufacturing processes for products.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment techniques and the use of on-going assessment in order to improve the match of tasks to individual pupils.
- Overall GCSE grades and the quantity of higher ones especially.
- Improved timetabling so as to allow subject areas to complete their design tasks successfully.
- Improved accommodation for resistant materials areas and better facilities for designing throughout the faculty.
- Ensuring the attainment of girls improves as well as ensuring they have more curriculum choices better suited to their needs.

- 137 The standards of work achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 are slightly higher than national expectations. This was observed in the work of pupils during the inspection. It is difficult to use the teacher assessments of 2001 as they are highly optimistic and present an inaccurate picture. The assessments carried out by teachers do not help in trying to establish a trend in the results over recent years. It is also difficult to judge pupils' level of attainment when they enter the school as there are insufficient records to form an appropriate judgement. The findings of this inspection do, however, concur with those found in the previous inspection where approximately three-quarters of the pupils produced work showing average standards and the rest were above.
- 138 At the end of Year 11 in 2001, pupil's standards are slightly above the national average. Girls perform at a level very slightly above the girls' average and boys are significantly better than their own national average. The national average has been slowly improving by almost three per cent over the past four years (from approximately 47 per cent to 50 per cent) but the results in the school have remained at a fairly static level (around 52 per cent) Girls are not reaching the highest grades at GCSE but boys are achieving well above their own national performance at these higher grades. Textiles has the most consistent grades in the faculty and food technology has achieved an awarded grade for every entrant to GCSE in the past three years. The courses for systems and control and food technology have produced widely varying results in the past four years. Other courses show greater consistency.
- 139 Standard of work seen for the current Year 9 and Year 11 pupils are generally in line with national expectations. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory but boys' performance is better in Years 10 and 11 in their practical, three-dimensional work. Conversely, girls are frequently better at design work often producing work of good or very good standard. Some very good work was seen, produced by both boys and girls in their project concerning the proposed development of country buildings needing refurbishment. Very good graphical presentation allied to imaginative use of ICT yielded some design folders and architectural models of very high quality. Pupils produce some benchwork and machinework of good quality in the GCSE resistant materials course. This was evidenced in the lighting project on which the pupils were working. They show much better than average skills in these respects and they approach the work with considerable confidence, particularly using powered machinery. The quality of the craftsmanship is generally good. However, the designs developed for the lights need greater aesthetic understanding in order to improve the product. In food technology pupils of several classes in Year 9 were seen to produce imaginative pasties and pies to very good quality as part of a batch production run. The enthusiasm for this work was notable. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress commensurate with their ability.
- 140 The quality of teaching across Years 9 to11 is almost uniformly good or better. A small amount was satisfactory but no lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The knowledge and understanding of the staff in their subject areas is good as is their teaching of basic skills. The use of computers to develop design ideas is actively fostered through teaching and this frequently yields good results such as the architectural project for design graphics at GCSE. Pupil management is also good. The high expectations by teachers of the pupils are sometimes lacking and greater challenge should be promoted, especially for the able pupils to achieve higher grades. The use of assessment data to stimulate heightened achievement is currently unsatisfactory and this needs urgent review throughout the faculty. Pupils need to understand where they are situated at the present and what they need to do in order to achieve better. Pupils' learning will be enhanced if greater recognition is taken of

what has been achieved already and what further has to be done in order to improve. Basic design and manufacturing skills in all materials are taught effectively ensuring craft skills are brought to the fore. The pupils, in response, are able to manufacture items of good quality. Good examples of this were seen in resistant materials where pupils were adept in using lathes: also in textiles where good applications of ICT were seen in producing embroidered work on various fabrics.

- 141 There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The continued production of good craftsmanship in all materials areas is a strength of the subject. The use of computer aided design work in the development of design ideas is also a good feature of pupils' work. Progress here has been rapid and enormous. The allied computer aided manufacture in resistant materials is noteworthy in its usefulness for pupils. Pupils were observed to be using this facility with some skill. One of the outcomes of the last report was the need to promote the achievement of boys in the faculty. This initiative has been successful; so much so, that a similar initiative is now needed for the girls in order to boost their achievement. The standards of boys' work have improved markedly since that time but those of the girls have developed to a lesser degree.
- 142 Leadership and management of the faculty are satisfactory and ensure a shared commitment to overall subject improvement. Departmental handbooks are very detailed and cover most aspects of work effectively. The three individual materials areas of the faculty do need drawing together more closely, becoming more unified in common and agreed approaches to the subject. In particular, the methods used for designing in varying contexts should be evaluated with particular materials in mind. Current timetabling is a problem for the faculty in all years. Pupils attend for an hour lesson that is generally insufficient to allow pupils in some areas to complete their tasks effectively. Most notably this occurs in food technology.
- 143 There has been an increase of 31 per cent in the number of entries for GCSE in the past three years. This has brought increased pressure, particularly in accommodation for resistant materials and systems and control. Workshop areas are sometimes very full and pressure is put on basic facilities. In addition, there are too few facilities for designing and working in two dimensions and the equipment available for this work is looking tired. The number of girls withdrawing themselves from design and technology after Year 9, particularly the higher attainers, is concerning and proportionally much higher than that seen nationally. The current courses are insufficiently broad to allow a full spectrum of pupil activity in the subject ensuring both boys and girls have interesting opportunities throughout the faculty.

GEOGRAPHY

The quality of provision in geography is at least satisfactory; good in some areas.

Strengths

- Teaching standards are high, exhibiting a considerable degree of positive leadership and teamwork.
- Standards of pupil work are at least satisfactory across both stages with some good work, especially in Years 10 & 11.

Areas for improvement

- Development of a wider range of teaching strategies to address the differing needs of pupils in Year 9 teaching groups.

- 144 Standards of pupil work are at least satisfactory across Years 9 to 11. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupil books produced evidence that standards in Year 9 and 11 are at least satisfactory, with Year 10 producing significantly higher standards. Assessments in national tests at the end of Year 9 indicate results consistently above the national expectations. 84 per cent of Year 9 pupils achieved level 5 or better, indicating a significant proportion of pupils achieving standards that are good or very good. As it is extremely difficult to determine attainment on entry with any confidence, this factor, together with the inaccuracy of data available from teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, makes a realistic judgement difficult regarding any possible gains. Overall girls record significantly higher levels than boys. Results have shown similar trends over the last three years.
- 145 GCSE results in 2001 are above the national average with 64 per cent of pupils attaining A*-C grades compared to 51 per cent nationally. A*-G grades were at 98.1 per cent, compared with national figures of 97 per cent. Top grades at A*/A make up 20.2 per cent of the entry, against a national percentage of 17.5. The results are slightly better than in 1997 when the school was last inspected. In the intervening years results have been consistently above average although there is a falling trend which the school reports as reflecting the prior attainment of pupils within the option group and some staffing problems. Differences in achievement levels between boys and girls are not significant, although both boys and girls in 2001 produced results slightly lower than in other subjects.
- 146 The standards of work seen during the inspection are at least satisfactory across all year groups, with the best work seen in Year 10. Pupils in all groups exhibit clear understanding; they listen attentively, approaching their work with enthusiasm and commitment. Class relationships are good, with supportive collaborative work seen in most groups, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- 147 In Year 9, satisfactory progression is evident in the extensive wall displays of maps and scatter graphs from local village studies. The majority of Year 10 pupils achieve well, making good progress in all aspects of their work. In both Year 10 and 11, a majority of pupils applied physical and creative efforts in their class work and homework, together with the ability to apply their intellectual knowledge to specific case studies. This was particularly a strong feature in the Year 10 work on rivers, where they displayed a good general knowledge of local and global events, leading to very satisfactory outcomes to their practical work that included map construction and the interpretation of hydrographs. In Year 11 good progress was apparent via their sound understanding and positive application of the relationships between climatic factors and global farming regimes. Fieldwork is a good feature of the department's

work across all years. Levels of literacy and numeracy were sound in class work , in homework and in fieldwork exercises. All year groups utilised some aspects of ICT skills, but usage was limited. A major feature of all lessons was the high degree of inclusiveness; all pupils had a role to play, some high attaining pupils contributing to the learning processes in a distinctive and profound manner. A Year 9 lesson on city zoning demonstrated good group work activity; groups were often positively led by more able pupils , who were observed supporting and explaining concepts to less able classmates. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are well supported within the department by the teacher and learning support staff, as well as friendly support from within their class. A positive learning environment is found in all classrooms, with pupil behaviour and attitudes good or very good.

- 148 The quality of teaching is good, with some very good lessons observed, particularly in Years 10 and 11. A major strength is that preparation and planning is of the highest order, with learning objectives and outcomes clearly defined and shared with pupils. The three specialist teachers exercise a wide range of teaching strategies and methods; they all have high expectations of their pupils and present precise and relevant challenges accordingly to all pupils; most pupils respond well to this pupil-friendly style of teaching, generally exhibiting a reciprocal enthusiasm and commitment to their studies. However, in Year 9 there are occasions where the introductory strategies in mixed ability lessons are not sufficiently matched to the capabilities of the most and particularly the least able, leading to frustration and boredom. Teaching strategies have to ensure the engagement of all pupils from the start of lessons. The use of ICT is limited, needing to be more transparent throughout teaching and learning processes in order to improve on standards. Pupils' work is well marked, in accordance with school policies; comments are constructive and supportive. Schemes of work and departmental policies are evolving and are designed to progress the department's clear and definitive aims for improvement. Considerable priority is given to assessment procedures and target setting, as well as tracking and monitoring individual and group pupil performance. This facet of teaching has positively addressed weaknesses highlighted in the last inspection. Non-specialists working in the department are well supported with the provision of appropriate resources and teaching materials.
- 149 Departmental management is good. Management and administration of the department are strong and enthusiastic, with an emphasis on dynamic teamwork across all stages. Departmental documentation is well prepared, concise and transparent, containing clear guidance to all aspects of the subject, including homework and marking, field course policies and strategies relating to whole school cross-curricular issues such as equal opportunities, ICT, literacy, and numeracy. These factors impact upon all teaching and learning in terms of social mixing, relationships and attitudes. Assessment and target setting procedures, review strategies, attainment and progress, are also included for staff reference. Departmental staff are able to plot the progress of individual pupils against previous achievement and against challenging targets via a regular review procedure. Teacher records and mark books clearly indicate the patterns of review applied to pupils via their class work and via regular testing. The current departmental development plan is strong and clear on strategies; it needs to be more definitive on success criteria. The departmental staff monitor the ongoing teaching programme by regularly meeting to review the effectiveness of the schemes of work and the use of resources. This year, the department has through its good teamwork coped well with a difficult staffing problem that has affected the continuity of teaching, and thereby adversely affecting standards.

150 Overall, the subject has made good progress since the last inspection, with Year 9 results in national tests indicating standards are above average, and results at GCSE level still above the national average. Weaknesses regarding assessment and use of pupil data have been positively addressed and are now successfully implemented and used by all staff across all key stages. The main areas for development are the implementation of additional, or alternative strategies, in Year 9 classes to involve all pupils, as well as a more transparent usage of information and communication technology across the school.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Good and very good quality teaching is leading to good and very good learning.
- The contribution that is made to developing key skills, particularly literacy.
- The quality of marking is very good and gives clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.

Areas for improvement

- More use should be made of assessment data to set pupils' targets and to monitor their progress against such targets.
- The standard of boys' written work.

151 The standards recorded by pupils in National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are well above the national average though the department acknowledges that these results are too generous. Nevertheless, they clearly indicate that girls are recording higher standards than boys. It is difficult to comment on the progress that pupils make as the department does not receive reliable data about standards on entry, but inspection evidence clearly shows that a significant minority of pupils are working at well above national average standards.

152 Standards recorded in GCSE examinations in 2001 are close to the national average for both boys and girls, but for results in the range A* to C, girls did better than boys. The percentage of A* to C grades in 2001 is well below the figures recorded in 2000. This decrease should be set against a context of staffing problems and a changing entry policy. Staff turnover has made it difficult to ensure continuity in teaching. In addition, in 2001 the department entered all pupils for GCSE irrespective of their anticipated levels of attainment. In previous years, lower attaining pupils were not entered. The end result is that more pupils now gain GCSE history, but more grades are issued in the range D to G. This depresses the percentage gaining higher grades and distorts comparative statistics. It is also difficult to evaluate the progress pupils make overtime. The department has little statistical information on the standards pupils have reached when they enter the school. Allied to this is the inaccuracy of the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. Consequently, it is difficult to gauge the extent with accuracy that pupils progress overtime. More use of statistics is needed so that the progress of all pupils can be accurately measured.

- 153 For present pupils, standards in Year 9 are above average, though the department caters for pupils of widely varying abilities. While some are working at below national expectations, a significant minority are well above this level. Work seen during the inspection suggests that all are making good progress, including those with special educational needs, especially in terms of their ability to write about historical events. A very good contribution is being made to developing the literacy skills of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and this is leading to improving standards, though more work needs to be done improving the writing skills of many boys. Present pupils in Years 10 and 11 are similarly recording standards of work that are above average, though girls are doing better than boys. In lessons many boys impress with their oral knowledge and their ability to offer lucid and detailed accounts of historical events. Unfortunately their written work does not contain the same level of detail and accuracy. Girls tend to be quieter in class but write more fluently. Again the standard of work of all pupils is benefiting from the emphasis that history teachers place on developing the pupils' literacy skills. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress, but higher attainers are improving at an even quicker rate. Their written work is especially strong. It is detailed, interesting to read, accurate and is balanced in terms of the views expressed. A minority of pupils make good use of ICT when presenting their work. The emphasis that is placed on interpreting source material is significant and this is helping higher attaining pupils to reach very high standards in their work.
- 154 The quality of teaching is good. Most lessons seen were at least satisfactory and, in some cases, teaching was better than this. Such good quality teaching is having a good impact on learning. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their history lessons and they learn well. A number of key strengths of teaching are identifiable. Staff plan their lessons well and, where teaching is most effective, the lessons are challenging and proceed at a good pace. A key feature of many lessons is the contribution made to key skills. Though there is a very good emphasis on literacy, there is good planning to offer pupils opportunities to learn by developing their numeracy and ICT skills. Lesson planning is frequently thorough and takes account of the needs of pupils of widely ranging abilities. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by the very good marking of work undertaken by members of the department. During the inspection, a very good Year 9 lesson was seen on the theme of 'freedom'. Pupils had to examine this notion under a range of headings and write down their thoughts before discussing their views. The pupils tackled this task with interest and maturity and offered some very good and thoughtful answers. Work samples also indicated evidence of some very good teaching and the frequent use of homework. Another example from Year 9 is work on the assassination of President Kennedy. The quality of written work seen was of a high standard and included detailed arguments about his death based on very good research. This series of work made a very good contribution to literacy as well as encouraging pupils to research views from textbooks and the Internet. Where teaching was occasionally less effective, the pace of learning was slower, the level of challenge was reduced and the lesson was too teacher centred. On one occasion the quality of learning was disturbed by the attitudes of a minority of pupils who were reluctant to listen and co-operate. This happened in another Year 9 lesson on the theme of 'freedom'. Unlike the previous group, this group lacked maturity and were reluctant to tackle the challenges presented. Their behaviour deteriorated and learning suffered. The teacher changed the emphasis of the lesson and moved on but was unsuccessful in motivating a significant minority of pupils who had negative attitudes and who were not prepared to listen.
- 155 The leadership and management of history are good, with very good prospects for further improvements. Though there has been some deterioration in results since the

last inspection, this has largely been because of staffing issues. Staffing is now more stable and new staff have settled well and are suitably supported and monitored by the head of department. The quality of the curriculum is strong and is enhanced by relevant visits to local places of interest and the very good planning for literacy, numeracy and ICT. The accommodation for history is very good and the rooms are enlivened by the comprehensive and interesting displays of pupils' work. Planning for further improvements is also good. The main area for development is for the department to develop its use of assessment data as an effective mechanism for monitoring and improving the performance of all pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils are good.
- provision for lower attaining pupils including those with special educational needs is good.

Areas for improvement

- progress of the majority of pupils during Years 9, 10 and 11.
- management and co-ordination of the subject and the curriculum arrangements
- use of ICT across a number of subjects.
- quality and level of computer resources.

156 Standards of attainment of pupils towards the end of Years 9 and 11 in ICT are at the national average. The teacher assessments in 2001 indicated that above 90 per cent of Year 9 pupils reached the expected level. However, the reliability of these assessments could not be assured by the school. Inspection showed that although some pupils reach very high standards this is not generally the case for the majority of pupils. Teacher assessments prior to 2001 show that a below average proportion of Year 9 pupils reached the expected level. Girls performed better than the boys in the teacher assessments in 1999 and 2000. However, in 2001 the reverse was the case. Unvalidated data from the middle schools indicates that pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment in ICT. The school has limited information in order to determine attainment levels for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11. For other than those with special educational needs pupils are not examined in ICT at this stage. Regular unit testing leading to an accredited award shows that the majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout Years 9, 10 and 11.

157 Standards of work seen are at the expected level in Year 9 and during Years 10 and 11. Since the majority of pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 9 with above average levels of attainment their achievement and progress are unsatisfactory. There is a wide variation in terms of standards of work seen in almost all classes. Some pupils are producing work of a very high standard though this is not generally the case for all pupils. For example, pupils in a mixed ability Year 9 class were undertaking work associated with genetically modified foods. The task was to develop a report covering the advantages and disadvantages of producing foods that had been genetically modified. Pupils were required to research the internet in order to obtain the required information. Whilst a number of pupils were making good progress with the task a number of others were not and required significant support from the teacher in order to make further progress. Several pupils had failed to complete the previous task that involved use of software to search for information on the internet.

Pupils in a mixed ability Year 11 class were using software to develop either a slide show or a newspaper article on a topic of their own choice. Whilst a number of pupils had well developed ICT skills and were able to use advanced features of the software, this was not generally the case. Although aspects of the work include the use of both literacy and numeracy, the nature of the provision does not lead to the progressive development of these skills.

- 158 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Year 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Occasionally it is good. Lessons are well planned and the tasks to be undertaken by the pupils in terms of practical computing activities are clearly defined. Pupils are well supported by the teachers when they are working on an individual basis at computers. Sometimes further support is provided by additional staff. The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to their work in information and communication technology. Behaviour of the majority of pupils is good. Relationships between pupils and with the teacher are supportive. Occasionally pupils are encouraged and able to work collaboratively on aspects of the work. Only a minority of pupils have a more negative attitude to the work. This was particularly apparent for several Year 10 and 11 pupils undertaking the ICT work as part of the life skills programme. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are withdrawn from classes and receive appropriate support frequently on a one-to-one basis. Many quickly gain confidence in using the computer and make good progress.
- 159 The curriculum for ICT is unsatisfactory. The current arrangements during Year 9 involve pupils in discrete ICT work for one period every fortnight. During Years 10 and 11 pupils attend classes in two blocks throughout both years. The total time for these classes in each of Years 10 and 11 is intended to be 10 hours. However, in practice it is frequently less than this. Additionally, pupils throughout Years 9, 10 and 11 receive insufficient feedback on the quality of the work that they are producing. Overall the provision is unsatisfactory and does not lead to the progressive development of the required range of skills. There is highly structured and appropriate provision made for pupils with special educational needs.
- 160 There is inconsistent use of ICT across subjects. Its use to support teaching and learning varies from unsatisfactory to good. In design and technology there is very good provision for computer-aided design and manufacture and for simulation and control. Good use is also made of the computer for supporting pupils with special educational needs. However, there is much less use made in many other subjects. Aspects of the statutory requirements for data logging are not currently being met in science and pupils not studying design and technology in Years 10 and 11 do not cover the required control work. Statutory requirements for the use of ICT are also currently not being met in music and art. There is a need to introduce procedures to monitor individual pupil's experiences of ICT across all subjects and to ensure that statutory requirements are met for all pupils.

- 161 The management and co-ordination of ICT is unsatisfactory. The current arrangements for the delivery and support of the subject make effective co-ordination very difficult. At the time of the inspection 17 teachers were involved in teaching lessons. Several teachers only teach the subject for one lesson every fortnight and some have restricted ICT skills themselves. All have major teaching commitments in other subject areas and it is not possible for all of those involved to meet on a regular basis. Some monitoring and evaluation has been completed. A review of the work has been undertaken by the co-ordinator and this has been discussed with senior management. No observations of teaching and learning have, however, been completed in the main school. A development plan recognises that improvements are required in the management, provision and support for ICT in the school. The school is planning to appoint a full time co-ordinator and to reduce the number of teachers involved with teaching. The ratio of pupils to modern computers in the school is 10:1. This is above average and causes difficulties of access for some pupils. Additionally, when some software packages are in use the computer network responds very slowly and this is frustrating to pupils. Occasionally random error messages further add to the difficulties experienced by the users.
- 162 Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Although some improvements have been made a number of weaknesses remain and overall the provision continues to be unsatisfactory. Discrete teaching for ICT has been introduced and attainment at the end of Year 9 is now at the expected level. A number of subjects make good use of ICT. However, the progress of pupils is unsatisfactory and the curriculum, management and resources require improvement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- High standards in French.
- Good achievement in German.
- Good accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- Provision of more course books to give pupils their own copy.
- More extensive and more effective use of ICT.

French

- 163 When pupils enter the school they have already been doing French for a year longer than most pupils of their age. In consequence their standards are above average, and they remain so as they progress through the school. This is confirmed by teacher assessments for 2001, which are similar to those for earlier years. The standards of some pupils are well above average. Standards seen on inspection are also above average. Pupils' writing skills are relatively well developed. The highest attainers can already write passages of French using a range of tenses, and their relatively wide knowledge of vocabulary enables them to understand more advanced passages of French than most pupils of their age. What they know about how language works is a useful contribution to literacy. Speaking and listening are satisfactory, but many pupils lack confidence in expressing themselves in the foreign language. Achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Some of the

lowest attainers receive a useful boost to their ICT skills and can produce poster work of display quality.

- 164 GCSE results in 2001 are above the national average in terms both of grades A*-C and of grades A*-G. They had declined a little from the high standards reached in 2000, but over the last four years the overall trend has been upward. Although girls perform better than boys, as they do nationally, boys' performance is satisfactory in relation to that of boys nationally. Standards, seen in lessons and on analysis of pupils' work, are also above average. Some higher attaining pupils can write extended text, for example about keeping fit, about their work experience or about the local area. They have a good knowledge of formal grammar, and they are well trained in keeping records of words and phrases they encounter. Very high attainers including some seen in Year 10 display very good speaking and listening skills: a very demanding task for them was to make notes in French on video clips about the life of a multicultural Paris community. This represented a real contribution to their social and cultural development as well as a contribution to literacy skills. Boys and girls work well together in boy-girl pairs, which further contributes to their social development. There is little low attainment in the school; pupils of more modest attainment are trained in speaking at the level of the transactional language expected in GCSE. Most pupils with special needs can join in well with this category, though a few cannot. The lowest attainers may opt instead for Northern Profiling and Records of Achievement Units. This is good provision for some with special needs. Achievement is satisfactory.
- 165 The teaching of French is satisfactory, and teaching overall is also satisfactory. It is fully inclusive. Three of the five lessons seen were satisfactory, one good and one very good. Teachers know the language well and can use listen and repeat methods successfully to promote pupils' speaking skills, though some pupils retain an Anglicised pronunciation. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, especially in terms of the extent of the vocabulary and grammar which the pupils have to retain. Teachers manage their pupils well, which leads to constructive relationships and improves the climate for learning. The very good fixed audio-visual resources of the department are well used to sharpen pupils' listening skills further. A French *assistante* makes a good contribution, especially by being available at certain times for main school pupils to consult. However, there are areas for improvement in encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning and ensuring that all pupils take a full part in lessons. The provision of a coursebook for each pupil would enable pupils to take more control of their own work. A further ongoing area for improvement concerns ICT, in which the resources of the internet are not being used as well as they could be and where there is insufficient access to computer rooms capable of accommodating a whole class.

German

- 166 German is taught to all pupils in Year 9 as a new language. After one year standards are below average when compared with the standards expected of pupils learning a second foreign language. This is because in many schools this opportunity is not offered to low attaining pupils, as well as because the second language is often begun in Year 8. At Shelley High School pupils rediscover the fun of learning a new language and most make good progress, so that they are not far below the average for first languages by the end of Year 9. Higher attainers seen on inspection were beginning to construct sentences about their favourite things and some pieces of descriptive writing were seen. Overall, achievement is good in the relatively short time available, though a small number of boys do not make the progress they should because of negative attitudes and poor behaviour.

- 167 GCSE results in 2001 are below the national average in terms of grades A*-C, though above average in terms of grades A*-G. Standards have been rising over the last three years. When pupils' individual standards in German are compared with those in their other subjects, the outcomes at Shelley are in line with national data, representing average performance by the whole cohort of pupils. This matches average standards seen in work scrutiny and in lessons. Overall, there is no conspicuous underachievement by boys. Written work at its best extended to longer texts in a range of tenses, for example, describing their work experience arranged by the school. Some lower attainers were doing well to express personal opinions about a range of musical styles played to them over the very good audio system the department has. Achievement, including that of pupils with special needs, is good.
- 168 Teaching in German is good. Four of the six lessons seen were good, the others satisfactory. Although teaching is broadly similar to that in French, it is more focused because teachers are always aware of the short time they have to prepare the whole range of pupils for GCSE in three years. Learning benefits from the initial response of the pupils to a new language, and it receives an important boost from contact with pupils from link schools in Germany through annual exchanges, which are recovering this year from two years when they did not take place. The links themselves have been in place for many years, with consequent long-standing personal relationships. This important characteristic of school and community life makes an important contribution, beyond the numbers directly taking part, to pupils' future citizenship as citizens of the European Union. Pupils involved, including some in Years 10 and 11, are already using email in German to communicate with their opposite numbers in Germany.
- 169 Leadership and management of modern languages are satisfactory, despite the fact that the permanent headship of the department has been left vacant since September 2001. The male-female co-operation that is demonstrated in the running of the department provides good role models for both boys and girls. The department has a satisfactory handbook and schemes of work, ensuring that procedures and learning objectives are clear to all. Assessment is satisfactory and is effectively used in whole school procedures of target setting and review of targets, when each student is given a grade indicating their rate of progress towards the target. Monitoring of teaching and learning are not as securely in place because no time has been found for them. In this experienced department there is scope for more sharing of best practice. Staff have worked together well to create a good learning environment in their new suite of rooms. Good display contributes to learning not only about France and Germany but also about their culture. Quotations from classical authors and others are accessible to most pupils, as for example that from Molière: *Il faut manger pour vivre, non pas vivre pour manger* (you have to eat to live, not live to eat). This is good contribution to their cultural development. Contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are satisfactory.
- 170 Overall standards in the teaching of modern languages have been rising after a fall after the previous inspection. Maintenance of high standards is considered satisfactory improvement.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is satisfactory.

At the time of the inspection staffing in the music department had undergone a period of transition. A new head of department had been appointed at the beginning of the Spring Term, less than three months before the inspection.

Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Year 9 steel band lessons.
- Growing instrumental provision.
- Developing extra-curricular work and the range of instrumental opportunities.
- Departmental management.
- Good planning.
- Good relationships in the department.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 11.
- Computer provision.
- The use of computers for composition and performance.
- Organisation and use of ongoing assessment.
- Co-ordination in the department.
- Differentiated work.
- The provision of small rooms for instrumental teaching.
- Poor condition of pianos in the department.

171 Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is well above average. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 9 are good when compared with their attainment on entry, which is above average. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs, and gifted-and-talented pupils, is often good. At the end of Year 9 all pupils are able to use steel pans very well. Keyboards are used with some competence for performance and for composition. Pupils build on their instrumental skills. Appraising skills are near average but variable; pupils develop a suitable musical vocabulary with which to describe and appraise the music they hear and this helps attainment in this area. There are no significant gender differences in attainment.

172 GCSE music results in 2001 are well below comparable national averages with 50 per cent of pupils, twelve out of twenty four, gaining grades A*-C. In the GCSE short course in 2001 the A*-C pass rate is 40 per cent. This represents a significant fall in standards compared to examination results in 2000, which are above average with 73 per cent of pupils awarded grades A*-C. Over the last four years there has been a decline in GCSE attainment. However, the standards observed in work seen during the inspection have begun to reverse this trend in the current Year 11, and standards are above average in Year 10. At the end of Year 11 achievement in performing is, overall, better than in appraising and composing. The department places emphasis on basic literacy and technical language and this has an improving effect on attainment in listening and appraisal. When strong emphasis is placed on literacy skills, for example in a Year 11 lesson on composition, students improve their ability to use analytical and descriptive language and thereby increase their musical understanding. Most pupils make good progress in building on their performing and composing skills. In Year 11, pupils' are conversant with a range of musical styles. Individual instrumental skills are often good and well utilised in supporting

composition. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

- 173 Teaching in Years 9 to 11 is very good. This has a strong impact on pupils' progress. Teachers successfully build on previous attainment. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on composition, pupil performance was closely linked to the development of an extended chord vocabulary. Work is appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers' musical skills are used well in the classroom and in the range of extra-curricular activities. Care is taken to relate tasks to previous learning; lessons often have a range of tasks and energetic pace. This helps to consolidate pupil learning and maintain interest. Co-ordination of teaching across the department is variable, so that on occasion different work is given to pupils at the same stage or different standards of marking applied. Homework is set regularly to consolidate learning. Pupils have opportunities to explore their own culture and value the opportunity to explore the music of other cultures, for example, in a Year 9 steel band lesson, pupils successfully played syncopated calypso rhythms with a strong sense of precision and ensemble. This helped to broaden pupils' understanding of other cultures and develop co-ordination and ensemble playing. Pupils' attitudes in music lessons are good and they respond well to stimulating work. Pupils work well individually and with enthusiasm in instrumental groups. Music teachers support special needs pupils and adopt an 'inclusive' approach that encourages all pupils to fully participate and thereby gain in confidence. There is some work that targets special needs and gifted-and-talented pupils, but further development in this area is needed. Teaching, together with suitable resources and planning, ensures that many pupils make good progress across Years 9 to 11. Computer work, however, has modest use. The department has already noted lack of computers and computer work as a serious deficiency and prioritised computer-generated composition as an area for development, from Year 9 onwards.
- 174 Instrumental teaching is sound, often good. The number of pupils taking lessons in school is near average in relation to the size of the school. About 110 pupils have instrumental lessons each week. The nine visiting instrumental teachers make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and their work is managed and carefully integrated into the work of the department. In the best instrumental lessons teachers keep careful records of student progress. In one brass lesson the teacher meticulously recorded aspects of pupil performance and devised exercises written in the pupil's 'practice planner' to help the pupil to develop relevant points of technique. Pupils have the opportunity to take instrumental grade examinations and the department has a record of success up to Grade 8.
- 175 Since the recent appointment of a new head of department, administration within music has improved. Leadership and management are good. Schemes of work, including the development of ICT work, are being developed. The long-term monitoring, assessing and recording of pupils' work are in place and good use is made of pupil self-assessment. The department aims to develop an efficient method of short-term, day-to-day assessment, in order to set targets for pupils and develop the work offered to them. Teachers analyse attainment across the range of skills taught in music lessons and have begun to consider this information to extend the work offered to pupils of differing attainment. There is analysis of GCSE results. There is no rigorous monitoring of lessons and of instrumental provision to inform the development plans for the subject. The department generally has suitable instrumental stocks, although computer resources are limited with only one of the machines operational but not connected to an electronic keyboard. This means that pupils cannot currently play their compositions directly into the computer. Steel pans

are not sufficient for a full class and this leads to some loss of time as pupils patiently watch others perform. Pianos are generally in a poor state and require repair. Accommodation is suitable for most musical activities but there is some lack of space to accommodate the visiting instrumental teachers. In some areas decoration is poor but the main music rooms have good displays.

- 176 Leadership of the department has a strong impact on performance and extra-curricular work. There is a variety of extra-curricular activity in music and many pupils are involved. They enthusiastically commit time and effort to the steel bands, choir, instrumental ensembles and other smaller groups. The performing and composing work of pupils is appropriately celebrated in musical events. Such opportunities have a strong impact on the cultural and social development of pupils; they also contribute to the prevailing ethos of the school.
- 177 There has been satisfactory improvement since the last report. Even though standards have been in decline there are clear indications that this position is now in reverse. The main issues from the previous report, concerning time allocation and specific resources, have been resolved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve consistently well with examination results well above average in 2001.
- Teachers have high expectations so learning is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and achievement are good.
- Very good extra-curricular activities enhance learning opportunities.
- The department is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils in Year 9 to target and improve learning by being more aware of their attainment.
- A consistent contribution towards literacy and numeracy to improve and understand vocabulary.

- 178 Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding which are average in physical education. In 2001 teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average compared with schools nationally. These results indicate that more girls than boys achieve at level 5 and above. Teacher assessments confirm that students are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.
- 179 The work seen during the inspection shows that the standards attained by students at the end of Year 9 are average when compared with national expectations. This judgement is in line with the assessment results and teachers have been accurate in their monitoring. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in comparison with their standard on entry into the school. For example, at the beginning of Year 9, pupils' awareness and experience of rugby is below expected levels; they have had little opportunity for this activity in their middle schools. In a Year 9 rugby lesson high attaining pupils were able to demonstrate a better understanding of the rules of the game, passes were well directed and usually more effective than those of low attaining pupils. Their passes were often poorly directed because of weak body position and lack of follow through action. All pupils were in the initial stages of play in dodging and tackling. Most

pupils gradually acquire the skills and understanding to improve their performance so that by the end of Year 9, in activities previously covered in middle schools, they work to expected levels. For example, in a Year 9 football lesson pupils were able to build on previous learning to improve attacking techniques. They were able to suggest suitable exercises for the warm up of different groups of muscles. High attaining pupils were able to dodge effectively even when they were challenged and the area was restricted.

- 180 In 2001 GCSE results are well above average for grades A* to C and above average for grades A* to G when compared with national results. These results are better than the results in 2000 and better than at the time of the previous inspection but fewer pupils entered for the GCSE examination in physical education in 2001. Pupils perform better in physical education than in most of their other subjects. Girls perform significantly better than boys. Four times as many girls achieved A* when compared with girls nationally.
- 181 The standards attained by Year 11 pupils, observed in lessons, in the GCSE course, are above average. The majority of students achieve well when compared with their results at the end of Year 9. The standards seen during the inspection are consistent with boys' results in examinations but are inconsistent with the results of girls. Girls' examination results in 2001 are higher than this. The discrepancy between boys' and girls' achievements in examination performance is demonstrated in dance where girls perform very well and in line with their examination performance. In a Year 10 GCSE dance lesson girls showed very good understanding of dance using levels, balance and gesture. They confidently demonstrated individual and group dances and retained lengthy sequences well. Where they worked with others, timing and rhythm was very good. In individual dance sequences pupils showed good interpretation of the music.
- 182 Standards in curriculum physical education are high and this represents good achievement. For example, in a Year 11 football lesson boys effected strong, well-directed passes and high attaining pupils, several from the GCSE group, flighted the ball at good height with extension and flexion in the back and good follow through which ensured good angle and direction to the ball. In Year 11, in a core curriculum dance lesson, progress during the lesson could be seen. Pupils at first appeared mechanical as they effectively focussed on objectives, then, through repetition and evaluation, they acquired the content of the dance and matched this to the challenging fast speed of the music. By the end of the lesson pupils had imprinted their own interpretation on the dance and executed it with quality and confidence. Boys do well in dance too and some gifted and talented pupils are excellent. One Year 11 boy helped to lead others in a dance in an extra curricular session. He moved fluidly with expert interpretation. Gifted and talented pupils' progress is good. They are assisted to improve their standards and extend their knowledge by being given more challenging work and being set higher targets. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because of the individual attention they receive. Teachers are clear in their explanations and conduct demonstrations for good understanding; this is useful for all pupils but particularly benefits low attaining pupils or those with special needs.

- 183 Overall the standard of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning is particularly effective in examination classes where teachers have a clear focus on examination requirements and the criteria for success. In a Year 11 GCSE hockey lesson the teacher linked theory work, on anaerobic explosive energy, with practical work, on quick sprints up the wing of the field, to embed learning. GCSE theory work is arranged to facilitate good revision. The standard of coursework is high and teachers ensure that work is progressively more challenging. Very good learning resulted from appropriate planning and organisation. It was particularly good in a Year 11 core curriculum dance class when the teacher evaluated with pupils, who recognised with her, that they were at different levels of achievement. The teacher offered extension work and a choice of perfecting the pupils' own interpretation or continuing with the original version. This provided different tasks to suit the needs of all levels of ability. Teaching and learning is not as effective when pupils are not given all the necessary teaching points for success so that low attaining pupils, in particular, lack the correct body position to direct a shot, head a ball or execute a stroke. In one lesson too many objectives were set for the time allowed and this affected the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers insist on good behaviour and good relationships existed in the lessons seen.
- 184 Opportunities for learning are enhanced by the very good provision of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities including team matches. Pupil-led activities are very popular with large numbers, and all year groups, involved in activities. All respect the authority of the pupil leader, frequently a gifted and talented pupil. Teachers check the balance of teams in team games and include all students by ensuring that everyone has equal chances within games so, for example, in team games, positions are changed for better understanding, appreciation and learning. Pupils recognise the special needs of some pupils and encourage them, along with the teacher. Non-participants often contributed well when engaged and helped others to succeed by giving feedback and critically analysing performance. However, some non-participants are not engaged sufficiently in the lesson; they talk, off task, and are not fully involved in group learning. Literacy and numeracy, apart from in a few lessons, are incidental within lessons rather than planned and there is little opportunity for pupil access to computer facilities.
- 185 Leadership and management of the department are good. Provision of resources is very good. Books for independent learning and differentiation are available for examination courses in the department and the library supplements learning with additional material. Access to the Internet enhances research possibilities for GCSE students. Accommodation is good and includes a sports hall, gymnasium, extensive playing fields and outdoor courts. Good organisation, planning and procedures are in place, including objectives concerned with basic skills and safety. There is a lack of consistency in the practical delivery of some of these objectives affecting the thorough learning of some pupils. For example, access to ICT facilities is limited. Safety is outlined in a policy on behaviour and the expectations of pupils. Some pupils risk the safety of others and infringe the rules of some games, by wearing jewellery and contravening this policy.
- 186 Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The head of department has made significant changes in the organisation of courses and the introduction of a wide range of activities has helped to address the underachievement of some pupils at GCSE. Examination results have improved and achievement is good. Extension work is available for the gifted and talented. New assessment processes monitor students' achievements in Year 9 and there is better liaison between middle schools and the physical education department on the content of courses. Year 9 pupils still need

assistance in being more aware of their achievement and attainment to self-target and improve. Teachers are addressing non-participation but non-participants still need to be more involved in the learning. Most teachers evaluate at the end of lessons but opportunities to see and learn from the achievements of others are sometimes lost when time is not given for groups to display their work to others for analysis and improvement. Teachers monitor one another's teaching and share expertise, for example, through team teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is unsatisfactory in Year 9 and satisfactory in the Years 10-11.

At the time of the inspection the department was recovering from the effects of the tragic death of the head of the subject less than three months before.

Strengths

- Examination results in the GCSE short course are well above average.
- Teachers work well together and have managed a difficult situation with courage, poise and equilibrium.
- They are very hard working, committed to raising standards and helping the pupils to succeed.

Areas for improvement

- There are no staff with specialist qualifications or training and this reflects in the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- There is insufficient time given to the subject in the curriculum for pupils in Year 9 to cover the agreed programme and make satisfactory progress.

187 Although pupils enter the school with above average general skills in literacy and numeracy their notebooks show that they fall back in their knowledge of the subject because they receive less than half the amount of teaching recommended for pupils of this age. The school has had to institute a catch up programme to get pupils up to the threshold for new learning at the start of the GCSE course. Pupils have an unsatisfactory, disjointed experience as lessons are grouped in five week units separated by teaching in other curriculum areas such as careers. They find it hard to remember their earlier work or to build upon it.

188 By the end of Year 9 standards are average only for higher attaining pupils, those of average and lower prior attainment achieve less than is expected for pupils of this age. All begin to develop a knowledge of some of the technical vocabulary needed in the subject, distinguishing theist, atheist and agnostic for example. They achieve a little knowledge of some major Christian denominations including Roman Catholics, non-conformists and Quakers. In the work of pupils of average attainment there are too many short answers but the books of higher attaining pupils shows some insight in extended personal writing completed for homework. They learn to do simple surveys about the basic religious opinions of other pupils concluding that not many have ever prayed and most describe themselves as agnostic. Overall however, their knowledge is sketchy and achievement is unsatisfactory as they make unsatisfactory progress.

- 189 The lack of background time in Year 9 leads to great pressure in the one hour a week teaching in Years 10 and 11. All pupils take the course and almost all pupils in Year 11 are entered for the examination. There are currently no national comparisons available for this course. However, results have risen since the last inspection. Over the last three years the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades is high and averages 71 per cent. Almost every pupil gained a grade in the A*-G range, a tribute to the hard work of the teachers.
- 190 In work seen during the inspection pupils in Year 11 achieve good standards in the topics they study. For example, they explore personal creeds and recognise the similarities and differences between the different faith perspectives on issues such as the sanctity of life and marriage in different religions. Pupils of high attainment make very good notes and show some beautifully presented work on topics. They debate the origins of the universe and classic philosophy including the work of Thomas Aquinas and Paley's evidences. Pupils work hard to reconcile biblical and scientific accounts of the origins of the universe at a suitably mature level and develop and compare personal viewpoints, on matters such as animal rights.
- 191 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Year 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Almost all teaching is satisfactory or better. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from the inexperience of the teacher. During the inspection there was no teaching of the subject in Year 9 as careers education was taking place. Judgements about the quality of teaching are based on analysis of pupil's work and teachers planning documents. There are sixteen staff who contribute to the teaching of religious education. Of these one is newly qualified and three are on temporary contracts. As a result of these arrangements, not all teachers could be observed teaching. Teaching varies widely according to the general skills of teaching staff. Most of the teaching is in Years 10 and 11 and this makes considerable demands on the non-specialist teachers preparing pupils for GCSE. Several teachers report feeling insecure about their command of the subject except when dealing with personal and social issues such as marriage and the family.
- 192 Introductions often make clear the purposes of the lesson and ensure that pupils know what they are expected to achieve. To assist teachers all lessons are very carefully planned with detailed support notes and pupil handouts. Sometimes too many handouts are used. Although the content is sound the presentation is lacklustre and does not inspire and challenge pupils or meet the needs of mixed ability classes sufficiently. In some very good lessons pupils are given the opportunity to discuss and debate issues very effectively. In one lesson some startling statistics on world poverty stimulated very good discussion. Class management is generally skilled and keeps the class focused. Occasionally, colourful relevant videos are used to stimulate interest and in Year 11 there is a planned opportunity to research information from the inter-net and keep up to date. Overall the use of ICT is limited.
- 193 Very detailed planning is supported by careful and detailed schemes of work. While this is a support for teachers, it is also a constraint for non-specialist teachers who are insecure and cannot widen the topics to deepen religious perspectives. As a result many lessons, although satisfactory, lack flair and enthusiasm. The teaching focus is often on comprehension rather than on developing insight, inquiry and qualities such as empathy. Overall care for students is good. Their work is assessed regularly at the end of each unit of work and teachers try to ensure common standards by moderation. End of course achievement is monitored in relation to earlier scores on commercial tests, but underachievement is less identifiable and

there was no evidence of pupils setting targets for their work to enhance development. Good questioning technique elicits pupils' opinions well. Several teachers show how much they value the sharing by pupils of their personal experience and show respect and gratitude for their contributions. No training or staff development in the subject has taken place for non-specialists, which reduces their expertise. The marking of pupils' work is often hasty but understandable when, for example, one teacher teaches more than 400 pupils per week. Marking rarely shows diagnostic comment on how to help the pupils to improve their work.

- 194 The subject overall makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development especially in Years 10 and 11. However, too few teachers feel confident in exploring the deeper, interior, aspects of the subject such as prayer and worship. As a result the subject makes less contribution than is usual to spiritual development. Good opportunities are given to consider moral codes in religions and different faiths, particularly Judaism and Christianity. Pupils consider major moral dilemmas such as the disparities between rich and poor, wealth and poverty across the world. Codes of conduct are displayed in every room, but not always consistently applied to help pupils to respect others and help each other to learn effectively as members of community. Pupils have some good opportunities to learn about different societies and their expectations. Only a very limited amount of group work was seen but when it occurred pupils evidently enjoyed the experience of offering their opinions and considering those of others. Pupils learn about international charity organisations working to develop societies across the world, such as Christian Aid, the Red Crescent and the Salvation Army that helps to widen their horizons. Pupils' cultural development is fostered by the study of other religions and the cultures in which they evolved as well as the worldwide nature of religious faith. However, they make few visits, for example to places of worship, nor do they have visitors to widen their experience of major faith heritages present in Britain. They are not given sufficient opportunity to grapple with the riches of human diversity and cultural difference.
- 195 Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory given the present circumstances, although the daily management of the department is good. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching to ensure that pupils get an equal experience. No analysis of the examination results of different groups of pupils takes place so that the progress made, for example by boys and girls or pupils with special educational needs is not considered sufficiently. Resources are adequate but some texts are dated and do not support the GCSE course well. There are no subject specific teaching rooms. None has the clear subject identity which supports learning, for example by the display of key words to develop subject literacy or the colourful and sensitive display of religious artefacts and images or paintings which usually enrich pupils' aesthetic understanding and help to educate the emotions.
- 196 Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards at examination have improved since the last inspection but there has been no attempt to remedy the lack of curriculum time or to engage a head of subject and appropriately qualified teachers. However, new management has taken steps to improve the situation and interviews were held for a new specialist head of subject the week after the inspection. Plans show that more curriculum time will be available for Year 9 from September 2002. There is real commitment to improving provision for the subject and enhancing the opportunities for pupils' spiritual development and understanding.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business Studies

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

Strengths

- Standards in examinations particularly for the higher attaining pupils.
- This is a very popular course that is enjoyed by pupils.
- Teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

- Some poor attitudes of a small minority of pupils.

- 197 Only two lessons of business studies were seen during the inspection. These were in Year 11.
- 198 GCSE examination results in 2001 are broadly in line with the national average when comparing the average points score. The proportion of pupils awarded grades A* - C is well above average when compared to all secondary schools. The subject is very popular with 116 pupils entered for the examination in 2001. The proportion of pupils awarded higher grades of A* and A is also well above the national average. There has been a steady improvement in examination results over the last three years for pupils awarded grades A*-C. Pupils in 2001 performed slightly better in business studies than they did in their other subjects. Boys achieved significantly higher than girls when the average points score per pupils is considered.
- 199 Standards observed in Year 11 are broadly in line with expectations, reflecting the examination results in 2001. High attaining pupils revising a topic on flow production within the context of the Ford Motor Company were able to explain the meaning of specialist vocabulary such as economy of scale, sustainability and capital intensive. Lower attaining pupils use terms such as workers and employees and know the difference between issues such as salary costs and hourly rates. The range of attainment of pupils is wide and the majority of them are making good progress in relation to their individual abilities. Literacy skills are good with pupils confidently reading aloud and contributing some lively answers to class debate and teacher questioning. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in the lesson and make satisfactory progress. Their overall achievement is satisfactory but is hampered by some poor attitudes to learning.
- 200 The quality of teaching in Year 11 is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and demand sustained participation by all pupils to the lesson. For example, in a lesson where there were several exceptionally high attaining pupils working alongside a group of boys with special educational needs, the teacher used questions very effectively to involve all pupils and encourage responses at a level appropriate to each pupils' ability. Teachers have very secure knowledge of the subject and can relate the learning to relevant situations in such a way as to interest and motivate pupils as was seen in the car production topic. The course material is well planned with a comprehensive assessment procedure that allows pupils to track their progress and offers them control over their work. Unfortunately the poorer attitudes of a small number of weaker boys are undermining the overall achievement of the classes and making teaching considerably more difficult. Homework was seen to usefully extend the work taught in class and pupils were encouraged to complete an extended piece of writing on the implications of a management decision to move Ford's manufacturing plant from the United Kingdom to Germany.

- 201 The subject is enriched by a lively environment with high quality display work in classrooms that celebrates pupils' work and informs pupils about course requirements. Teaching makes a very good contribution to developing the pupils' literacy skills. Key vocabulary are prominently displayed and work samples showed that pupils, of all levels of ability, are frequently set challenging homeworks that require detailed written answers. Pupils respond well to these tasks. Other key skills are also well catered for. Numerical work involved the use of graphs and calculations and ICT featured word processing and the use of spreadsheets. A key feature of the work samples was the high quality of presentation, with pupils clearly taking pride in their work.
- 202 The department is also making a contribution to fostering the talents of its more able pupils. A group of about 10 Year 10 pupils have been working on a project promoted by the Dr. Bernardos charity. This scheme encourages interest in business activities by enabling the pupils to run their own mini-enterprises. The pupils had tackled their tasks with considerable enthusiasm and much enterprise. One project undertaken was the vending of red roses on Valentine's Day; a venture appreciated by staff and students alike.

Drama

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is good.

Strengths

- Examination results are well above average.
- Teaching is very good.

- 203 Only three lessons of drama were seen during the inspection as drama assessments were arranged by the school for that week. These involved both drama teachers and all pupils in Years 10 and 11. Two of the GCSE assessments were also observed.
- 204 In the GCSE examinations in 2001 the average points score for pupils awarded grades is well above the national figure. The proportion of pupils awarded the higher grades A*-C is significantly higher than the national average, by nearly 17 per cent. The proportion of pupils awarded the highest grades of A* and A is exceptionally high at nearly 35 per cent above the national figure. Every pupil who entered the examination was awarded a grade. Pupils' performance in drama in 2001 examinations is slightly better than their performance in other subjects. There is an imbalance in the number of boys and girls studying the subject and very few boys entered for the examination in 2001. The results in 2001 show significant improvement on previous years in the numbers of pupils awarded grades A* - C.
- 205 Standards of work seen in the current Year 11 reflect the high examination results and are well above expectations. Pupils' folders in Year 11 contain work that is very detailed with clear evidence of progress in understanding on some very challenging themes such as bullying and poverty. Pupils are able to show good empathy with characters. Work in Year 10 folders indicates that pupils are able to make detailed evaluations of monologues and other devised pieces. In lessons, Year 11 higher attaining pupils rehearsing their final performance for assessment were taking the subject very seriously and achieving a high standard with good use of voice and body movement, timing and response to others in the group. Lower attaining pupils are able to produce some sensitive interpretations although their performance is rather wooden at times and lacks some conviction about their roles. Two groups of Year 11 pupils observed during their formal assessment achieved very high standards with

the majority of pupils working well within grades A*-C. Year 10 pupils produced an accomplished performance with very good sense of timing, positioning, use of simple props and lighting effects.

- 206 The quality of teaching in drama is very good. Marking in pupils' folders is usually helpful and encourages pupils to focus on areas for improvement. Well designed worksheets direct pupils' thinking and their evaluation, without being too prescriptive and doing the work for them. In all lessons there are very good relationships and teachers treat pupils as responsible people with a clear expectation of how to behave and an increasing awareness of the disciplines necessary for success in the subject. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that is demonstrated by the good use of technical language and this helps to deepen pupils' understanding of dramatic conventions and disciplines. Teachers in the drama department follow a simple rule 'take a risk!' and constant reinforcement of positive aspects of pupils' work ensures that this rule is used effectively to prompt improvement in pupils' work. The pace of lessons is a particular strength of the teaching with challenging tasks, high level use of questioning and good quality and quantity of guidance. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 207 The subject is enriched by a range of activities that take place outside lessons. There is a drama club for pupils in Year 9 and at least one theatre trip is arranged each year for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils also work in local theatres such as the West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Kirklees youth performing arts centre. The school has a good specialist studio and a useful rehearsal room, but lessons are sometimes curtailed due to the need for the studio to be also used for assemblies.

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

In the inspection, 15 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 2001.

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	2	50	62	0	15	0.50	1.51
Music	2	100	84	50	29	2.50	2.41
Other sciences	1	100	78	0	27	1.0	2.27

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
Art and design	14	100	96	21	46	5.29	6.57
Biology	22	95	88	32	34	5.27	5.25
Chemistry	11	100	90	45	43	6.36	5.90
Communication studies	26	88	93	15	31	4.54	5.53
Computer studies	10	80	86	10	23	3.20	4.62
Economics	32	97	89	19	36	5.44	5.52
English language	8	100	91	0	30	4.25	5.27
English literature	11	100	95	73	37	7.64	5.91
English/ language	28	100	92	64	30	7.0	5.28
French	5	100	89	20	38	4.4	5.59
Design and technology	19	100	91	53	30	7.05	5.38
General studies	49	94	85	35	30	5.35	4.91
Geography	16	100	92	44	38	6.13	5.74
German	6	100	91	33	40	6.0	5.81
History	20	90	88	20	35	5.0	5.45
Mathematics	20	75	87	25	43	4.0	5.8
Music	1	100	93	0	35	2.0	5.74
Other sciences	24	83	90	33	30	5.0	5.16
Physics	16	75	88	19	40	4.25	5.67
Sociology	15	93	86	27	35	5.47	5.32

Sports studies	14	100	92	14	25	4.71	5.09
----------------	----	-----	----	----	----	------	------

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	-	-	-	-	14	12.24
Business	11	-	-	-	-	9.82	10.45

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

208 The focus subjects in this curriculum area are mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. One lesson of geology was also seen. Provision for geology is good.

209 Small numbers of students choose to study geology and a comparison of students' results with national performance figures are not possible. During the last two years students have gained a range of grades including the highest A and B grades, however, a small number of students do not gain pass grades. In one lesson seen during the inspection teaching was good, it was very enthusiastic, instructions are clear and practical activities are interesting and well organised. Students are interested in geology and work hard. Their notes are well-organised and show a good understanding of ideas about the relationship between changes in plants and animals, fossilisation and interpretation of the fossil record.

Mathematics

AS and A level courses in mathematics are studied by 44 students across Year 12 and 13.

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- The very good teaching of AS-level and A-level mathematics.
- The very good subject knowledge of all teachers of mathematics.
- The provision for gifted and talented students.

Areas for improvement

- Improved time allocation to give students the opportunity for more interaction with teachers.
- Make higher demands of students to complete homework.
- Improve the screening of students before they are permitted to start the AS and A-level course.

Standards and achievement

210 Standards attained at A-level in the 2001 examinations are similar to the previous two years and are below the national average. 25 per cent of students achieved A or B grades, nearly 18 per cent below the national figure. There are no clear gender

differences in the pattern of attainment. A quarter of students who study the course are not awarded an examination grade. Standards in A-level and AS level examinations have been adversely affected by a reduction in the teaching time allocated to the subject. Standards attained in the new AS-level course have also been adversely affected by the demand to complete three difficult units of work in less than a year. Students start the AS and A-level course in Year 12 with A or B grades at GCSE. Some students enter the course with a B grade on the intermediate paper. GCSE grades on entry are not always indicative of the potential of students to cope with the AS and A-level course. Due to the high expectations of teachers and high quality of support given in Year 11, some students attain high grades in GCSE and start the AS-level course without the thinking skills or the speed of work required to cope with the heavy demands of the new mathematics AS level and A-level courses.

- 211 Most students who retake their GCSE improve their grades in Years 12 and 13, and approximately half of those who retake the examination attain a grade C. The specialist mathematics' teachers provide suitable opportunities for students to take a well-planned numeracy course in Year 12.
- 212 The work seen in the A-level course in Year 13 meets the required standards, with most students on line to achieve at least an E grade and with some very high attainment. The students show good achievement in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics given the time allocated to the course. This is due to very good teaching. Standards of attainment in further mathematics A-level and provision for gifted and talented students are exceptional. Although fewer girls than boys study mathematics at higher levels in Years 12 and 13, there are no significant differences in performance, taking four years into account. Students say that they choose this subject because they have enjoyed mathematics throughout the school.
- 213 Numeracy skills demonstrated in other subjects are often very good and support the students' learning. The use of data-handling skills in other subjects is impressive, for example in geography and business studies and reflects the high standards attained in GCSE statistics and in the statistics element of GCSE mathematics.

Quality of education

- 214 Teaching is very good. All teachers' subject knowledge in the three areas of pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics is very good. This was particularly evident in an excellent further mathematics lesson with an exceptional student where the teacher was able to respond rapidly to very astute questions from the student. All the teachers' very good subject knowledge is used to prepare good quality notes and well chosen examples for students to use as a study guide. Teachers are building up sets of notes in the new course that will form a good quality programme of study. The limited time allocated to the subject means that teachers have to lecture rather than spend time working with the students and ensuring all have the necessary knowledge and understanding of each stage of work. Much dependence is placed on students to study independently and complete homework set. Some students do not take this requirement seriously and therefore do not make sufficient progress in their learning. In a few lessons opportunities are lost for interaction with students. Homework, when it is handed in on time, is well marked and gives good guidance to students how to improve. There needs to be more demands on students to deliver homework on time. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support learning. In particular calculator skills are taught well.

Leadership and management

- 215 The leadership of the subject is good. More could be done to track attainment systematically throughout the school to ensure that those not achieving well enough are detected early in the AS-level course and also to give more information for guiding students who wish to take the courses. Attainment is used retrospectively, and well to adapt courses and procedures. For example, the order of module testing has been altered in view of school and national test results in AS level examinations. The department is now considering beginning studies in at least one of the course units in Year 11 to give students with high attainment a better chance of doing well in Years 12 and 13. The limited subject time allocation means that specially designed intermediate tests, which take up two lessons, cannot be used to assess the students' understanding and provide both students and teachers with up-to-date performance grades. The subject manager maintains a good overview of the quality of teaching and teachers' individual skills, and makes the best use of their individual strengths.
- 216 In the previous inspection attainment at A-level was judged 'in accordance with expectations'. These standards have been maintained, although students do not always achieve their higher target grades. Teachers have given much time and effort to preparing work for the new course units. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Biology

As and A level courses are studied by 75 students across Year 12 and 13.

Overall, the quality of provision is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching is good. Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding and good planning provides sound preparation for external examinations.
- Formal assessment is used to monitor students' progress effectively and good support is given.
- The subject is well led and well managed, and a collection of good learning resources is being built up.

Areas for improvement

- There is too little investigative work and information and communication technology used within teaching.
- Students' independent learning skills are underdeveloped.
- Analysis of subject performance and of student progress requires further refinement.

Standards and achievement

- 217 In the 2001 A level GCE examinations, the proportions of students achieving grades A-B and grades A-E are broadly in line with the national averages, as is the average point score. Relative to the other sciences, results are better than those seen in physics but not as good as those seen in chemistry. When comparisons are made with other sixth form provision in the Local Education Authority, students do well. Results have fluctuated since the last report but have been consistently above average until 2001 when they dipped. However, modular results for the present Year 13 would indicate a further rise in 2002. Although, overall, numbers have been falling over the past few years, the present Year 12 has seen a significant increase. More

females than males choose to study biology, and tend to gain the higher grades. In the 2001 AS examinations, most students gained a pass.

- 218 Standards of work seen amongst current students in Year 13 is above average and most are achieving well, relative to school predictions. The more able show a very sound knowledge and understanding of the syllabus topics. For instance, they accurately explain the complex communication between nerve fibres; describe how population changes are related to the environment and have a good understanding of the hormones of reproduction. They make good use of their knowledge when handling searching examination questions. Less able students have weaker written expression. They recall and describe processes clearly, such as the transmission of a nervous impulse, but find it more difficult to apply their understanding to unfamiliar situations. Investigative skills across the year group are generally underdeveloped because of a lack of opportunity to do the required amount of practical work. Numeracy skills are adequate for the course, but skills in information and communication technology are limited to research and word processing. Students in Year 12 have now completed two terms of their AS course, but being of a wider ability range, are generally achieving standards closer to the national average. Most, however, are successfully taking their scientific knowledge and understanding to greater depths. In their study of human physiology, for example, they relate physical exercise to the chemistry of the cells, and in cytology, understand the complex nature of the cell membrane.

Quality of education

- 219 Teaching is good overall and as a result students learn well. Teachers show very good subject knowledge when they use questions to probe students understanding, and when they answer students' unexpected questions. Their explanations are clear and show an up-to-date grasp of the subject that is often linked to topical issues. In one Year 12 lesson for example, the study of genetic farming and its use in the most recent treatments of diseases such as cystic fibrosis, evoked student discussion on the dilemmas facing parents carrying deleterious inherited characteristics. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and there is a mutual respect that effectively supports the learning process. Lessons are planned well to make good use of the limited amount of teaching time allocated to the subject. Very well structured in-house resources have been developed that closely match the syllabus, recently redesigned by the board to comply with the latest changes in post 16 studies. They are much appreciated by students for whom they provide a valuable set of revision notes. Shortage of time, however, is impacting on teaching styles; many lessons are too teacher led in order to cover the necessary material and there is insufficient practical work. Students are becoming very focussed on the written resources prepared for them and take insufficient responsibility for their own learning. Over recent weeks, the department has set up its own sites on the school computer network; it is in the early stages of being used for students to submit work, and could be an effective resource for supported individual study. The independent learning skills of students are, at present, insufficiently well developed. Homework is set regularly by teachers and marked carefully and helpfully. The grading system, however, does not directly relate to A level standards. The nature trail and the two ponds provide an excellent teaching resource. For example, in one very good Year 13 lesson seen, it was put to very good use to prepare students very effectively in the techniques they would be using on an imminent residential field trip. Whilst ICT is used for some research, and to word process coursework, there is a need for further development of its use in day-to-day teaching. Each class benefits from the teaching being shared between two specialists. The programme of work is well organised

within the constraints of the syllabus, and allows students to make good progress. The good technical support provided is much valued by teachers.

Leadership and management

220 Work in the subject is well led and well managed. Teachers are deployed appropriately and form a hard working team that is committed to ensuring the success of the students. Regular formal assessment takes place, and there is good one-to-one guidance that informs students, sets targets, and effectively aids their progress. Analysis and monitoring of students' progress, however, needs further refinement. The number of laboratories available is just adequate for present student numbers, but the fact that they are not all sited within the same area of the school, leads to some inefficiencies. Whilst some of the laboratories provide a pleasant working environment, others are in need of some refurbishment. The subject co-ordinator and his team recognise that the limitations of their present examination syllabus, together with limited teaching time, has been affecting the quality of provision over the past two years. With this in mind, the section is to be involved in the piloting of the new and exciting programme of study being launched by a different examinations board next September. Improvements since the last report are satisfactory. Teaching styles have been modified to cope with new curricular requirements and ensure standards are maintained. Since the last inspection, access to computers has improved, and a previous preparation area has been refurbished to provide a small laboratory that is being used very effectively by A level students. A good range of support materials is being developed and library facilities are being put to good use. However, with the introduction of more investigative work, the department will need to extend its range of scientific resources and replace a number of larger items of equipment that are now becoming dated.

Physics

'AS' and 'A2' courses are offered in Physics for 34 students.

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

Strengths

- The good quality of the new AS and A level courses.
- Good teaching.
- Organisation of the teaching programme and students' coursework.
- The assessment and target setting systems.

Areas for improvement

- Underachievement of some lower attaining students in examinations.
- Increase the use of ICT in teaching.

Standards and achievement

- 221 In A level examinations in 2001 students' results are below the national average and, overall, they are significantly worse than their results in other subjects. From 1998 to 2000 A level results are also below the national average and there is no trend showing improvement in these results. The high attaining students gain the highest grades and generally do better than is predicted from their GCSE results. Weaker candidates do less well than is predicted from their GCSE results and a significant number of them do not gain pass grades in their examinations: these students are underachieving and as a consequence, overall, results are below average. In the AS level examinations in 2001 students gain a range of grades including grades A and B; the higher attaining students do well. Some students repeat their module examinations and improve their grades, in one case from grade E to B. A large majority of students continue into the second year of their course; this is a good retention rate. Although fewer girls study physics, boys and girls do equally well.
- 222 During the inspection the standard of work seen in lessons and students records is above average and students' achievements are good. In Year 12 students' understanding of the reasons why light bends when it passes into a block of glass is good. They have a good mastery of the calculations that are made when measuring how much the light bends and a good knowledge of the practical application of these calculations when they are used to measure the sugar content of fruit. Practical skills displayed when making these measurements are above average. In Year 13 students' understanding of ideas about simple harmonic motion and its application to building design is above average, as is their understanding of the calculations that are carried out to explain these principles. Practical projects, such as one about electric motors, are well above average, others are about average. Numerical skills are good, in Year 13 they are very good. Students generally speak articulately and use scientific terms accurately. Insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons but many use ICT very effectively to record their coursework.
- 223 Students' achievements have improved this year for two reasons. Teachers have worked hard to introduce new courses in both Years 12 and 13. These courses are well organised and provide many interesting applications of physics to the everyday world. One of the three teachers responsible for the course is new to the school and these changes are having a significant positive effect on the quality of teaching and as a consequence on standards achieved in the classroom.

Quality of education

- 224 Teaching is good. Assessed practical work is well organised and students are well supported in preparation and during these assessments, students consequently know what to do and develop good practical skills. Lessons are well planned, for example a practical demonstration of the effect of vibrations of different frequencies provided very effective support to the teachers explanation. Explanations, for instance of the practical procedures used to measure how light passes through sugar solutions, are very clear and students' practical work is done well and carefully as a result. A variety of strategies are used which illustrate the applications of physics such as testing a Crunchie bar to model the effect of stress on a bone. These make physics purposeful and interesting so that students learn effectively; they are willing to offer explanatory answers to questions and work hard. Teaching in lessons about vibrations and medical applications of physics is energetic and challenging and relationships with students are very good. In these lessons students make good progress in their learning because teaching methods are demanding and teachers are very supportive,

ensuring that students have the confidence to try and to succeed. Sometimes students have to spend a long time listening and they would benefit from a short consolidation activity offering an opportunity for independent learning. A small minority in Year 12 do not put as much effort into their work as other students.

Leadership and management

- 225 Progress since the last inspection is good: standards have improved this year; physics has been made more attractive and numbers, including girls, studying physics have increased.
- 226 Management of the department is good. There are clear views about course design and teaching methods, organisation is good especially of the assessment and target setting procedures. Completion of homework and assessed work is checked thoroughly but data about achievement should be used more effectively to ensure that lower attaining students do not underachieve. Although more use is being made of ICT in lessons more still needs to be done and the department needs more ICT equipment in order to do so. There is an adequate supply of other resources including books and equipment for practical work.

Chemistry

Year 12 – 25 students studying the AS level course; Year 13 – 16 students studying the A level course.

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is good.

Strengths

- Results are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students are very well motivated and have very good independent learning skills.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress are good.
- The quality of individual student investigations is very high.

Areas for improvement

- The use on computers needs to be fully integrated into the teaching scheme.
- Information gained from the monitoring of the work of the department could be more effectively shared to inform good practice in teaching.
- The marking of homework is not effectively used to inform students about their short-term gains in progress.

Standards and achievement

- 227 A level results in 2001 are above the national average. All students gained a pass grade and the proportion of students gaining A and B grades is above average. Girls perform better than boys, in line with the picture nationally. In relation to their GCSE examination grades nearly all students achieve at least as well as expected. Over the last two years the results in chemistry make a very positive contribution to the school's overall A level results, and are better than those in both biology and physics. In the 2001 AS level examinations for Year 12 students, all gained a pass grade and one-quarter achieved A or B grades. In relation to their GCSE performance the vast majority of students achieve at least as well as expected. Students are well equipped to continue to the A level course and the majority of students choose to do so. Those

students choosing not to continue with the subject are, in the main, the lower attaining students and those for whom the subject is their fourth AS level choice. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

- 228 The standards of work of current students are above average. Students in Year 13 are achieving well. They are confident in their knowledge and understanding of current topics. They discuss their work enthusiastically and are accurate in their use of scientific terminology. They are generally adept in applying their knowledge to new situations. In one lesson, they used their knowledge of enthalpy changes in the formation of ionic crystals well to develop understanding of the factors determining the solubility of ionic solids in water. Students have particularly good knowledge of organic reactions and their mechanisms. However, they are not always secure in their use of symbols such as “curly arrows” in representing reaction mechanisms. Students, both boys and girls, produce individual investigations of very impressive quality, demonstrating very good literacy and independent learning skills. All students research thoroughly the chemical background to their investigations, and higher attaining students demonstrate a very mature approach in this aspect of the work. They are accurate and precise in their writing and in the handling of quite complex ideas, such as the use of the Nernst equation in a study of electrode potentials. All students handle data very well, with observations accurately recorded and graphs very well drawn. Students display good skills in the use of ICT skills in presenting their investigations, but the use of computers is not well developed in the scheme of work.
- 229 Students in Year 12 have successfully made the transition to higher level work and the demands of the course. Generally they are skilled in supplementing material from lessons with additional notes from other sources. However, lower attaining students would benefit from closer scrutiny of their files early in the course to guide them in this activity. Students are very competent and careful practical workers. Boys and girls work well together in practical sessions, meticulously observing safety routines and obtaining good results. All students discuss their work with clarity and higher attaining students confidently discuss the background theory of the experiments. They have good knowledge of atomic structure and chemical bonding, and competently handle calculations involving reacting quantities and enthalpy changes. They demonstrate very good understanding of the treatment of errors in experimental results.

Quality of education

- 230 The quality of teaching overall is good and occasionally it is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They are confident in their delivery and in handling students' questions. They use questions well to assess students' understanding. Lessons are well planned with clearly defined learning objectives that are reviewed at the end of lessons to enable students to effectively assess their own progress. Teachers have high expectations and higher attaining students are encouraged to extend their thinking. In one lesson, students were challenged to link features in the structures of amines and phenols that would influence the colour of the azo dye formed on coupling the two reagents. Lower attaining students are given good support and encouragement to develop confidence and accuracy in their work. Students respond very positively to the more relaxed tutorial style of teaching adopted in lessons and this contributes significantly to their learning. Homework is regularly set but it is not used effectively in the overall assessment of students' progress. Students develop very good independent learning skills through regular homework, researching the context of the topics and in their investigative work. However, the planned use of computers is under-developed, and limited access to computers in

free periods further restricts opportunities for students' learning. Very good use is made of the yearly industrial visit to broaden students' learning experiences to include socio-economic aspects of the subject.

Leadership and management

- 231 The subject is well led. Although relatively new to the post, the head of the subject has identified relevant key strategies for further improvement in standards. The procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress are good. Challenging but realistic targets are set early in Year 12 and students are kept well appraised of their progress in reaching their target. Monitoring of teaching is regular, but the information gained is not effectively used to share good practice and further develop the quality of teaching. Resources are generally good although there is a need to acquire a range of quality molecular and crystal model kits to enhance students' appreciation of the three-dimensional aspects of the subject.
- 232 The subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards of attainment at A level have improved and early indications are that good standards are being set in the new AS level. Student numbers had shown a decline during the period 1996-2001 but have risen considerably in the current sixth form groups. Very few students have failed to complete their A level course over the years. The subject is generally well managed and there is a shared commitment by staff to further improve standards. Further development of the use of ICT is needed across the subject.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

- 233 Two focus subjects of design and technology and design and communication were inspected. The school does not provide any other subjects in this curriculum area. All aspects of design and technology within the sixth form were considered as part of the inspection. All the courses are reported here under the title of 'Design and Technology'.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

A and AS level courses are studied by 14 students in both Year 12 and Year 13.

Overall, the provision in the subject is good.

Strengths

- Results in design and technology, and design and communications yield a high proportion of students achieving A and B grades at A Level.
- Teaching is a strength in the A level courses.
- The use of computer aided design by the students in their coursework.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation and teaching resources of the department need significant development to allow for further gains in academic standards.
- Improvement in the grades of students studying courses at AS level.

Standards and achievement

234 Standards of work in both courses at A level are high. Examinations results in 2001 confirm that students achieve grades that are high when compared with other schools nationally. 53 per cent of the students achieve grades of A and B, which is 23 per cent higher than the national figure. The average points score across the subject is 7.05; a very high figure and as good as any other subject in the school and high when compared nationally. The results of the past three years show continued high achievement. Results in the more-recently introduced AS level courses are less impressive however. In design graphics and resistant materials no students achieve an A or B grade at all and the quantity of students who are unclassified is high at 43 per cent of the cohort. Observed evidence of the AS level textiles course shows that good quality work is currently being produced. Overall achievement is very good for the A level courses and less than satisfactory for the AS levels that have been examined. However, some allowance should be made for the development of the new courses in what is an inaugural year.

235 Students generally enter the courses in the sixth form with good grades in their respective subjects at GCSE. All have a good range of basic skills in design methodology as well as the practical ones that relate to their subject specialism.

Quality of education

236 Teaching is good overall, with some that is excellent or very good. Students learn well in the subject as a result. This level of teaching on the A level courses is a strength within the sixth form. Teachers have a much better expectancy of students at this level than in the earlier years of the school and this motivates them. The challenge they extend for the work is high and students respond accordingly. The teachers working on these courses also have extensive subject knowledge. In one lesson where the teaching was excellent, the teacher fired the imaginations of the students and through the use of excellent teaching aids promoted appropriate expectancies along with high value taught input. The quality of the teaching observed ranged between good and excellent with the majority being very good. Like the main school, the increased quality and use of assessment data that promotes further the abilities of students is required. This should help staff focus their efforts even more finely and inform students of their achievements. Students learn effectively within the sixth form, principally through the production of their project work. The use of computer aided

design and manufacture helps development of project work significantly. This is exemplified well in the lessons where the students were using computer-aided-design software to model potential projects on the screen and in a three dimensional way. They are very competent in using the software and they generate very good work that enhances significantly the quality of their folders. Students generally show independence in their work and are self motivated. They make suitable intellectual, physical and creative efforts in producing their work. Much time beyond the classroom teaching time is spent completing project work, design folders or general research and this time is well spent.

Leadership and management

- 237 The subject is well led and well managed in the sixth form. Teachers are deployed appropriately and are thoroughly committed to helping students to reach their full potential. Frequent discussion between the students and the staff ensures that work is kept on track and quality is maintained. The more formal aspects of assessment are less secure. For example, the recording of targets and success that has been achieved already. Monitoring of student groups and the teaching is carried out through a team approach. The staff are conscientious in supporting the students, as well as each other. Monitoring is generally effective but still requires a better co-ordinated and rigorous whole-faculty approach.
- 238 There has been significant progress since the last inspection report. The achievements in A level design and technology, and design and communication have been maintained and improved. The GNVQ courses have been dropped in favour of AS level courses and newer vocational courses are being considered. The increased use of ICT is a notable feature. The popularity of the subject has increased resulting in larger numbers of students. There is considerable pressure on the accommodation when sixth form groups are timetabled along with other GCSE groups. Students vie with each other to use vital pieces of equipment and certain spaces. Good provision is made for developing key skills. The school integrates students from other schools and colleges well into the sixth form. Students report they are made welcome and supportive approaches by staff ensure they achieve their best.

BUSINESS

- 239 A number of courses are offered including economics and business A/AS level, AVCE business (formerly GNVQ Advanced business) and GNVQ Intermediate business. The department also offers a course in A/AS level politics but no lessons were seen during the inspection. All courses in business studies were inspected; these are all reported under the following section on business studies. The range of subjects offered are popular and numbers are good. One lesson of economics was observed. In this lesson the quality of teaching was good, although the quality of student's learning was only satisfactory because a significant number of students had unsatisfactory attitudes to their work. Economics is a popular subject and recruitment to the course has steadily increased over the last four years. In 2001, 32 students entered the A level exam and standards are in line with the national average. Over recent years students have performed better in economics than in other subjects.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

Strengths:

- The contribution made to key skills.
- Very good course retention rates.
- Standards of work being recorded by Year 13 students.
- The range and variety of the curriculum opportunities.
- A developing relationship with the local business and education community.

Areas For Improvement:

- Improve the attainment of all students, but especially that of male students in Year 12.
- More use should be made of assessment data to set students' targets and to monitor their progress against such targets.
- Completion rates on vocational courses.

Standards and achievement

- 240 Standards recorded by A level students in 2001, based on average points scores, are in line with national averages, though female students gain better than average results whilst their male colleagues gain less than average. Few A and B grades are awarded. A level results over the last four years have shown no consistent pattern, reflecting the different ability levels of different cohorts studying the subject. However, results in 2001 are an improvement on those recorded the previous year. The progress of students cannot be accurately measured. There is a lack of assessment data showing the level at which students started compared to their final grades. AS results in 2001 show a pass rate of nearly 90 per cent, with a quarter of those entered for the examination gaining either an A or B grade.
- 241 Advanced GNVQ business students similarly record results in 2001 that are close to the national average. Though retention rates on this course are very good, the course completion rate is disappointing and serves to depress the overall quality of results. These results, however, are a big improvement on those gained in the previous two years. Standards recorded by GNVQ Intermediate students are below average. Once again, though very good retention rates are recorded, the course completion rate is disappointing and reduces the overall standard of results. For both vocational courses, most students commenced with modest levels of achievement at GCSE. Those who completed their courses and gained accreditation often did well, so the progress recorded by this cohort of students is at least good.
- 242 Currently, GNVQ Intermediate students in Year 12 are recording standards that are below average. They are all developing their ideas and some students have a good theoretical understanding of issues, such as factors determining the location of firms. What they do less well is apply their theory to real life situations. Students on this course are making satisfactory progress. AVCE business students are recording standards that are in line with national averages, but those in Year 13 are recording higher standards than their Year 12 colleagues. The progress of Year 13 students is good, while for Year 12 students it is satisfactory. Year 13 students are keen and enthusiastic and have developed a good knowledge and understanding of business. They work hard and are good at applying theory learned. The levels of application shown by Year 12 students are more variable. Some lack commitment and many are struggling to master basic economic theory. As yet, few are confident about applying their knowledge and understanding to real life situations. Standards recorded by A

and AS level business students also show significant variations but, overall, are in line with national averages. Year 13 students again display greater confidence. The work of some male students in Year 12 is well below the expected standards. They lack commitment and are not independent learners. Some Year 12 students are, however, working very hard and make very good progress. In a lesson on macro-economic management, a minority of students were working at a high level. One male student showed a very good understanding of the equation for aggregate demand and could highlight which components would change, and the direction of the change, if the government followed an expansionary fiscal policy based on cuts in direct taxation.

Quality of education

- 243 The quality of teaching across the various courses offered is good and in some cases it is very good. Such good quality teaching is helping students to learn, especially those who are committed and want to improve. A number of key strengths of teaching are identifiable. Planning is often very good and the provision made for covering the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is similarly very good. Where teaching is particularly effective students are developing their knowledge and understanding, which they are then encouraged to apply to real life situations. For example, a Year 13 AVCE group showed very good knowledge and understanding of how firms might promote their products. Each student had developed their own ideas for promoting a variety of products. This work involved research using the Internet and the facilities available at Huddersfield University library. One student had developed a series of five short slogans for advertising a family car. Another student was concentrating on promoting a new range of male clothing. He had identified his market by age and his research had led him to identify that women predominantly purchased the clothing for the age range in question. This led to the student deciding that prime advertising space should be purchased in specialist women's magazines. This was a most interesting observation based on very good research involving ICT, numeracy and literacy, which had been encouraged by effective and challenging teaching. Very good teaching was also seen in a GNVQ Intermediate lesson on the location of industry. The students had each picked two local businesses to study. Their teacher encouraged them to identify key factors in their location decisions, but also stressed that they should consider other locational factors and explain why their importance was less strong. Such thoughtful teaching made an important contribution to the quality of learning. Another strength of teaching, especially on the vocational courses, is the quality of the assessment techniques. All students know how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their work further.
- 244 In the minority of cases, teaching was less effective. This was because the quality of explanations lacked detail and the students were given too few opportunities for independent work. For example, in a lesson on supply theory, students should have been offered more opportunity to construct their own diagrams. In a lesson on comparative cost theory, the pace of learning would have improved if the students had done the calculations for themselves. In one Year 12 business and economics lesson, learning for many was unsatisfactory, as a number of mainly male students had not completed a short and relevant homework task. This meant that the teacher could not proceed with his planned lesson. The teacher coped well with this awkward situation and ensured that the students who had completed the homework task were not penalised. This lack of commitment from a number of students was tiresome and has considerable potential to inhibit progress.

Leadership and management

- 245 The leadership and management of economics and business are good and the good progress made by students identified in the last report has largely been maintained. Since the last report the curriculum has been developed; a greater variety of courses are now offered ensuring that a wider variety of students are offered opportunities. The curriculum is further enhanced by the collaborative work that is taking place with local firms and Huddersfield University. Most students following business related courses are positive about the opportunities offered and they acknowledged the efforts that have been made to enliven the library provision. A number of modern books have been added to the stock and these are serving to encourage keener students to read around the subject. The department's planning is good and there is a very good commitment to ensuring that key skills are well-covered in lessons. Students also benefit by having full course details on the school's Intranet. This provision includes various exercises and simulations that students can undertake outside lesson time. The department is a lively one and there is a very good capacity for further improvement, though more use should be made of examination data to set targets and to use as an aid to monitor progress.
- 246 Results gained in 2001 in a number of courses showed an improvement on the previous year. Teaching and learning are good and very good provision is made for developing key skills. Leadership and management are good and a very good and inclusive curriculum has been developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 247 The school offers AS level computing in Year 12 and A level computing in Year 13. All Year 12 students also follow an ICT key skills programme at level 2. At the time of the inspection 25 students were following AS level computing in two groups in Year 12 and 6 students A level computing in Year 13.

The provision for Information and Communication Technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- teaching which is mainly of good quality.
- AS and A level students have positive attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement

- Response of students to the key skills provision.
- AS level results.
- quality and level of computer resources.

Standards and achievement

- 248 A level results vary in recent years. For two of the last four years they have been above national average levels and in the other two below these levels. Over this period, however, there have been 10 or fewer candidates in each of the years so comparisons are invalid. In 2001 they are slightly below the national average level with 8 out of the 10 candidates achieving pass grades. Average points scores in the subjects also vary. In 2000 it is 4.67 compared to a national average of 4.58 and in 2001, it is 3.20 compared to a national average of 4.62. Achievement of A level students is at the expected level for the course. AS level results in 2001 are disappointing with only 50 per cent of the candidates obtaining pass grades. All but two of the 32 candidates for A level over the last four years are boys. Results for

students taking the ICT key skills course during Year 12 in 2001-2 are low. Of those sitting the level 2 tests less than half achieved passes.

- 249 The standards of work of current students in Years 12 and 13 are at the expected level for the courses that they are following. In a Year 13 A level class for example, students showed a good understanding of the concepts involved when undertaking work on databases. They were able to respond to questioning by the teacher on methods used to ensure the consistency of data held centrally and when necessary asked for points of clarification during the development of the topic. Additionally a Year 12 class working towards AS level made good contributions during group work on operating systems. Although the range in terms of attainment was relatively wide most showed a good understanding of the topic in responding to the teacher's questioning. As indicated the majority of AS and A level students show a good understanding of the various theoretical aspects of their courses. However, opportunities to develop the required practical skills are more restricted with practical periods only operating after the normal school day. The development of practical and independent learning skills is also impeded by restricted access to appropriate computer resources particularly at peak times during the school day. Additionally, most students in a Year 12 key skills class were showing below expected levels of ICT skills.

Quality of education

- 250 Teaching is good overall. The teacher involved has good subject knowledge. All lessons are well planned and students have a good range of learning opportunities in classes, including working as a group and on an individual basis. As a consequence, students' progress and learning are good. Some of the group work includes lively and interesting presentations by the teacher with good questioning of the students. For example, in one Year 12 class the teacher gave a lively and interesting presentation on operating systems and this was well supported by a detailed handout. The students responded well to the questioning and showed a secure understanding of the topic. A and AS level students are regularly assessed. Good records of students' progress are kept by the teacher and these are used well to guide the teaching and to provide additional material. There is an appropriate balance of theory and practical work on the courses, though the latter takes place during twilight sessions in order to improve access to the resources for other students in the school. Attendance at some of the twilight practical sessions is low. Additionally, the employment of a part-time teacher means that students only have access to specialist support for two days each week. A and AS level students are well motivated and respond well to the questioning during the group work. However, attitudes of the majority of students to the key skills provision is much less positive with many not appreciating the relevance of it to their other subjects.

Leadership and management

- 251 Management of the sixth form provision is satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation procedures include lesson observations and the provision is regularly reviewed. However, the management and provision for key skills is unsatisfactory. Insufficient links are currently being made between this aspect and the main subjects being followed by individual students. The employment of a number of non-specialist teachers for the delivery of the key skills provision also makes effective co-ordination of this aspect of the work more difficult. As a consequence, a high quality experience for all students cannot be guaranteed with these arrangements. Good use of ICT in art, geography and business studies. Very good use is made in graphics and design and technology. Much more restricted use is being made of ICT in other subjects. In particular, use in science, modern foreign languages and in English is currently unsatisfactory. The quality and extent of computer resources available to sixth form students, is lower than average. Access at peak times to appropriate computer resources is sometimes difficult.
- 252 Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Recruitment has increased with in particular good numbers now taking AS level courses. Teaching in the sixth form continues to be good and standards remain at the expected levels for the courses being followed. There continues to be inconsistent use of information and communication technology across subjects in the sixth form.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

- 253 The school offers courses in sports studies, and a GNVQ in leisure and travel. Two lessons of sports studies were observed and one lesson of GNVQ leisure and travel. In the lessons in sports studies the quality of teaching and learning was good and very good. In 2001 examination results in sports studies are in line with the national average and the number of students entered for the examination is 14. There has been a steady fall in recruitment to the course since the last inspection. In the lesson in GNVQ leisure and travel the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory and students had good attitudes to their work.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

- 254 The school offers a range of courses including art GCE A/S level, A-level and the vocational GNVQ; music A level; theatre studies; and media studies. Art and music were inspected and theatre studies and media studies were sampled. In both lessons seen in theatre studies and media studies the quality of teaching and learning was excellent.

Art

There are fifty-nine students studying Art and Design courses in Years 12 and 13.

Overall, the quality of provision in art is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The standards that current students are achieving are good.
- The range of courses that are offered is good.

Weaknesses

- Standards in the 2001 GCE A-level examination at the higher grades are below average.
- No record is maintained of the frequent monitoring of students' progress.
- Monitoring of the consistency and effectiveness of the department is weak.

Standards and achievement

- 255 In 2001, students were entered for examination in the GCE A/S level, A-level and the vocational GNVQ examinations. Results in the GCE A-level are below average. Though all fourteen students passed at grades A-E, less than half the national proportion gained the top two grades. Only one boy was entered for the examination. GCE A-level results have been below average for the last two years, falling from being consistently good at the time of the previous report. Students did not perform as well in art compared with other subjects in terms of the average point score, adjusted to take account of the national picture. Results in the GCE A/S level are well above average. Of the twenty-six students entered, about two thirds gained the top two grades compared with about one third nationally. The six students entered for the GNVQ examination gained above average results. One-third gained distinctions while the remainder gained merits.
- 256 The standards of work seen in Year 12 and in Year 13 exceed expectations for the course. Students produce very varied work from extended studies around broad themes. They use sketchbooks very well to collect images, develop ideas, experiment with techniques and to make insightful written commentaries and evaluations of artists' work and their own. Drawing skills are well developed and ideas are explored with interesting combinations of materials. For example, handmade paper is combined with weaving, machine embroidery, wax resist and staining. Students' development work is thorough and often very lively, though some lower attaining students do not use this sufficiently well to inform the final piece of work. Students use information and communication technology well to research projects through the Internet and to develop and manipulate images, which inform their further work. For example, in the development of a sculpture, a student uses digital photography and software to create a simulation of how the finished piece will look when installed in the school. During inspection Year 13 students prepare for their final examination. Standards seen are very good. Students have built on their success at A/S level and they produce much very good quality development work. Some is excellent. A student has made good use of the local Yorkshire Sculpture Park, making studies of contemporary sculpture. Her research guides the development of her sculpture based on natural forms. The quality is very good. Students talk with confidence about the source of their ideas, how they have developed them and their intentions for its realisation. Achievement over both years is good, including those students with special educational needs. Students studying for the AVCE qualification achieve well as they follow a well-structured course, producing research, design-work, making and

evaluating. They benefit from work placement, which is the subject of a written study. The course attracts a wider range of students than is typical of A-level courses. Standards of work are good.

Quality of education

257 The quality of teaching is very good. In lessons observed it was never less than good and it was very good in over half of lessons. Teachers support individual students very well. By questioning and discussion on a very regular basis, teachers guide students as they work independently, often committing considerable time outside of lessons. In this way students are suitably challenged, including higher attaining ones. Students show great commitment to their studies and are very positive about the quality of the course, the support of their teachers and the good accommodation and resources made available to them. They now benefit from two dedicated studio spaces, which are not timetabled and are always available for private study. This has had a positive effect on the standards of work achieved. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, both technically and of the wider field of art. They are able to help students to solve technical problems and to develop their work in historical and contemporary contexts. Students have a good knowledge of significant artists, including contemporary sculptors as they make good use of both local and national galleries and museums. The low results in the two previous years' A-level examination have been addressed by the careful monitoring of students' progress through frequent informal assessment and discussion with students. Teachers also use annotation in sketchbooks to focus students' efforts, including 'Action Points' with dates for completion. Good use is also made of group tutorial sessions, where students present their work to their peers. However, the intervals between formal assessments are long and no record is kept of these valuable formative assessments in, for example, a student log.

Leadership and management

258 The acting head of department is providing satisfactory leadership and management. She is working in a temporary capacity for the third year, covering the extended secondment of the post holder. She has responded effectively to the new and changing curriculum demands and the students' success in the A/S and AVCE examinations bear this out. There is now a good range of courses available to suit a range of students' needs. Flexible and negotiable entry requirements enable the widest access. Despite the below average A-level results in 2001, the department has made good progress in other examinations and other areas so that improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. A very high proportion of the very successful A/S group has continued to study art and the quality of the work seen indicates that they are likely to gain good or very good grades in the forthcoming A-level examination, reversing the trend of the last two years. However, the monitoring of the work of the whole department is not sufficiently rigorous.

259 The department should now develop a way to record some of the very good informal assessments that are made in daily exchanges between students and teachers. A continuing focus must be the standards achieved in the GCE A-level examination. Systems should be established to monitor the consistency and effectiveness of the whole department.

MUSIC

The provision in music caters for 10 students following Advanced (AS and A-level) courses: seven students at AS level, three students at A2 level.

Overall, the quality of provision in music in the sixth form is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- The subject is well led and has adequate resources.
- Teaching is good.
- There has been a modest improvement in the small number of students opting for the sixth-form course.
- The department places suitable emphasis on key concepts and technical language.

Areas for improvement:

- Computers are underused.
- The development of extended critical analysis and discursive argument is limited.
- The small numbers of students who take the subject.

Standards and achievement

260 AS-Level Music results in 2001 are broadly in line with the national average and represent good progress in relation to candidates' attainment in GCSE music. Candidates' achievement is in line with their other A-Level subjects and results in music largely in line with national averages. There are no significant gender differences in attainment. The small number of A-Level candidates lessens the viability of statistical comparisons with national figures. At A-Level in 2001 a single candidate gained grade E. Candidates A-Level results in 2000 are also broadly in line with candidate's attainment in other subjects. In a detailed analysis of the 2000 A-Level results the department clearly identified historical-analytical aspects as a weak area and performance as a relative strength.

261 In Year 13 standards in performance vary but are broadly near average. Compositions display some variety. Structure and developmental aspects in composition are variable. Some student's compositions rely on repetitive styles while others display a more developmental approach using an extended harmonic vocabulary. Performance standards are often secure with students performing suitable music with fluency. Standards are more variable in aspects of extended writing. In comparison with performing and composing, standards in aural analysis and appraisal are more variable, with a lack of discursive argument applied to the significant aspects of musical texts. Overall, Year 13 students are on course to produce similar results to their attainment in the AS examination. Instrumental skills are more variable in Year 12, but in both years such skills are used well in supporting composition. Students' knowledge is often good, as in a Year 13 lesson on extended harmony in jazz where students had knowledge of the various chord configurations used in different styles. Overall standards in sixth-form music compare with students' general attainment.

Quality of education

262 Teaching is good. Work is matched to students' abilities. Teaching embodies good preparation, suitable pace and thorough organisation. Students are helped to consolidate their technical vocabulary; teachers routinely re-enforce musical terms and language. This helps to improve students' ability to apply appropriate language to

the analysis of music. Teaching promotes composition using the skills, interests and enthusiasms of students as a starting point. This has a strong impact on progress in this area. Teachers make sure that students have opportunities to develop most necessary musical skills. However, computer work is under-represented and this means that some student potential, particularly in the area of computer-generated composition, is left partially untapped. Students' attitudes in music lessons in Year 13 are diligent. They respond to challenging work. Just occasionally their response to questioning is a little reluctant. Normally, classroom question and answer sessions are directed towards eliciting one-word or short answers from students rather than developing discursive analytical debate. This is mirrored by modest use of analytical argument in extended writing. Sixth-form teaching stresses the need to widen analytical thinking, though students sometimes tend to focus purely on the factual elements in learning. Marking of student work is often thorough and comments helpful; students have a realistic view of their standards and welcome the sense of structure that the course offers. Overall sixth-form students have an appropriate approach to learning and are hard working. The subject has good retention rates. The department has already noted analytical appraisal as an area for development.

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

Leadership and management

- 264 The department has sound organisation with many suitable administrative processes in place. Leadership is good. There is awareness of student potential through careful assessment of student work. The long-term monitoring, assessing and recording of students' work are satisfactory and students are usually aware of what areas they need to develop in order to attain the grades to which they aspire. Suitable assessment records are kept. The overall use of assessment is partially directed towards the introduction of new strategies to develop student learning. This helps to improve attainment. Management of the environment is sound. The department has good instrumental stocks but poor information technology resources. The department has identified computer resources as a weak area in need of urgent development. Accommodation is adequate and suitable for all sixth-form musical activities. There is a variety of extra-curricular activity in music and some involvement amongst sixth-form music students. Opportunities for students to take part in public solo performances promoted by the school are currently limited but the prospects for future development are good. Such opportunities have a positive effect on attainment in performance. The popularity of the subject is showing signs of improvement with a modest rise in the numbers taking the A-Level options.
- 265 There has been satisfactory improvement since the last report. The main issues from the previous report, concerning time allocation and resources, have been resolved.

HUMANITIES

266 The school offers courses in geography, history and sociology at A level. These were inspected and reported on in full. One lesson was sampled in psychology where the quality of teaching and learning was very good.

GEOGRAPHY

The provision in geography caters for 25 students following Advanced (AS and A-level) courses: 12 students at AS level, 13 students at A2 level.

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

Strengths:

- Standards on the A-Level courses are above average.
- Students achieve well, with both class work and fieldwork of a high standard.
- Teaching and learning are good; very good in some cases.

Areas for improvement:

- The role of ICT in teaching and learning needs a greater transparency and additional resources to allow full exploitation of such tools in geography courses.
- A need for human resources to be rationalised within the humanities area to allow a full specialist delivery team to support the development of the constituent subjects.

Standards and achievement:

267 Standards overall are well above average. Results have been consistently good over the past four years. The 2001 results are well above average, with all 16 students gaining pass grades, and 44 per cent gaining the highest grades of A and B, 6 per cent above the national figure. The average points score in geography is above national averages over the past three years with an overall average points score of 6.13 points in 200, compared to 5.74 nationally. Girls outperform boys with an average points score of 7.0 compared to 5.6 The new AS course is also very successful with 52 per cent of students achieving A and B grades. Thirteen of the group of 19 candidates proceeded on to A2 in geography. Geography students compare favourably with other subjects at the school in terms of standards and staying on rates.

268 Lesson observations, discussions with students and a scrutiny of student work files confirm that the standards achieved by students following the two sixth form courses are well above average. High standards have been sustained since the time of the last inspection. Much of the A2 work showed a positive progression over the two-year programme of study, with the work of AS students exhibiting standards consistent with good grades and considerable potential for those proceeding to A2 in 2003.

269 Students show good levels of knowledge and understanding of concepts and processes in both human and physical geography. They are well focussed on task, applying newly acquired knowledge and skills to practical problems, and working collaboratively to address issues presented by the teacher. Levels of conceptual understanding and application within the A2 group are very high, with individual progress advanced by the expectation that students have to contribute to their own learning. All students are able to articulately describe stage and process in a mature

manner, with work on individual projects showing a wide range of interests and application. All student's work displays a wide variety of skills, including the basic skills of literacy (written and spoken), numeracy and graphicacy, together with more subject specific skills, such as problem solving, data collection and presentation, and the use of surveying and sampling equipment. Their practical work shows sound cartographical skills, displaying good abilities in the analysis of photographs and maps, as well as a capacity for both positive teamwork and for independent study. ICT skills are not transparent in the teaching and learning processes observed, although A2 students handle statistics and other data with confidence, but IT skills are clearly utilised by both year groups to enhance the presentation of field work projects. A few students regularly use the Internet, using downloaded materials to support ongoing class work, such as the impact of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zones as illustrated by the 21st March INFRARED-SAT images produced on the day of the Spring Equinox.

Quality of Education

- 270 Overall, teaching is good, with elements being very good. Subject knowledge is very comprehensive, with a range of teaching strategies used, together with a broad spectrum of learning resources. A very positive element in all lessons is the sharing of learning objectives and intended outcomes with the students; classroom discussion is enhanced accordingly via a joint teacher- student focus on relevant issues and processes. Extended writing work and course exercises are well marked, with students provided with clear supportive judgements on the quality of their work. Students are able to understand their current levels of understanding and application from the feedback discussions and written comments provided by teachers. The use of a hypothesis style approach in addressing issues is very successful in extending knowledge, as well as in the application of principles and processes to tasks. Assessment is regular, rigorous and supportive, with student work well monitored by teaching team via grade records, regularly reviewing progress and adjusting individual targets, thus allowing an on-going evaluation of student progress.
- 271 Students are very attentive and focussed, working effectively in response to good teaching techniques. Year 12 were able to firmly grasp and apply the concepts of 'high value\low weight' products when considering the impact of hydroelectric power and a ready labour\sales market in the Phoenix area, USA. The A2 students were also able to apply their knowledge of key physical processes to examples of discordant and concordant coastal structures in Dorset. Learning processes are clearly followed and reflective thinking skills are well developed, with fieldwork experiences drawn upon to illustrate class and essay work. Work examined displayed a maturity of understanding, as well as the usage of a wide range of resources, including statistical data, plus a limited use of ICT skills by some students.

Leadership and management

- 272 The department is well led by a very experienced head of department who is addressing issues identified in the departmental development plan. A team approach to the preparation of teaching resources is a major strength, as is the thorough planning of teaching and learning strategies used by the two teachers and students. Students freely indicated their appreciation of the breadth of opportunity offered via two differing staff perspectives. The new AS course has bedded in well, with the modules supporting the progression to Advanced level. There are good stocks of up-to-date resources and reference material available to students, with a good library\ resource room adjacent to the main teaching rooms. This room provides five

computers to supplement resources available elsewhere in the school, as well as providing a study area for research and quiet work. However, at times the department spends a disproportionate share of its budget to provide each student with a personal copy of the main texts, plus a good supply of reference books and journals. The staff teaching the sixth form courses meets regularly to compare experiences, to plan and to review individual student progress and targets.

- 273 The department has sustained its high standards since the last inspection, with teaching still of a high quality supporting a well-structured learning environment. The provision is good, with some very good aspects. Staffing problems influencing the main school due to staff illness have not impacted in the sixth form area. Retention at sixth form level between the two-year groups is good, but the department are less optimistic regarding future recruitment into the sixth form geography course.

HISTORY

History is a popular option with good numbers of students, especially in Year 12, choosing to study the subject.

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

Strengths:

- Good teaching is helping students to learn well, especially in Year 13.
- Students have been well supported by the head of department during a recent period of significant staff turbulence.
- Teaching is making a very good contribution to developing key skills.

Areas For Improvement:

- More use should be made of assessment data to set students' targets and to monitor their progress against such targets.
- The standards of work and the attitudes shown by a number of male students in Year 12.

Standards and achievement

- 274 The standards achieved by A level students in 2001, based on average points score, is in line with national average standards, though there is a big difference in recorded results between male and female students. Male students record results that are below national standards, whereas female students record results that are well above average. Overall, however, few A and B grades were awarded. The results in 2001 continued a decline in standards that started shortly after the last inspection. However, the outcomes in 2001 should be set in a context of some staff upheaval, which caused some disruption to teaching. Moreover, some encouragement can be taken from the 2001 AS level results with nearly 40 per cent of candidates gaining either A or B grades. The department does not have any valid value-added data, so no comments on progress can be made. The department needs to develop its use of assessment data so that the progress and performance of each individual student can be monitored.

275 Present students are recording standards that are above expectations overall but, in Year 12, there is a group of male students whose standards of work are well below expectations and who have poor attitudes to their studies. These students are passive in class and make little contribution. They have yet to develop the independent learning skills expected of advanced level students. Despite the existence of this disenchanting group, most students are making at least satisfactory progress and some, especially higher attainers, are developing a very good level of knowledge and understanding, and are emerging as confident and competent historians. These students in particular, write well and are able to present balanced arguments and show how views about major events, such as Stalin's economic and social policies, have changed over time. The students' analytical skills are further being developed by the emphasis that is placed on the use and application of ICT and numeracy. Students are encouraged to use the Internet for research and data is used appropriately. For example, in a lesson on Stalin's industrial policies students were clearly shown how figures relating to prisoners could be interpreted in different ways.

Quality of education

276 Learning in history is good because of the good teaching provided. Teachers plan well and use a variety of strategies to develop the students' historical knowledge and understanding. Source material is used most effectively and this helps students to understand about different perspectives and how interpretations can change over time. Very good planning is undertaken to deliver key skills. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing literacy skills, especially the skills of writing and evaluation, but planning for the relevant use of ICT is very good and there are opportunities to develop understanding by the use of data, especially the analysis of output statistics for example. Careful and detailed teaching in Year 13 is helping the students to learn about the Stalin's leadership and to appreciate that a range of views exist about his impact of life in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. By examining a range of detailed texts, students are increasingly appreciating that there are few clear-cut answers about his personal role in the 'Great Purges'. They are also learning that statistics estimating the numbers imprisoned during this period can be distorted by changing the definition of what constitutes a 'prisoner'. Though all teaching seen on advanced courses was at least satisfactory, occasionally insufficient challenge was offered. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on educational reform in nineteenth century England, the effectiveness of a well-planned lesson was downgraded as the teacher tended to give all the answers. Learning would have been further enhanced had the students been required to research on different types of schools, for example, and then given short presentations to their peers.

Leadership and management

277 The management of the history department is good. Though there has been a decline in history results, recent staff problems have been managed well with the head of department working tirelessly to minimise the effect of the disturbance. His endeavours received favourable comments from the students. Course completion rates are very good and the department is developing its library and other resources well. This offers students good access to information to aid their research work. The department is well organised and planning for future improvements is good, but more emphasis needs to be placed on assessment data as a tool to improve standards. At present the monitoring of the progress made by each individual student lacks rigour. More use should be made of known examination results to ensure that students are achieving realistic standards in their work. The post 16 curriculum is well organised

and is suitably enhanced by fieldwork, especially the work that students undertake at Saltaire.

- 278 Progress since the last report has been at least satisfactory, especially when set in the context of the staffing problems that the department has faced. Results are in line with the national average, though many present students are working at above this level. Teaching is good and leads to good learning and the development of key skills, especially the skills of analysis and evaluation, is a particular strength.

Sociology

There are 23 students studying sociology in Year 12 and 10 in Year 13.

Overall, the quality of provision in sociology is good.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good; a good range of teaching methods stimulates effective learning.
- Students' attitudes and enthusiasm, and the support they receive from teachers.
- Good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Use of evaluation to embed learning particularly for lower attaining students.
- Sufficient time for teachers to deliver the subject material.
- Opportunities for using ICT.

Standards and achievement

- 279 A-level results are average when compared with national data in 2001. Results have remained broadly average since the last inspection. This represents an overall improvement in standards because the average attainment of students admitted to the course is lower. Male students did significantly better than female students in 2001 with an overall improvement in boys' results since the last inspection compared to a falling pattern for girls. There is significant under achievement by girls in 2000 when their results are compared with other subjects. The proportion of students awarded the higher grades A and B has fallen consistently since the last inspection from 47 per cent in 1998 to 26 per cent in 2001. This is 9 per cent below the proportion indicated by national statistics. However the school reports students achieve well overall when prior results at GCSE are taken into consideration. There are fewer high attaining pupils studying the subject than at the time of the previous inspection. The overall work observed in Years 12 and 13 is at the standard expected for the course.
- 280 Year 12 students have made a very good start on their AS-level course. Students can identify important concepts concerning the media. For example, they understand the influence of politics, bias and the conflict between the needs of the popular press to sell newspapers by manipulating, exploiting and exaggerating stories, to gain sales, and the possibility of conditioning society against presentation of the actual facts. Students are developing their critical skills. They explore the norms and values of society to identify the reasons for upper class influence in society and the decline of working class values. Students are able to apply this thinking to contemporary and historic issues, for example the fox hunting debate and the closure of pits. They are aware of the effects of socialisation and how this influences prospects in terms of jobs and marriage. Current achievement is good because of the challenging teaching.

- 281 Year 13 students have a good understanding of theorists and differing perspectives and apply these to present day issues, making well-informed hypotheses for discussion. They are able to describe different perspectives, using their knowledge of underlying principles of studies. Students are competent at organising essays; they are able to interpret statistics, use graphs and understand the value of planning and research. High attaining students analyse appropriate material, which links with the requirements of the question that they then specifically address. They readily link theorists, perspectives and aspects of society. Low attaining students do not always identify the key words in the title and can be ambiguous in their selection of relevant material. Overall students' standards of literacy and numeracy are good. There are too few opportunities for students to use computers and develop their skills in ICT.

Quality of education

- 282 The teaching of sociology is good. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject and this enables them to use a variety of teaching methods that help students. For example, anecdotes from the teacher brought alive the spirit of the working class community so that students had an understanding of their suffering, solidarity and the culture of the time. Marking is closely linked with AS and A-level grading and teacher comments assist understanding and indicate areas for improvement. Teachers are adept at prompting students' learning by good questioning. In a Year 12 lesson students learned, and were entertained, when the teacher used different accents to exemplify labels used in stereotyping people. The teacher used pictures of people in different jobs so that students realised how labelling could relate to clothing and position. He referred to people's names, the clubs they attended and the sports they followed and invited students to link and divide these by class. They put words into context so that students understand meanings. This type of teaching extends students' thinking well. Teachers take care to involve all members of the group. This good teaching promotes good learning and students are keen to extend their knowledge independently, especially for coursework. They use supplementary information from books and periodicals, they research topics from their files and books, they obtain information from the Internet and adequate complementary research books are available in the library. Access to ICT facilities is limited and this access time is mainly used for coursework. Students' attitudes to the subject are good. Students appreciate the way teachers create an atmosphere where teaching and learning is a joint enterprise. Students feel that they have a good understanding of how society functions, especially the impact of different interest groups. Several students will follow a university course in the subject. Overall, students make good progress.

Leadership and management

- 283 The head of department provides good leadership. His links with the examining board keep the department up-to-date and fully acquainted with examination requirements. Good systems of monitoring students' progress enable teachers to be aware of students' strengths and weaknesses. This guides teaching, supporting teachers in the preparation of tasks that closely reflect students' individual needs. There has been continued absence by a member of staff in recent months that has been well managed by the head of department. A weakness in provision is that students' are not sufficiently made aware of the whole syllabus and are therefore insecure in their understanding of links between topics and are restricted in their ability to set their own targets for improvement. Although numbers entering the examination have declined since the last inspection, larger groups currently in Year 12 put strain on the

accommodation and resources available and on teachers' time. There is a lower allocation of teaching time provided for the subject than is sometimes seen and this puts pressure on staff to cover the content of the course. As a result evaluation time is curtailed and extension work to embed knowledge is often omitted. This has a particularly detrimental impact on the learning of lower attaining students who require greater and more regular opportunities to review their progress. Despite this, and as a result of good planning in the department and the good attitudes of students, the department has the capacity for further successful development.

- 284 There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Although examination results have declined the school indicates that the open policy of entry to the course offers good continuity for some students who might not reach the entry requirement in other subjects. Recruitment and retention in sociology has also been steadily falling since the last inspection and this fall will continue into 2002. However nearly all students who enter the examination are awarded a grade. There are signs of improvement as the number of students currently studying the course in Year 12 is higher than the previous year. The quality of teaching and management of the subject is good and students are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

- 285 The school offers courses in French and German alongside a range of English courses. Both French and German were inspected.
- 286 In English the focus was on English/English literature, but one lesson of literature and one lesson of media were also sampled. English literature results in 2001 are well above average but students did not do as well as expected considering their GCSE results. In a very good literature lesson students confidently identified stylistic features in John Donne's poem 'Song'. In an excellent media lesson students were all able to identify the media devices used to sell magazines to niche markets.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English/English literature

The overall provision in English caters for 137 students. 'AS' and 'A2' courses are offered in English language, English literature, English language and literature and Media studies.

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

Strengths

- Teachers have sound subject knowledge that effectively helps students to build up their own knowledge and understanding.
- Relationships are very good; students share ideas freely and work in a mature and business like manner with their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment needs sharing with students in order for them to have a firm understanding of areas of their work which need developing.
- Student progress needs closely monitoring in order to avoid underachievement.
- More independent work for students in most groups that will ensure thorough preparation for University.

Standards and achievement

- 287 In 2001 GCE 'A' level English and English literature examination results are well above average with 64 per cent of students achieving A/B passes, nearly 23 per cent more than national figures for all secondary schools. However, a third of the group failed to achieve as much as they could based on their previous attainment at GCSE. Twice as many girls as boys failed to achieve their predicted grade. The standard of work seen on inspection confirms these high standards and also confirms the lack of achievement by some students who are not being developed to their full potential. Standards have been consistently well above average since the last inspection and the proportion of the highest grades awarded increases each year.
- 288 Standards of work seen for students currently in Year 12 are satisfactory overall. Students' 'AS' folders reveal a slow transition from GCSE. The picture is inconsistent, in some groups the work is a result of considerable teacher input. The student achievements in some 'AS' modules are unsatisfactory and only balanced by very good teaching of the partner module.
- 289 The students' development of critical responses is good in some groups and weaker in others. There is good exploration of text by all students; they are able to describe character and plot but the development of their comparative skills is weaker. Students generally use terminology well but in some groups they are weaker on personal opinion and show little reflection about the text. Some students have a range of literary perspectives to bring to their reading while others do not and this limits their understanding. One Year 12 group explored the notion of the 'omniscient' style in Mark Twain's 'Huckleberry Fin', using this and other perspectives, they went on to successfully rewrite short passages.

- 290 Standards of work seen for students currently in Year 13 are satisfactory overall, but the picture is inconsistent. Most students in Year 13 are able to respond to questions, develop lines of argument and offer detailed critical interpretation. They generally have good awareness of language, both written and spoken, and are aware of audience and purpose. In a lesson on 'Othello' students were able to analyse the significance of spoken language in the play. In this lesson the students applied Grice's maxims to their analysis of dialogue and identified negative word clusters. The higher attaining students lucidly explained the effect of these on both the delivery and interpretation of the speech. This excellent lesson was constantly empowered by the teacher's expert subject knowledge. In this very challenging lesson all students learned how prolixity, taciturnity and hesitancy in speeches emphasised the dramatic effect.
- 291 Most students are able to write accurately and sustain a line of argument supporting this by relevant illustration. Higher attaining students show critical awareness of different approaches to the analysis of spoken and written texts and write fluently as a result. The full range of critical, analytical perspectives needs introducing much earlier in the course as many assignments are underdeveloped and writing remains focussed on character and plot. Good responses include work on First World War poetry, Sylvia Plath's 'Bell Jar' and 'Wuthering Heights', weaker responses were evidenced in 'Death of a salesman' and 'Journey's End'. There was little evidence of personal and original writing in both courses, and very little evidence of independent reading or reading around the text.
- 292 Achievement of both 'AS' and 'A' level students is satisfactory overall. There is a difference in achievement in teaching groups caused by a lack of rigour in monitoring procedures within the department. All students appreciate the work of their teachers and respond with an enthusiasm and commitment to succeed. Students work is generally well organised but in some groups there are a lack of research notes, seminars and personal reviews of text. This shows poor independent learning and slower progress in developing critical skills. Students in some groups demonstrate a high level of application and the ability to work under pressure. Students work well together. Strong purposeful relationships are a feature of most lessons and as a result good learning takes place within the parameters of the teaching provided.

Quality of education

- 293 Teaching is good. All teachers have thorough knowledge of their subject, they read around their texts and some offer additional references. The picture is inconsistent. The higher performing groups reflect very good teaching. Features of these lessons include the students being offered additional references and becoming more responsible for their own learning. The best teachers share assessment criteria with students that helps them identify weaknesses in their own work. In a really lively lesson students improvised Iago and Roderigo; they were able to confidently discuss Iago's extension from a character into a psychological influence in the play. Here gains in understanding were a result of consistently good teaching over the module. Expectation of students is also variable, most teachers have high expectations of their students and students achieve well. In groups where they were not challenged the learning was much slower. An example of good practice was a lesson on Iris Murdoch's 'The Sea, The Sea'. The teacher did not miss any opportunity to extend the literary references and challenge the students to make the literary connections. In this lesson good gains were made in understanding the socio-historical context. The inconsistent experiences provided by ten different teachers on these courses are significantly affecting the achievement of different groups of students. A rigorous review of this structure would result in expertise being focused to students needs.

There is a lack of systematic and rigorous monitoring of the overall provision experienced by different groups of students.

Leadership and management

- 294 The planning of the department lacks the refinement that is needed to incorporate good practices and integrate assessments into the cycle of learning. Thorough procedures of monitoring will ensure consistent practice and a coherent experience for students. Teachers do know their students well, but this knowledge is not carried forward into documentation. Teachers' assessments are not always shared with students, nor are they used to inform planning in the majority of teaching groups. As a result, many students are unable to express an understanding of their own learning, or of what they need to do in order to improve. There is also no way in which teachers in this large team can track individual student's progress or check they are reaching their full potential based upon their results at GCSE. Last year nearly one third of all students failed to achieve their predicted grade.
- 295 The book stock has developed since the last inspection but is still not satisfactory. The department needs to incorporate a wider range of reference texts; literary history, literary criticism, biographies and linguistics are needed to meet the changing demands of 'A' level.
- 296 Students are given good guidance on choosing the course, and as a result the retention rates from 'AS' to 'A' are good. Information and communication technology has also developed since the last inspection and is being used more regularly by the sixth form students. However, more needs to be done to promote independent learning and this includes students using the internet to read articles and academic papers.
- 297 The head of department is enthusiastic about the exploration of language and literature but has failed to recognise the need for some strategic management in order to promote this ideology. All teachers are well qualified and experienced but their work needs developing to include the interpretation and analysis of student performance. This, combined with closer monitoring of their students progress, should ensure all students achieve their full potential. This is an enthusiastic and hardworking team who need clear direction through the new courses and a shared understanding of all student progress.

French

Thirteen students take French in the sixth form, nine in Year 12 doing AS Level, and four in Year 13 taking A-level.

Overall, the quality of provision in French is satisfactory.

Strengths

- In three of the past four years, A-level results have been well above or above average.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject and mostly enjoy their lessons.
- The schemes of work for AS and A2 level have been revised very carefully.
- Materials used to support teaching are very effective.
- Students benefit from work with an excellent foreign language assistant.

Areas for improvement

- Marking and follow up to marking are not as effective as they should be.
- Students do not record their independent work, and teachers do not monitor it carefully.
- No shared observation of teaching takes place.
- No teacher has attended training for the new A-level courses.
- Insufficient use is made of valuable resources such as the satellite television and the languages laboratory.

STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

- 298 From 1998 to 2000, A-level results are well above or above average. In 2001, results dropped to below average but the school reports that this is caused by inconsistencies in examination board procedures and that the decline in results is quite exceptional. In 2001, students performed worse in French than in their other subjects. This had not been the case in previous years, when all students had gained results in French at least in line with those in their other subjects. The department has made no value-added analysis of results, but teachers report that, overall, students perform in line with expectations based on their GCSE grades. Girls outnumbered boys, in line with national patterns. Students taking AS examinations in 2001 have not yet 'cashed in' their results, but they perform as expected given their earlier GCSE grades.
- 299 Standards in the lessons and work files of current students in Years 12 and 13 are broadly in line with national expectations for the course, although they are higher, in relative terms, in Year 12 than 13.
- 300 Standards in Year 12 are satisfactory, with some good features. Year 12 students' accents and intonation are good, but students sometimes lack confidence in speaking and expressing their ideas and opinions. In one lesson, when the teacher produced both English and French newspapers in an interesting way to introduce the topic of 'La Presse', several students hardly spoke any French at all, in spite of continual encouragement from the teacher. However, in another lesson, when the level of direct challenge was greater and the material was presented with more verve and interest, the same students responded well and most lost their hesitancy. Most, and more particularly the boys, participated vigorously in the competitive oral testing of work they had done previously. The class moved on at a good pace, learning the introductory intricacies of the subjunctive tense; and maintained very good concentration in response to rigorous teaching. Most Year 12 students develop their writing skills well, and the best work seen shows that the more talented students have

made good progress since GCSE. In their longer essay work these students are beginning to use more complex grammar, structures and expressions with good understanding and accuracy. The work of other students is less accurate in grammar and structure, but is satisfactory overall. Generally, students are positive in their attitudes and achieve well in response to demanding teaching. A few more passive students do not make the progress expected in speaking French, because of their reluctance to participate.

- 301 Standards in Year 13 are broadly satisfactory, but the range of attainment in Year 13 is slightly lower, overall, than in Year 12. In a Year 13 lesson, students demonstrated this range of attainment when they took part in group work, discussing French attitudes towards the treatment of animals. The most confident student was able to take part fully in conversations with the teacher and with other students, but the rest were more hesitant and needed much prompting from the teacher, particularly in the case of one student whose preparation for the lesson had not been thorough enough. A similar range of attainment is apparent in students' reading and written work. Some essay work shows effective control of grammar and high levels of accuracy, but other work is too often hurried and inaccurate. Most students achieve as expected, given their earlier attainment. The work of a few students is affected by absences or by inadequate independent study. Students' skills in ICT in both Years 12 and 13 are satisfactory. However, the language laboratory does not function properly and students do not have adequate opportunities to use the satellite television. In addition, the computers in the main departmental base cannot be used effectively, because of lighting problems. Because of these factors, the development of the students' skills is restricted.

Quality of education

- 302 Teaching is satisfactory overall, and the rate of students' learning is also satisfactory. Lessons are conducted almost entirely in French and students listen carefully. On occasion, however, teachers in Year 12 speak too slowly, and in consequence students do not get the practice they need to develop their understanding of the rapid French of native speakers on tape. The planning of lessons is good, and the range of activities includes most language skills and opportunities for pair or group work. Teachers have prepared good grammar booklets for students to work on independently, and they also provide information on web sites for further reading and study. This independent work is not, however, logged by students nor monitored by teachers, to ensure that students do the amount of study they have agreed to do. A further area for improvement is the assessment of students' work. Although marking by teachers is usually careful, students are not required to do follow-up corrections or redrafting. Sometimes, the marking does not give students a clear idea of how well they are performing.

Leadership and management

- 303 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, and there are some good features in the overall management of French in the sixth form. The department has responded very well to the decline in results in 2001 and remains positive, particularly about the achievement of current Year 12 students. Teachers have put much thought into revising the schemes of work, which now achieves a good balance between the demands of new syllabuses and the time allocated to the subject. They have worked very well on the development of the 'Digital Brain' initiative for Module 3 of the AS course. This initiative has stimulated similar work in other departments across the school, and is greatly appreciated by students. The foreign language assistant is

used very well to raise students' standards of speaking and listening, and to support the students' preparation of oral presentations. Teachers work well together, but there is no reciprocal observation of teaching, and no teacher has attended a course on the new A-level courses. Although target setting is becoming well established, the monitoring of students' progress is not firmly based on a value-added analysis of their attainment.

- 304 Overall, improvement in the quality of provision for French since the last inspection has been satisfactory, as far as it is possible to tell on the basis of limited evidence in the previous inspection report. Comments on examination results in that report suggest that the rate of progress of current students is broadly similar to what it was then.

German

14 students take German in the sixth form, 7 in Year 12 doing AS Level, and 6 in Year 13 taking A-level.

Overall, the quality of provision in German is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Over the past three years, A-level results have been average or above average.
- Schemes of work have been revised carefully, on the basis of analyses of students' performance.
- Students have good attitudes towards the subject.
- Students have good access to information on the Internet.

Areas for improvement

- Students in Year 13 lack confidence in speaking skills.
- No shared monitoring of teaching takes place, and no teacher has attended a course on the new A-level examinations.
- Some of the classroom activities would be better done as independent work.
- The valuable resources of satellite television and the language laboratory are not used sufficiently.

Standards and achievement

- 305 Over the past three years, A-level results have been either in line with or above the national average for all schools. In 2001, the results are in line with the national average. Students performed as well in German as in their other subjects. The department reports that students performed in line with expectations based on their GCSE grades, but the department has no value-added analysis of students' performance to support this assessment. The results of the AS examinations in 2001 have not yet been validated. Girls outnumber boys in all examination groups, in line with national patterns.

- 306 The evidence of work seen in Year 12 and 13 in lessons and in students' files indicates that standards are average overall and that students' achievement is satisfactory, although better in Year 12 than Year 13. All students study German for three years only before starting sixth form work. Although entry to AS and A-level work requires an A, B or C grade at GCSE, students' knowledge of grammar at the beginning of Year 12 is relatively thin. The teaching of grammar begins at a more elementary level than is normally encountered in the sixth form.

- 307 The written work of current Year 12 students is, however, mostly done well, and students make good progress over the methodically constructed course. Year 12 students are confident in their speaking skills. They express themselves simply, but accurately, and are not shy in expressing and sharing their opinions and ideas. Students are very positive in their attitude towards the subject and they make appropriate progress.
- 308 In Year 13, the range of attainment is more varied. All students listen well, but they are not all as confident as they should be, and a few still make basic grammatical errors in word order and subordinate clauses. The written work seen of current students at the beginning of Year 13 was below the standard expected. However, by the time of the inspection, standards had improved to average overall, particularly in longer essay work. The more talented Year 13 students write well at length, and use words and expressions effectively. Other students work at a much less complex level, and are comparatively limited in the range of vocabulary they know and use. Overall, Year 13 achievement is satisfactory, but several students, because of their unwillingness to take part in classroom conversations, do not make enough progress in speaking German. Students' skills in ICT are satisfactory in both Year 12 and 13. However, the language laboratory does not function properly and students do not have adequate opportunities to use the satellite television. In addition, the computers in the main departmental base cannot be used effectively, because of poor lighting. As a result of these factors, the development of students' skills is restricted.

Quality of education

- 309 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The lessons seen were conducted entirely in German and teachers demonstrated a good knowledge of the subject. In a Year 12 lesson on health and vegetarianism, a prolonged sympathetic questioning session enabled students to make good progress in developing their speaking skills. They were helped to become more confident in expressing their own ideas and opinions. Most lessons are planned well, and activities are generally appropriate to the classroom context. Nevertheless, in a Year 13 lesson, a reading activity on pollution problems in Germany that required students to use dictionaries, would have been better done as an independent study. The pace of lessons varies between teachers and in some lessons the level of challenge is not always high enough. Teachers generally mark students' work carefully, but students are not required to do follow-up corrections in order to learn by their mistakes. Teachers do not monitor the students' independent work rigorously enough, and students do not use the satellite television sufficiently. However, students use the Internet well, when they are given the opportunity and despite poor lighting. They also have valuable time, one hour per week, with a foreign language assistant, which helps them develop their listening and speaking skills. Teachers provide a high degree of support and sympathetic understanding for a student with special educational needs.

Leadership and management

- 310 Management of the subject at sixth form level is broadly satisfactory, but there is room for improvement, for instance in the upkeep and servicing of resources, including the satellite television, the language laboratory, overhead projectors and cassette recorders; the training of teachers in the new A-level courses; the effective monitoring and observation of teaching; and the tightening-up of some assessment procedures, including value-added analyses of all students' attainment.
- 311 A good feature of leadership has been the head of department's careful revision of the schemes of work of the AS course. The programme is now demanding but highly accessible, and it includes a significant element of enjoyment in the course materials. The long established exchange with a German school has recently been re-established after a short break, to provide students with further opportunities for learning outside the classroom.
- 312 Overall, improvement in the subject has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Although little detail of sixth form performance is given in the previous report, it appears that current students make progress in examination courses at as good a rate as students at the time of the last inspection.