

INSPECTION REPORT

DON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique Reference Number: 106786

Headteacher: Mr R Johnson

Reporting inspector: Mr T Wheatley
10013

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th October 2002

Inspection number: 249642

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 – 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Jossey Lane
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Doncaster
South Yorkshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Pauline Hutchinson

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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10013	Ted Wheatley	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19720	Deborah Granville-Hastings	Lay inspector		Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19586	Wendy Easterby	Team inspector	English Post 16: English	
2919	Phillip Armitage	Team inspector	Mathematics Post 16: mathematics	
27503	Marie Foulds	Team inspector	Science Post 16: biology	
30901	Susan Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design Post 16: art and design	
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology Post 16: information and communication technology	
18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	History Post 16: business studies	
12118	Allan Paver	Team inspector	Geography Post 16: geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
3793	John Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
1340	David Wigley	Team inspector	Music Citizenship	
22042	John Challands	Team inspector	Physical education Post 16: leisure and tourism	

18673	Richard Wilkins	Team inspector	Religious education Post 16: religious education	
27803	Joe Clark	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	
23402	Birendra Singh	Team inspector	Post 16: chemistry	
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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?	14
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	24
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	27
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	28
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	32
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	34
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	41
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	72

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Don Valley High School is an 11-18 comprehensive that is larger than similar comprehensive schools. It has 1,527 pupils and students, including 242 students in the sixth form. Numbers are rising and the sixth form has doubled in size since the last inspection. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups, mainly Black British. Only a very small number of pupils have English as an additional language and none are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportions of pupils and students with statements of special educational needs or who are on the school's register for special needs are broadly average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is average, but the school serves a community of very high unemployment due to closure of coal mines and many families receive state benefits. Attainment on entry to the school is now about average and has risen in three years from being well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school that provides a good education and although standards are below average they are improving and pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Many pupils achieve well. Many stay on into the sixth form to follow a wide range of courses. Teaching is good and the school is well led. Management has a clear focus on improving teaching and raising standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' and students' attitudes are good.
- The leadership of the school and commitment to improvement are good.
- Provision for pupils' and students' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school's care and support for its pupils and students are good.
- The range of extracurricular activities is good.
- The school's links and relationships with parents are good.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment are below average by the end of Year 11.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- Attendance of some pupils is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not meet the needs of all pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997 and since then it has made satisfactory progress. Standards are rising slowly; better teaching and the implementation of an oracy policy are contributory factors. Statutory requirements for religious education are now fully met. Requirements for collective worship are still not met, though students in the sixth form have elected not to have collective worship. Fixed term exclusions have decreased and basic hygiene issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with.

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	D	E	D	E
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	D	

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

Attainment in the national tests taken by 14 year olds in 2002 was well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Attainment is well below that seen in similar schools. Comparisons are based on schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, the school is in an area of considerable economic deprivation, finding employment is difficult and many families receive financial support which lowers the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Attainment has improved in line with rising standards nationally and is satisfactory for most pupils considering they entered the school with very low standards, particularly in their literacy skills. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average rather than well below average, and are therefore improving, and that pupils of all prior levels of attainment generally make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education are broadly average and in drama are above average. Standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), music and modern foreign languages are below average.

In the GCSE examinations taken by 16 year olds in 2001, results were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. However, results have improved in recent years in line with improvements nationally. The school did not meet its targets for the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades but exceeded its target for pupils obtaining at least one GCSE pass grade. Overall, pupils performed much as expected compared with their performance in the national tests taken when they were 14 and taking into account the low starting point and disaffection of some pupils, many pupils achieve well. Unconfirmed results for 2002 show increases in the percentages of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades and for those obtaining one or more A*-G grade GCSEs.

Literacy skills are generally below average in spite of the school's efforts to improve them and this affects how well some pupils learn. Numeracy skills, too, are below average.

The majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily and the school works hard to meet the needs of disaffected pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall, largely due to the work done by class teachers. Some do not achieve as well as expected because details of their particular needs are not always available to teachers.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall in lessons and around school. Pupils generally learn well as a result. They are proud of their school and enjoy being there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good by the great majority of pupils and this creates an orderly happy atmosphere.

Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Pupils work well together, cooperate with and help each other in lessons. They grow in self-confidence and self-esteem.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, although it is improving, and is the result of the persistent absence of a small number of pupils.

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.

Teaching and learning are good overall and teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In nearly one quarter of lessons teaching is very good and occasionally excellent, in three fifths it is good or better and in most other lessons it is satisfactory. In a small percentage of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching in mathematics and science is good and in English it is satisfactory. The best teaching in all three subjects, and in other subjects too, is characterised by good questioning that enables pupils to express their own knowledge clearly and to develop their understanding, as well as their speaking skills. In most lessons expectations are high and pupils respond well to this. Teaching in drama, geography, and design and technology leads to good learning because teachers are enthusiastic and often inspire pupils. Marking of pupils' work, particularly in Years 10 and 11 is good, providing clear guidance that aids pupils' learning. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, teachers do not build on pupils' prior learning sufficiently, challenge brighter pupils or meet the needs of all pupils in lessons. Consequently, pupils' learning suffers, they become bored and poor behaviour ensues.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. However, while there is noticeable good teaching of oracy skills, there are generally too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and this limits how well pupils learn. Teaching of numeracy is not well established; the school policy is not fully implemented.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, in spite of specific information about pupils not always being available, mainly because class teachers work hard to identify learning needs and to provide support in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is good. In Years 10 and 11 statutory requirements for design and technology are not fully met. The school is working hard to improve the vocational curriculum, though it is too narrow currently.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. However, there is very good provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties; pupils are well supported and make good progress in managing their behaviour. Provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties is inconsistent because teachers often have insufficient information about pupils' needs and what support they require to help them achieve well.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good and for spiritual development is unsatisfactory because the school policy on providing spiritual development has not been fully implemented.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care is good and is appreciated by parents. Staff know pupils well, and support and provide suitable guidance and support to help them learn well.

Overall, the school has a good relationship with parents. The school values parents' support and is constantly looking for ways in which it can improve some parents' view of the value of education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and the leadership team. Together they provide clear direction for school improvement and involve all staff in planning development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the headteacher and staff in their efforts to improve the school. For the most part they ensure statutory requirements are met, except for collective worship and some elements of the National Curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall and improving. The headteacher and senior staff have a sound grasp of the areas for improvement and are increasingly involving other staff in recognising these and planning development.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans its expenditure very carefully, takes professional advice and uses its resources effectively to improve the education of its pupils and students.

The school is well resourced, has good accommodation that is improving to match the demands of the rising numbers of pupils and students. Staff are well qualified and experienced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school has high expectations of children. • The school generally deals with parents' concerns well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress • How closely the school works with parents. • Some parents are concerned about homework. • Some parents feel that pupils do not behave well in school.

At the meeting held for parents before the inspection, the main response was of support for the school and how it provided for their children. Some parents expressed concern about the irregularity of homework, the quality of marking and inconsistencies in giving detention to pupils or removing them from lessons. On the whole, inspectors agreed with the strengths that parents recognised. Inspectors found that the quality and frequency of reporting on pupils' progress was good and that the school

communicated well with parents. Provision of homework was generally good and although there were inconsistencies, the school was doing much to improve this. Pupils behave well in the school and the school's procedures to manage unacceptable behaviour generally work well. The school has monitored how frequently detentions or removal from lessons are used and is working on establishing consistency and fairness across the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 242 students, which is higher than average. In Year 12 there are many more female than male students and in Year 13 there is an even balance. The sixth form attracts students from outside of the school, mainly from a local 11 to 16 school. In the most recent years more than half of Year 11 pupils have stayed on into the sixth form. This is above the national average, and high compared with other schools locally. Twenty-two academic courses and 14 vocational courses are on offer, an increase from the previous year. The school is developing links with other schools in the area in order to provide further options choices. Once started on courses, the great majority of students complete them. The school sets entry qualifications for sixth form subjects, but is flexible according to specific students' needs.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is very successful and gives good value for money. The school has a caring ethos which contributes to its reputation and it consequently attracts students from nearby schools into its sixth form. It provides a very wide range of academic and vocational courses and many opportunities for students' personal development. Management of the sixth form is excellent. The overall quality of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good teaching; students learn and achieve well.

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching; teachers have very good specialist knowledge, and generally high expectations.
- The quality of guidance and support provided by sixth form tutors.
- The very wide range of courses.
- Relationships between members of staff and students, and between the students.
- The quality of information given to students entering the sixth form, and across Years 12 and 13.

What could be improved

- The range of vocational education.
- Increased opportunities for independent learning, especially in English and art.
- Class sizes.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Many students start their courses from low levels of attainment. Teaching is very good, with teachers having very good subject knowledge. Students' attitudes are very positive and coupled, with the effective teaching, they make very good progress.
Biology	Good. Standards vary from year to year. Numbers choosing the subject are rising. Students make satisfactory progress, and perform according to expectations. The department makes good and increasing use of ICT.
Chemistry	Satisfactory. Overall, standards are satisfactory, and are improving. Teaching is sound overall, though sometimes lacks sufficient opportunity for students to discuss their understanding. The subject is

	well managed.
Design and technology	Good. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching is good with clear objectives, sharp planning and a brisk pace to lessons, leading to good learning.
ICT	Good. Teaching is good, with well-structured sequences of activities in lessons, leading to students making good progress.
Business studies	Good. Teaching is challenging, and leads to good learning. The subject is well managed and is currently considering a vocational course to provide a greater breadth of opportunity.
Physical education	Good. Good teaching, and the very good relationships between staff and students lead to good progress, and well-motivated students. Most students achieve as well or better than expected.
Leisure and tourism	Good. Teaching is good. Students progress well during the course, leading to high standards of attainment. Students have very good attitudes to the subject and work well independently.
Art and design	Good. Good teaching leads to good achievement. Results on the GNVQ course are improving.
Geography	Good. More students are being attracted to the subject. The teaching is very good and standards are rising.
Religious studies	Very good. The very good teaching, and the very good attitudes of the students produce standards in line with expectations for these students.
Psychology	Very good. The department is well led and directed. Very good teaching is having a strong impact upon how well students attain.
English	Good. Standards are below average, but good teaching enables students to make good progress. The subject is well managed.

Other lessons were observed in history, theatre studies, health and social care, NVQ retailing, sociology and key skills (communication), physics and general studies. In these lessons, the overall quality of teaching was good, with very good teaching in theatre studies and general studies. Overall, students make good progress and achieve well. Students have very good attitudes to their studies, and excellent attitudes in theatre studies, geography and history. Levels of attainment are average, though they are below average in communication key skills and in NVQ retail.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The school provides very good monitoring, support and guidance throughout Years 12 and 13 for academic performance, attendance, job and higher education applications. Students' targets are regularly reviewed and supportive action is taken very quickly when required. The pastoral care of students is excellent, and students value the support they receive.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management are excellent and have a priority of providing a high level of care and support. The four senior members of the sixth form management team work closely with the tutors, to monitor students' academic and pastoral development. Attention is being given to improving the sixth form accommodation and resources, study areas (with technology resources for independent research and careers guidance) and social areas.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about courses. • The choice of courses. • The way they are enabled to settle into the sixth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection evidence showed that students do not feel that there are any major areas of sixth form provision that need to be

<p>form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching. • The monitoring of their work, informing them of their rates of progress. • They are treated as adults. • The sixth form accommodation and resources. 	<p>improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most recent ALIS evidence noted three principal areas which students thought could be improved. These concerned student accommodation, computer resources and social activities.
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The inspection team endorses the positive comments made by the students through the questionnaire and discussions. The high percentage entry rate into the sixth form, together with the high retention rate, reflects the fact that students enjoy being members of the sixth form. Almost all of students would recommend other students to join the sixth form in this school. Features particularly appealing to them are the wide choice of subjects, the information they receive about courses before they start, and the very close academic and pastoral monitoring they receive throughout the courses. All students settled in well, and were made to quickly feel part of the student community. This is a very successful, caring and very well organised sixth form.

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. Attainment on entry to the school in 2002 was close to average overall, although literacy skills were below average. Attainment on entry has risen in recent years from being well below average in 1999 and for several years before that. Comparisons with the performance of pupils in similar schools are normally based on schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, the school is in an area of considerable economic deprivation where finding employment has been particularly difficult for several years. Many families receive some financial aid which lowers the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The overall picture shows that in spite of a high level of pupil disaffection, pupils make satisfactory progress generally and many make good progress as they move through the school.
2. In the national tests taken by 14 year olds in 2002, attainment was well below average overall. The percentage of pupils obtaining level 5 or higher in English and mathematics was well below average and in science it was below average. The proportion obtaining level 6 or better was also well below average in English, science and mathematics. Over recent years attainment has improved in line with improvements nationally. Compared with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment in 2002 was well below average. There is some difference between the attainment of boys and girls from year to year, the most marked difference being in literacy where boys perform less well than girls. In teachers' assessments in other subjects, attainment was broadly average in most subjects and below average in history, music and physical education. There have been fluctuations between years.
3. Inspection evidence shows standards to be below average, an improvement on the previous year overall and most evidently so in English and science. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science, and this reflects satisfactory achievement overall from when pupils entered the school and good achievement for many pupils. Unsatisfactory attendance has had an impact on the achievement of many pupils, but overall, attendance is improving. Standards are above average in drama, and they are broadly average in design and technology, history, music and German. They are below average in art and design, French, geography, ICT and physical education. Standards are below the expectations of the local agreed syllabus in religious education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and it is good in most subjects. It is very good in drama. Achievement is good in these subjects because there is some exciting teaching, high expectations and pupils know what they need to do to improve. In geography the teaching of literacy skills is good and this helps pupils achieve well. Girls do better than boys overall, though the main difference is that boys' writing is often careless and therefore less useful to refer back to for revision purposes.
4. In the GCSE examinations taken in 2001, the attainment of pupils was below average overall. In recent years results have varied between below and well below average, but overall there has been an improvement broadly in line with the national improvement. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE was well below average and fell below the school's targets. However, the percentage has generally improved in recent years and in 2002, although there are no national figures to compare with, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades was higher than in 2001. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades was in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils

obtaining one or more A*-G grades at GCSE was below average but better than the school's target. The percentage increased in 2002 and exceeded the school's target again, indicating that the school has started to reduce pupil disaffection. In 2002 results improved in English, mathematics and science. They also improved in drama, food technology, geography, history and French. Results got worse in art, expressive arts, resistant materials, graphic products and German.

5. Inspectors' findings broadly reflect these results. Standards are below average overall by Year 11. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. In design and technology, history and drama standards are broadly average. In art and design, geography, ICT, German, music and religious education standards are below average and in French they are well below average. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory achievement overall, and many achieve well. In design and technology, geography, history, music and drama, pupils achieve well, largely due to imaginative, demanding teaching and good guidance for pupils.
6. Standards of literacy are below average and this contributes to below average standards. Pupils read sufficiently well to understand material used in teaching, and they speak readily and appropriately, though their vocabulary is basic. They are less competent in their writing, which is inaccurate in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many find it difficult to develop ideas in detail, either in speech or in writing, which affects their standards in a variety of subjects. Standards of numeracy are below average overall, particularly for pupils aged 14 to 16. Many of these do not have a secure knowledge of basic numeracy processes and have difficulty, especially with their number tables. Standards of pupils' ICT skills are average overall and are improving. However, while most subjects provide opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills, there is insufficient provision in mathematics, art and design, geography, history, music and physical education.
7. Pupils with special educational needs overall do not attain the standards they are capable of and their progress over time is unsatisfactory. Pupils with the weakest literacy skills, especially in reading and writing, make unsatisfactory progress because their subject teachers are not given sufficient information about the targets set for them and this makes planning work to help them reach these targets difficult. Nevertheless, some teachers do plan work for them, and then these pupils make sound progress. The work pupils do on the school's computerised integrated learning system, Successmaker, helps to improve their literacy and numeracy skills up to a point, but they do not get further help from specialist teachers, either individually or in small group situations. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who attend the learning support centre make good progress, learning to manage their behaviour more effectively, improving their attendance and raising their self-esteem. The achievement by the highest attainers is generally satisfactory and an increasing amount of work is being done to support the most gifted and talented pupils.

Sixth form

8. Standards are generally average and most students achieve well. The school encourages students to stay on into post-16 education. Many students who would not traditionally follow courses in the sixth form do so and gain considerably from doing so in maturity and confidence to continue their education.
9. In the science seen during the inspection, students are working in line with the national average in chemistry, and results have improved in the last two years. They are working below average in biology, though students perform as expected, relative to their

previous attainment. They are working at the expected level in mathematics, but as the department has an inclusive policy towards those wishing to take the course, standards of achievement on entry are generally below average. Design and technology students, and art and design students, are working in line with average, and are achieving well in relation to predictions based on GCSE results. Standards observed in geography and religious studies are in line with the average. Much of the work seen in psychology was of a higher standard than the school's examination results indicate. Examination results in business studies have been below average, but trends are showing improvement; in work seen during the inspection, most students are working in line with, and occasionally above average. Standards of work by students on travel and tourism, and leisure and tourism courses, are average, with several students being expected to gain distinctions. Overall, the good, and often very good teaching, together with the positive attitudes of the students, contributes to the standards achieved by the students.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, the attitudes, values and personal development of pupils in the school are good and a strength of the school as reported in the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good in all year groups and in all subjects. Most pupils arrive with a desire to learn and enjoy the tasks prepared for them. They work hard, listen carefully and are willing to volunteer answers and ask questions. For example, in geography, Year 10 pupils cheerfully tackled work on the anatomy of depressions, gaining confidence quickly as they moved from one stage to another. Many pupils really try hard and persevere, even when they find the work difficult. In science, Year 11 pupils questioned the teacher well to extend and clarify their understanding of the life of a star.
11. Pupils' attitudes to school in general are good. The great majority enjoy coming to school and really appreciate the range of activities, events and clubs arranged for them at lunchtime and after school. Particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils flock to the drama, history and language clubs, enjoying their learning in a different environment. Sports and music activities are well supported and many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
12. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are good. They cooperate with their teachers and get on well together. Even pupils with the most severe emotional and behavioural problems who work in the learning support centre generally, though not always, show respect and consideration for their teachers. Behaviour in class is nearly always good. The learning support department makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development, providing good role models and encouraging pupils to be considerate to other pupils and to adults generally.
13. Behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around school is good. The number of exclusions, although still high, has reduced greatly since the last inspection and is the result of the unacceptable behaviour of a very small number of pupils. Analysis of the reasons for detention shows little aggressive or abusive behaviour from pupils but more the schools' push on the importance of attitudes towards work in lessons and homework. Very occasionally, a small number of pupils behave in a silly or immature way and do not seem to care that they disrupt the lesson and irritate others. Generally, pupils are supportive of one another in lessons, helping each other naturally and readily. They like working in groups and enjoy practical work, working well without supervision. Between lessons, pupils move from one side of the site to the other quickly and with little fuss. Many pupils are friendly towards visitors, showing a natural curiosity about other people.

14. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are good and have a positive impact on pupils' response and attitudes in lessons. Pupils are valued as individuals and for their contribution to their own learning in lessons. Many are learning to listen and respect the beliefs of others. For example, in a Year 9 religious education lesson on Islam, pupils were using their own experiences of personal and social responsibilities to compare and understand the culture of others. In drama lessons, pupils often show a genuine awareness and understanding of the social and personal problems people may suffer (for example, bullying, discrimination) and think about ways in which they can help.
15. Attendance at the school is unsatisfactory. Although attendance has improved since the last inspection, it is still below the national average and unauthorised absence is high. The great majority of unauthorised absence is the result of the frequent absence of a proportionally small number of pupils. However, low attendance is an issue that affects the whole town as some parents condone absence and this affects the standards those pupils achieve. The school is working hard to combat this attitude in both parents and pupils, and pupils' attendance is slowly improving as a result.

Sixth form

16. Students have very positive attitudes towards their studies. They work extremely hard and show a genuine desire to work and to do well. Many show a real honesty when assessing their achievements and speak very highly of the support they have received from staff. Some students feel that their positive attitudes and understanding of what is necessary to be successful in sixth form subjects are a direct result of the intervention and monitoring of staff. Relationships between students and between staff and students are excellent and instrumental in creating such a stimulating environment in many lessons. For example, in a Year 13 physics lesson the quality of relationships produced a relaxed yet fruitful dialogue in which students and teacher freely discussed issues. In a Year 13 theatre studies lesson, students were developing the ability to apply Brechtian techniques within their practical work. The communication between teacher and students was such as to make it an enjoyable and valuable experience for everyone.
17. Students have a strong sense of loyalty towards the school and take an active role in many aspects of school life. There is a sixth form council which largely organises the sixth form centre. Some students run a 'No Worries' drop-in sessions for younger pupils to talk about concerns or worries they have. Many students take part in a peer education scheme shared reading project with younger pupils and help in the special educational needs department. They also help at examination times and to organise events. Many pupils flourish socially in the sixth form where great emphasis is put on the development of their personal skills, confidence and self-esteem. Their attendance is high, and their self-discipline is very good. These values contribute directly to their positive attitudes to study and prepare them well for adult life.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching and learning are good overall and in one in four lessons teaching is very good or occasionally excellent. In the rest of lessons, teaching is mainly good or satisfactory. Teaching in a small proportion of lessons is unsatisfactory and in the majority of these the school has been providing support to help teachers improve. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection.

19. The most effective teaching shows that teachers plan their lessons well, taking into account the prior attainment of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this plays a significant part in planning activities and using suitable resources that lead to good learning. In many lessons in most subjects there is good questioning and discussion where pupils are encouraged to talk about their knowledge and understanding, to air their difficulties and to ask for help. This is a direct result of development work on oracy skills arising from the last inspection and, in the best lessons, is having a positive effect on how well pupils learn and in their involvement in school work. The majority of pupils become confident learners who are unafraid to ask for guidance. The great majority of teachers set suitable homework that builds on work done in school. Monitoring by heads of department and senior staff is identifying a small number of incidences where this is not the case, and is encouraging improvement.
20. Where pupils achieve best, for example, in design and technology, drama and geography, teachers' enthusiasm rubs off on pupils and they too become enthusiastic. In history and design and technology, close monitoring of how well pupils learn, identifying their learning difficulties and providing guidance on how they can improve their work are having positive effects on helping pupils achieve well. In music, teacher expertise and the range of practical work are generally leading to good musicianship.
21. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are satisfactory overall and in most lessons are good. Occasionally, teachers have the same expectations of all pupils and while this is usually good for the highest and some middle attainers, the lowest attainers find themselves struggling and become 'switched off'. Incidents of this were seen in English and ICT and as a result some pupils did not learn enough.
22. Teachers generally handle behaviour and discipline issues well; they are usually firm and friendly with pupils, establish good classroom relationships and sensible rules of behaviour and use the school's discipline and behaviour policies consistently. However, a small number of teachers have not established effective classroom management strategies, so pupils do not become involved in lessons, lose interest and start to behave badly.
23. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. While there is noticeable good teaching of oracy skills, and sometimes other literacy skills, this is not consistent. A newly convened working group has recently produced a good literacy policy, but this has not been implemented in all subjects. Most teachers recognise the need to develop pupils' literacy and a few, in history and geography, for example, have good strategies in place. Most teachers introduce important subject vocabulary carefully, though not all teachers stress enough the importance of accurate spelling. Some teachers encourage pupils to talk extensively about their ideas, extending and refining them, but not all do so. There is good practice, though. In a Year 11 history lesson, for example, a debate and 'press conference' about the problems in Ireland led to pupils making good progress in understanding the underlying issues. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to read a variety of reading materials and to engage in extended writing, though in history pupils' work is assessed for attainment in literacy and this gives very valuable help to pupils.
24. The teaching of numeracy is broadly satisfactory, though not fully established; the school policy is relatively newly formed and is not fully implemented. There is useful practice in science and design and technology, mainly because it is essential to pupils' performance in these subjects, but it is not specifically matched to a whole school approach to teaching numeracy.

25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory overall. Teaching in the learning support centre is good; the teachers have very good experience of teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and use the best strategies and methods to help pupils improve. Relationships are very supportive and encourage pupils to want to learn. Teachers in the unit have excellent support from the learning support assistants with special responsibility for the day-to-day management of the system. In other lessons, however, while teaching is mostly satisfactory because individual teachers put so much into supporting pupils with special educational needs, teachers are not given enough detail of pupils' individual learning needs so that they can plan their lessons most effectively. Individual education plans are not readily available and are, in any case, of poor quality. Nevertheless, learning support assistants are well deployed. The teaching of the most gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory and often good, with work clearly related to their needs. This is improving as the school's policy for supporting gifted and talented pupils is implemented.

Sixth form

26. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are overall of a good quality. Well over three quarters of the lessons observed in the focused subjects contained good or better teaching. There was overall very good teaching in geography, mathematics, religious education and psychology. Only one lesson contained unsatisfactory teaching. Students learn well because their levels of personal motivation are high, encouraged by the very good relationships between teachers and students.
27. Sixth form teachers have very good specialist knowledge, and they present students with high levels of challenge. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured in order to enable students to progress steadily. Teachers are very successful in matching targets to the appropriate levels at which the students are working, and to developing on from the knowledge they have already acquired. Thought-provoking, often provocative, statements by teachers lead to students discussing hypotheses at a high level of debate. In these situations, the students are expected to justify their views. Good learning and standards of achievement are the direct result of good teaching. Students listen well to the taught part of lessons, and become fully involved in activities. Most are able to work independently, though more opportunities to develop this facility are needed in art and English.

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

28. The school's curriculum is satisfactory overall. The breadth and balance of the whole curriculum is satisfactory though statutory requirements for the teaching of design and technology are not met for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 all statutory requirements are met and in addition drama is taught to all pupils. Pupils have a choice of French or German after experiencing both in Year 7.
29. The range of vocational courses and routes through education and training for pupils who are not interested in the traditional curriculum has improved significantly in the last two years, but is still not wide enough to meet the needs of all pupils. The school is currently reviewing a number of initiatives for which external funding has been received. Meanwhile the curriculum remains an academic one with some very recent provision for vocational education and a limited alternative curriculum. Whilst there is a clear vision by staff of a flexible 14 to 16 curriculum offering a number of identified pathways

to provide the education and training pupils and students need, this is not yet practicable.

30. Pupils can take up to ten subjects to GCSE. However, there are some problems of organisation, for example, physical education is taken predominantly by lower attaining pupils, yet sports and leisure is a rapidly developing and worthwhile career path. There is only one GCSE short course in ICT and, except for science, no certificates of achievement. The school has introduced sound provision for three popular vocational subjects in the current year and these have been chosen by over 40 per cent of Year 10 pupils. There are plans to extend this provision into subjects matched to pupils' needs. The school makes good alternative curriculum provision in Year 11 for those few pupils who reject the academic curriculum; they are disapplied from the National Curriculum and offered a modified curriculum with two days in school and three days of vocational courses at a local college. This is motivating some of these pupils and their attendance has improved. As yet there is no certification for this course. This aspect of the curriculum has not been sufficiently developed, but the school has plans to do so.
31. The school is making good use of short periods of residential experience for potentially disaffected pupils. Many of these pupils have their interest in school revitalised; it reinforces relationships with key staff and changes perceptions of education because it increases individual self-confidence and notions of self-worth.
32. The arrangements for organising the timetable are broadly satisfactory, but there are some minor problems resulting from the unavoidable appointment of a few part-time teachers, particularly with some classes experiencing more than one mathematics or science lesson in a day, whilst art is unable to have double lessons. Higher attaining pupils who follow the double science course cannot follow the GCSE in physical education. Accommodation issues affect the teaching of business education and travel and tourism and therefore teaching materials have to be carried around school. Nevertheless, teachers work well within these confines and, for example, although leisure and tourism is taught in rooms shared with other subjects and lacks office equipment, the room where it is taught provides a stimulating learning environment.
33. Provision for literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory. The school has a new, good literacy policy but it has not yet been fully implemented. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to read a variety of texts, and there is too little extended writing practised, and only rarely are pupils given specific teaching in this area. In history, work is assessed for attainment in literacy to a specific set of criteria. This gives very valuable help to pupils. The school's numeracy policy has only recently been produced and is not fully implemented so that there are similar approaches in all subjects.
34. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 7 to 9 do not have full access to the National Curriculum. They are withdrawn from too many lessons to work on a computer program designed to help them, particularly with reading, but they consequently fall behind in some of their other subjects, for example, in ICT. There are few other planned opportunities, for example, through a corrective reading programme, to help pupils improve their reading without being withdrawn for lessons. There is good provision for pupils who attend the learning support centre to help them modify and improve their behaviour. The alternative curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to learn about college courses, which they may want to pursue after age 16. The Youth Award Challenge from the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) affords pupils the opportunity, through various challenges, to develop key skills in areas such as ICT. However, in Years 7 to 9 there are insufficient opportunities for pupils with very weak

basic literacy skills to have specialist teaching in reading, writing and spelling, either in small groups or individually. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

35. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory because they do not contain enough detail, which means there is limited guidance for teachers to plan a suitable curriculum or lessons. However, teachers actually do a lot themselves to identify specific needs, and plan accordingly.
36. Provision for ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Most subjects plan to include elements of computer work in their teaching. In modern foreign languages, design and technology and music, computers are used well. In design and technology pupils use computer-aided design and manufacture software. In music, midi-keyboards are used to teach musical literacy and composition techniques. In modern foreign languages teachers make good use of an inter-active whiteboard and *PowerPoint* is used in presentations. In other subjects pupils occasionally use word-processing skills to present their work and some classes use the Internet for research. However, the use of ICT in mathematics, art, geography, history and physical education is unsatisfactory and is rarely used to support pupils' learning.
37. The range of extracurricular activities is good. Football, rugby, hockey, netball, cricket and swimming are offered and are well supported by a range of boys, girls and mixed teams. The new fitness centre is much appreciated by pupils. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is well supported by pupils who regularly attain bronze and silver awards. Music offers a wide range of opportunities to perform in public with three different bands, a choir and smaller ensembles for different instruments. There are music clubs and groups which meet regularly and every child has the opportunity to perform in public. Events are very well supported by parents. Similarly, drama is very popular outside of lessons, with a number of performance groups that are very well supported. Rehearsals and performances go on all year. Visits to the theatre are regular because teachers want every pupil to have the opportunity to see live performances.
38. There is also a good range of other clubs and activities available to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate. Those identified as gifted and talented have a lunchtime meeting place where they can play chess and are offered a variety of trips and activities. Those of lower prior attainment are actively encouraged to play chess in order to dispel the idea that chess is only for the clever.
39. A comprehensive personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE) is taught to all pupils throughout the school and makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Components of the well-planned course include a wide range of subjects and issues. The delivery of the programme has improved since the last inspection and teaching is now predominantly good and at times very good. Pupils are challenged to consider and questions areas, such as gender stereotyping and respond with interest. The use of drama groups and visiting speakers strongly support areas such as sex and health education. There are good initiatives in place such as the use of Year 11 pupils to mentor younger pupils on the dangers of smoking and parents are invited to talks on the hazards of drug taking. Statutory requirements for sex education and drug awareness are fully met.

40. There is good careers and vocational education. Careers guidance supports academic guidance because pupils receive appropriate advice about the choice of options. This is augmented by useful work experience.
41. The community make a good contribution to pupils' learning; industrial partners offer good work experience opportunities and contribute well to preparation for work by taking part in job interviews. The school has been chosen to house a new city learning college which is planned to substantially increase the part played by the community in the school.
42. The school has strong links with its partner schools, colleges and other institutions contributing to pupils' education. Teachers are attached to local primary schools and teach in them regularly. Primary school pupils visit the school in Years 5 and 6 and have well established links before they arrive at the school. Local primary schools use the sports facilities and the hall. The school is strengthening its network of links with the local colleges. Staff at an outdoor pursuits centre in Cumbria visit Don Valley to prepare pupils for residential experience and follow it up afterwards. The drama department has good links with a local school for the physically handicapped which has used the school's facilities for drama events and discos.
43. Overall, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Within that context, however, its provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. It has not adequately addressed a key issue of the previous inspection, concerning its statutory responsibility to provide a daily collective act of worship for all pupils. The school has devised a policy for spiritual development, and improved the quality of the weekly Year Assemblies. It has developed weekly themes for a *Thought for the Day* on the other mornings when pupils meet in their tutor groups, and good guidance and resources to support form tutors in their delivery.
44. These developments are not fully implemented. Year Assemblies have good moral and social content, and elements of good practice in the active involvement of pupils, and the use of music. They are, however, lacking in Christian or religious content, and only around half have any spiritual dimension. When pupils meet in their tutor groups, the time is used principally for pastoral and administrative purposes. Only a small minority of form tutors take note of the theme for the week and provide their pupils with an opportunity to reflect on it.
45. The school has evaluated its provision for pupils' spiritual development in lessons. There is good provision in some subjects, such as English, religious education and geography. Where there is, it is because of individual departmental initiative. Elsewhere, opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development in lessons are largely missed. There is a need for more rigorous monitoring of what is actually happening to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement, whether in assemblies, form tutor time or lessons.
46. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. It has clear values, based on respect and caring for the individual, that inform its everyday life. Pupils know right from wrong, and most behave well. They enjoy good relationships with each other and with their teachers, who provide them with very good role models. Pupils give practical expression to the values of caring in good support for a range of charities. The well-planned PSHCE programme challenges them with a range of moral issues, such as those relating to sexuality, or substance abuse. Teachers in English, drama, science, religious education, geography and history also do much to raise pupils'

awareness of ethical issues. For example, drama explores issues such as bullying through role-play.

47. The school also makes good provision for pupils' social development. It publicly recognises their achievements in all areas of its life, and raises their self-esteem, through a well-planned merits system, assemblies and presentation evenings. It gives pupils good opportunities to develop their social skills through a wide range of social activities, work-related visits and placements, educational visits at home and abroad, sports activities and outdoor and adventurous activities. The flourishing Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme makes a strong contribution to developing pupils' confidence and sense of self-worth. However, the school does not plan to provide all pupils with a residential experience.
48. Pupils have some opportunities to learn to take responsibility in the daily life of the school, for example, as form prefects, or on reception duty. Many subjects, such as music, religious education and physical education, provide pupils with good opportunities to develop skills of collaborative working through paired or small group work. The PSHCE programme challenges pupils with social issues. Some other subjects also do so. For example, history introduces pupils to 19th century factory conditions, helping them to understand the forces that have shaped contemporary society.
49. The school makes good overall provision for pupils' cultural development. It gives pupils very good opportunities to experience the creative and expressive arts. Music is a strength. Pupils can develop skills in a wide range of instrumental and choral music, and learn to perform for an audience through regular concerts and school productions. Background music in the dining hall enhances the experience of eating together. Drama is also a strength. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn the skills of acting and mounting productions through drama, sound and lighting clubs. Every pupil has the chance to visit the theatre. Pupils have enjoyed good success in the Derby Festival of Arts.
50. Pupils' awareness of other European cultures is enhanced through the concert band trip to Barcelona, and sporting and educational visits abroad. Currently, there is no foreign language exchange programme. Some subjects promote pupils' understanding of cultures other than the Western European. For example, religious education introduces them to the major world faiths, and English to Black American culture through the novel, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. Overall, however, the school still does not do enough to raise pupils' awareness of the contribution of cultures other than the Western European to the development of 21st century civilisation, or to appreciate the multi-cultural richness and diversity of contemporary British society.

Sixth form

51. The school has made an extensive study of the curriculum it provides in the sixth form, and continually seeks to give students many additional options, covering a range of levels. It recognises gaps in its provision and strives to fill these with courses to match students' needs and to encourage them to continue with education after the age of 16. In recent years, six new academic courses have been added, four new vocational courses, and a number of new NVQ courses. In addition to subjects studied up to the age of 16, students can choose from AS and A2 (A-level) subjects which include business studies, general studies, psychology, sociology, theatre studies, food technology and music technology. Two-year AVCE courses include health and social care and travel and tourism, and ICT, which has recently been added. One-year

intermediate vocational courses include art and design, health and social care and leisure and tourism. In addition, hospitality and catering, information technology and sports science courses have been added as choices. One year NVQ courses comprise business administration, retail operations, book-keeping level 1, career planning and preparation for employment and a key skills communication course up to level 2.

52. OCR single subjects, stages 1 and 3, and similar extension courses over one to three years, are offered at both certificate and diploma level in secretarial and administration procedures. Students wishing to raise their GCSE pass levels in English and mathematics may take re-sits.
53. A range of complementary studies enriches the curriculum in the sixth form. These include the ASDAN Platinum Youth Award, a PSHCE programme, Young Enterprise Scheme, the Rotary Club challenge and work experience. Various other activities enable students to achieve key skills in communication, the application of number, ICT, problem solving, working with others and improving their own learning. The Young Enterprise Scheme is particularly successful, involving about 25 students. The students run their own company, and enter competitions judged by leading business executives. The school has beaten other schools from Doncaster, from Yorkshire and at national level. The students concerned will be travelling to Switzerland to compete against other European schools.
54. The school regards the acquisition of key skills to be an important part of the students' training. A student who has not gained a grade A*-C at GCSE in either mathematics, English or ICT at the end of Year 11, must follow a one-year course in Year 12 in whichever of these three subjects is below standard. Currently, 75 students are doing the information communication technology course, 60 students are doing the application of number, and 15 students are doing the communication course. This ruling does not apply to those students following an ICT course to AS and A2 level. In Year 13, students not taking on three subjects to A2 level have the opportunity to take a level 3 key skills course through a 12-week intensive study.
55. There is a full range of opportunities for members of the sixth form to demonstrate levels of responsibility. Many are involved with producing a sixth form newspaper. In Year 12, they can take part in an "Ignition BSM" course, which gives them driver awareness of the road. Twenty students, who may wish to become teachers, are currently observing lessons in local schools. Through the "No Worries" scheme, sixth form students are identified for younger members of the school community to approach if they have personal worries they may not wish to discuss with teachers. Twenty-five students are currently involved with paired reading for three mornings a week in the special needs department. Carefully trained members of the sixth form give talks to Year 9 students about sex education and smoking.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school provides a good level of care which is appreciated by parents and pupils alike. It has continued to be a strength of the school as reported in the last inspection.
57. The school provides very good support for its pupils on a day-to-day basis. The pastoral team of year heads, assistants, tutors and academic tutors form the cornerstone of this and work effectively together sharing and using information well. Teachers and tutors know pupils well individually and have a genuine interest in their progress and personal well-being. Most pupils have trust and confidence in their

teachers and find them approachable and responsive. Where relationships are good (as seen in many lessons), teachers and pupils interact well and there is a relaxed but firm atmosphere. The learning mentors work alongside staff and pupils offering good quality advice and support. This is helping many pupils understand and manage their behaviour so that it does not get in the way of their own learning or disrupt other pupils. Another recent development has been the introduction of the academic monitoring of pupils. The school has invested time and money into year heads and academic counsellors being available to work intensively with identified pupils to help raise their attainment and achievement. This is having an immediate and positive effect on many of the pupils involved, with over half of them improving by one or two levels or grades last year.

58. Overall, the school has good procedures to monitor behaviour and to promote a positive attitude towards learning, school and each other. Procedures are effective and only a very small number of pupils continue to behave in an unacceptable way, and consequently earn the disproportionately high numbers of exclusions. A behaviour policy group, involving staff from all levels within the school, has recently put great effort into reviewing the way in which the school manages, checks and promotes behaviour. This is having far-reaching effects as subject departments are taking on more responsibility for monitoring and dealing with unacceptable behaviour in their subject lessons. This allows the heads of year more time to consider all the needs of all their pupils rather than constantly dealing with detentions. The school has clear guidelines for expected standards of behaviour which are consistently applied by staff who now feel more confident in handling difficult situations.
59. The school is very aware of the attendance problems of some of its pupils and has good procedures to both monitor this and promote the importance of regular attendance. It collects, analyses and uses information on every pupil. The attendance of individuals, groups, year groups and the whole school are monitored frequently. Specialist help from inside and outside the school is used to work with many pupils and the school has many rewards and incentives to encourage pupils and parents. The link between attainment and attendance has been well researched within the school and the information is increasingly used to encourage pupils to attend more regularly. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, the overall attendance at the school is still below the national average and this is due to the persistent absence of a small number of pupils which is condoned by families. The school continues to work hard with families to improve attendance.
60. The school pays good attention to the physical care of its pupils. Procedures for dealing with sickness, accidents and child protection issues are appropriate and sensitive. Good use is made of outside specialist help when necessary. Overall, there is a clear and structured approach towards managing health and safety across the school. However, two health and safety issues within the science department were raised during the inspection. One of the newly refurbished science laboratories does not have an electrical trip system, which should be rectified immediately and there are no risk assessments relating to the working practices of the technicians.
61. Overall, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and the use of assessment is satisfactory. Assessment is an important element in the school's overall strategy to raise expectations, and therefore standards. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, and all staff are now trained to use computer based assessment handling and analysis systems. Substantial investment in fibre optic cable has linked up the whole site, so that from any computer

on the network teachers can access data from pupils' academic progress, about their attendance, and their conduct log.

62. Assessment information is used effectively to place pupils into sets, as for example in English and mathematics, and there is now a common tracking system through the school, which teachers find easier and more accurate than the previous paper-based system. Heads of year now have time to deal with underachievers identified by this means. Targets are set by the headteacher in consultation with heads of departments. These extend across the whole school and extend beyond academic progress to behaviour management, attendance and participation in extra-curricular activities. There is an agreed calendar for annual reviews of progress by form teachers, which inform consultations with pupils and their parents. The sixth form has led the way since 1993 in using a measure of student progress to predict outcomes, and similar systems are now in place across Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, which means that teachers know what to expect from pupils.
63. However, there is some patchiness in implementing this whole school policy. The policy is very well implemented in history and mathematics, and its implementation is good in science, design and technology, religious education and modern languages. In art there is insufficient co-ordination and in English and music subject leaders have not yet had time to put the policy into full effect. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory in physical education and ICT, where teachers have no information about what level pupils have reached.
64. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory, but once placed on the special educational needs register, other than for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, support for pupils is unsatisfactory overall. Individual education plans lack short-term targets for pupils to achieve in order to raise self-esteem and they provide little guidance for teachers to plan support. Pupils are not tracked as they move through the school and although learning support assistants give effective support in the classroom they do not report back, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, how pupils are achieving. Pupils in the learning support centre are given good support to help them manage their poor behaviour. Learning mentors provide good support, particularly in improving pupils' attendance and self-confidence. There is inconsistent liaison between pastoral staff and learning support staff as to when pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are placed on the special educational needs register. Assessment of pupils' progress in improving reading and spelling relies too much on 'Successmaker' criteria and too little on other means of assessment to verify that pupils are making progress. Pupils are kept for too long on the 'Successmaker' programme, sometimes continuing through Year 7 and into Year 8 and Year 9. Learning support teachers provide good personal support to pupils. The lunchtime chess club is a valuable and popular meeting place for both teachers and pupils.

Sixth form

Assessment

65. Assessment procedures in the sixth form are rigorous and effective. Students sign a contract requiring their commitment to studies and early in Year 12 they are advised of their individual minimum predicted grades for AS and A2 examinations and after discussion are set targets that are higher than this. Tutors monitor academic progress regularly and under-achieving students receive academic counselling. Parents are informed where essential and are sometimes involved in establishing learning programmes. The system works well; all students spoken to during the inspection

confirmed that they knew at exactly what level they were working, and exactly what they had to do to improve themselves. Year 13 students who had not achieved as well as they should have in the AS examinations, confirmed that it was their own fault; they had been advised that they needed to work harder towards the end of Year 12.

Advice, support and guidance

66. The pastoral support and guidance given to students in the sixth form are of a high order, and are much valued by students. Students are allocated to tutors, who are involved with personal, social, health and citizenship planning, fostering links with parents, monitoring UCAS data and arranging interviews with careers staff. Personal tutors work closely with the heads of subject departments in order to monitor any under-performance by students. This includes the meeting of deadlines, lack of attendance and student attitudes. Tutors are very conscientious in their dealings with sixth form students. In one Year 13 lesson observed, the tutor was emphatic that students should get on with the first paragraph of their UCAS application, and put it on disk, as he needed to closely check what they had written. He also stressed the need for them to be formulating their curricula vitae, and not to leave it too late, as, again, he would need to check them. Students speak well of the support they receive.
67. The guidance students receive, and the careers information, is of very good quality. Full information about the content of sixth form courses is supplied to Year 11 pupils, and they are advised about the nature of academic and vocational courses on offer. The school is flexible in helping students to change courses if they realise they have chosen unwisely. Careers and university information is good and is readily available in the sixth form centre. The sixth form management team arranges a wide range of academic and vocational visits out of school, including to the Cambridge Science Park, Nottingham University and visits to the business area of Liverpool University. Good provision is also made for those students not intending to go into higher education. Trips, for example, are made to Geest Foods in Lincolnshire, to look at administration and finance. Vocational course students undertake work placements for one or two days a week and this sometimes provides contacts leading to full time posts. There is a full range of visiting speakers to talk about careers, and former students come back to talk about their own careers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. The school has a good partnership with parents and considers this a vital element in the quality of learning for its pupils. This area was strong at the last inspection and continues to be so.
69. Parents, overall, have good and positive views about the school. Most parents say they feel comfortable approaching the school with any problems and their concerns are acknowledged and sorted out quickly. Parents are happy with the quality of teaching and with the way in which the school is managed. Their children are happy at school and enjoy being there. Parents also think their children are expected to work hard. Some parents feel they are not kept sufficiently informed about the progress their children are making.
70. Parents are kept well informed about school life in general through the prospectus and the range of brochures for specific year groups (such as information for Year 7 and options information for Year 9). The newsletter is an informal and attractive way of keeping parents up-to-date with events and activities and to ask for and respond to their views and opinions. Formal reporting on progress of pupils is through a progress

review, a review day and written report (in the format of a pupil profile). The Family Review Day is very popular with an average of 85 per cent of parents attending. At the review, parents and pupils receive the profile and have time to read and discuss it together before they meet with the tutor. Pupils' achievement in relation to their potential is the basis of the discussion and areas for improvement are agreed upon. If parents feel the need to see subject teachers for further information, then the school will arrange this. The written profiles are of good quality, giving parents a summary of what pupils have covered and the progress they have made, and relate this to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. In this way, parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making.

71. The informal communication between home and school is very good. Teachers and tutors are quick to telephone home to discuss any problem, whether it is within a subject or more general. Parents are informed quickly when behavioural issues arise and kept fully informed as to any action the school is taking. The learning mentors and the learning support unit also work very closely with parents, involving them at every step. This is breaking down the barriers that some parents felt were there and changing their perception of the value of education.
72. The school offers parents many opportunities to be involved in their child's education and to learn more about the way in which the school and education work. As early as Year 5, parents and pupils are invited to school to see and taste the kind of activities they will meet in secondary school. A recent workshop on how to use the Internet at home to support work in school was recently attended by over a hundred families. The school encourages parents to check and read pupils' planners and use them as a means of communication, and some are doing this readily.
73. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress and are fully consulted and involved in annual reviews. Achievement in reaching Successmaker targets is celebrated both within school and by congratulatory letters to parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

74. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good overall. The senior team has recently expanded in size enabling the school to work more effectively in its efforts to improve. The headteacher provides very clear direction for how the school should improve and works closely with the leadership team to plan developments. Responsibilities are clearly defined though there is some flexibility. The team work well together. Members of the leadership team take on responsibility for individual developments and frequently involve other staff in working groups that evaluate current practice and plan improvement. There is, for example, a school improvement team, made up of a senior team member, some heads of departments and other interested staff, that is identifying what individual departments do to raise standards and is developing strategies to share what works best so that all departments can benefit. This is an effective approach because there are some inconsistencies and variations in how departments operate, for example, in developing literacy and numeracy skills and in monitoring and providing guidance for pupils on how to raise individual standards. There is throughout the school a commitment to improvement.
75. Other management responsibilities are generally carried out well. Heads of departments monitor and evaluate teaching and pupils' performance and plan well for improvements. They are implementing the school's policies on literacy, numeracy and

teaching gifted and talented pupils. However, there are some inconsistencies in the pace of introduction of these policies. The leadership and management of the learning support department are satisfactory overall. They are good in relation to the learning support centre but is unsatisfactory elsewhere because individual education plans are not detailed enough or accessible to teachers, and pupils' progress is not monitored thoroughly. The learning support centre is well managed with a focus on improving attendance and behaviour. Good evaluation criteria are in place to monitor its success. There are good links with primary schools and the special educational needs governor is well informed and supportive.

76. There is a high level of support for individual teachers that involves help for those teachers who experience difficulty in the classroom. Teaching is observed, strengths and areas for improvement are identified and targets are set. This is matched with profession training and support. Performance management procedures are fully implemented.
77. The school's priorities for improvement are good and are well expressed in its development plan. They are arrived at by careful discussion within school and involvement of governors at suitable times. Priorities extend to setting examination performance targets for subjects. They are based on analysis of prior performance of pupils and are negotiated with heads of departments. Expectations of departments to produce good results are fair but challenging. Where necessary, support is given to help departments achieve those targets.
78. Governors are generally supportive of the work of the school. They are involved in budget planning and planning the school development plan. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development; there is a commendable level of communication between school and governors. When appropriate, governors meetings include presentations from members of staff about pertinent issues. For the most part statutory requirements are met, but they are not for collective worship, or for design and technology in Years 10 and 11.
79. The school is well staffed both with well-qualified and experienced teachers and with a wide range of support staff. However, technician support in science is at present insufficient. Senior management has identified areas where teaching vacancies might occur and in some instances made appointments in advance of need, especially to protect the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Contacts with two local universities maximise the school's chances of appointing well-qualified newly trained teachers. The school makes good arrangements for the induction of new staff, of whom 12 this year are newly qualified. All five assistant heads are involved in supporting them. The school has also successfully recruited some new staff from abroad. In-service training for existing staff is a spending priority which makes a positive impact on learning, for example in the development of teachers' skills with ICT. Support staff make a good contribution to this. For them there is a proper management structure and opportunities to take major responsibilities in the running of the school.
80. Overall, the quality of accommodation is good and makes a positive contribution to the delivery of the curriculum and to pupils' achievements. The school's priorities for improving accommodation are appropriate and the school is constantly looking for ways to improve both the external and internal accommodation to further enhance the environment. The reorganisation of rooms means most subjects are taught in specific areas and create their own atmosphere with displays and artefacts. This is particularly so in geography, history and religious education where the high quality displays play an important part in creating a good learning environment. The refurbishment of the design and technology department is very good and the high quality rooms are

appreciated by pupils and staff and contribute strongly to pupils' positive attitudes towards the subject and their achievement. The new science laboratories have also made a good impact although there are still insufficient rooms and some science lessons are taught outside laboratories. In art, the specialist art rooms are good but too few. Some GCSE classes are taught in non-specialist rooms and this is partly affecting the standards pupils achieve.

81. The overall provision of learning resources in the school is satisfactory. Resources are very good in ICT, with the ratio of pupils to computers better than the national average and in design and technology with a very good level of resources for resistant materials and food technology. The library holds a good range of books and other multi-media resources. It is very well used. Learning resources are generally good in the sixth form. Improvements in the provision of learning resources are required in art, modern foreign languages, science and sixth form chemistry.
82. Financial management is good. The school's budget is well spent. It receives and spends more than most schools and is skilled in bidding for funds mostly from government sources to increase its basic budget. The governors have taken calculated risks in spending more money than most schools on teaching staff so that pupils work in small groups, and this is having a positive effect. Above scale payments are deliberately used to attract and retain good teachers and the school takes care to appoint teachers who come to the school well recommended. The school is successful in raising further funds from local and national initiatives and uses these funds carefully to improve the buildings and resources, for example, the new technology block.
83. The day-to-day management of the school's finances is very good and the clarity of lines of communication and accuracy of information are strengths. The last audit of official funds was three years ago. It found procedures satisfactory and suggested only minor adjustments which have been made. Governors rely on the headteacher for guidance and direction and recognise the importance of careful financial planning. This is an effective school which offers good value for money.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent. The most significant impact has been on encouraging students to stay on to further their education and in increasing the range of courses offered. Taking into account that the school accepts students who would not normally stay on for post-16 education, the management team have been particularly successful in raising the status of education. An assistant headteacher leads a highly effective senior management team, and a team of sixth form tutors. The sixth form management team leads all aspects of academic monitoring and counselling, and pastoral support and guidance. Systems in operation are thorough, ongoing and are regularly reviewed. Members of the team work closely with members of the student body in order to provide a good working and social environment for the students. Students very much respect how the sixth form is led and managed, and regard it as the principal strength of the sixth form.

Resources

85. Accommodation for the sixth form is very good. The sixth form management team has worked very hard to provide the students with a comfortable, work-friendly

environment, with all of the décor and furniture being a distinctive maroon and grey. There are two common rooms, a coffee bar, a reference library for private study and a careers centre. Plans are in hand for lunches to be provided in the centre, and the whole area is in the process of being physically enlarged with more recreation and study areas. Students value the provision of this area, and look after it well.

86. Resources for students are very good. There is a huge bank of computers available for independent research and learning, and more have recently been obtained. The reference library for private study is well stocked, and there is much information available for careers and university advice. The sixth form council keeps ahead of resource implications. In the meeting observed during the inspection, there was informed debate about more soap and toilet paper being needed in the toilet areas. The senior management team always respond positively to requests concerning resources. Departments are well provided for with text books and other learning resources.
87. Across the sixth form, the provision for staffing is generally good though there are a few instances of very large teaching groups, which reduces the level of personal support teachers can give to students. Heads of department liaise with members of the senior management team regarding the allocation of teachers on to sixth form courses. Two very positive strengths of teaching in the sixth form are the subject knowledge of the teachers and the challenges they present to students.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. The headteacher, staff and governors must now:
1. Raise standards by:
 - fully implementing the school's literacy and numeracy policies,
 - increasing opportunities for independent learning,
 - sharing existing good practice in providing work matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities with all teachers,
 - completing implementation of the school's strategies to support the most gifted and talented pupils,
 - ensuring that the good use of ICT seen in most subjects is common in all subjects.(Paragraphs: 6, 7, 33, 36)
 2. Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - reducing the time pupils are withdrawn from lessons for support work so that they do not miss out on their entitlement to the National Curriculum,
 - ensuring detailed targets for pupils with special educational needs are given to all teachers so that they can plan teaching more effectively.(Paragraphs: 7, 34, 35)
 3. Improve attendance by:
 - working to convince pupils and parents of the importance of regular attendance,
 - making the school's evidence on the link between attainment and attendance available to those pupils whose attendance causes concern,
 - building on the positive links between homes and school to reinforce the advantages of good attendance,
 - continuing to use existing methods to improve attendance and to explore further strategies.(Paragraphs: 3, 15, 59)
 4. Improve the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 by:
 - providing design and technology for all pupils,
 - continuing to increase the range of vocational education courses,
 - developing alternative routes through the Years 10 and 11 curriculum to match the needs of those pupils who are likely to become disaffected with school.
 - ensuring that choices of GCSE courses are not restricted by timetabling arrangements.(Paragraphs: 29, 30, 31, 32)

Sixth form

1. Widen the range of vocational education opportunities,
2. Increase opportunities for independent learning, especially in English and art.
3. Decrease class sizes in some subjects.
(Paragraphs: 27, 51, 87)

Minor issues the school should also consider are:

- i. meeting statutory requirements for collective worship,

- ii. ensuring the school's policy for spiritual development is fully implemented,
- iii. Increase the range of teaching strategies for Year 12 students in chemistry.
- iv. dealing with the safety issues in science in relation to:
 - electrical power supply to laboratories,
 - risk assessments on the working practices of the technicians.(Paragraphs: 43, 44, 45, 60, 217)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 -11	166
	Sixth form	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		78

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - 11							
Number	2	33	71	54	6	0	0
Percentage	1	20	43	33	4	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	2	17	38	9	1	0	0
Percentage	3	25	57	13	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 here as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,285	242
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	288	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	38	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	243	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	125	124	249

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	71	68
	Girls	72	64	67
	Total	104	135	135
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	42 (47)	55 (58)	55 (47)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (16)	26 (29)	16 (19)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	75	60
	Girls	72	76	66
	Total	111	151	126
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	45 (49)	61 (55)	51 (54)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	13 (18)	12 (22)	5 (20)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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	121	108	229

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	29	107	111
	Girls	42	99	105
	Total	71	206	216
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	31 (29)	90 (77)	94 (84)
	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	31.7 (27.2)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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	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	13	30	43

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	13	32	45
	Average point score per candidate	9.8 (n/a)	14 (n/a)	12.8 (n/a)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (n/a)	18 (n/a)	17.5 (n/a)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	13	30	43	1	2	3
	Average point score per candidate	9.8	13.7	12.5	n/a	18.0	12.0
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1496	124	7
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
12	6	0
11	2	1
3	0	0
1	0	0
4	3	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	96.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	622

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	22.8
Key Stage 4	22.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	4,591,988
Total expenditure	4,565,358
Expenditure per pupil	3,085
Balance brought forward from previous year	229,250
Balance carried forward to next year	255,880

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	37
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	50
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,527
Number of questionnaires returned	197

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	57	8	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	38	53	5	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	51	13	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	56	13	3	2
The teaching is good.	28	60	6	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	43	15	6	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	42	7	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	54	16	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	23	61	8	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	51	7	3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	53	6	5	10

Other issues raised by parents

Parents attending the meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection expressed their support for the school and overall felt that the school provided a good standard of education. They had some concerns about homework, thinking that it was irregularly provided for pupils. Some also expressed concern about the quality of marking and inconsistency in giving detention or removing pupils from lessons. Inspectors found that provision of homework is good; there had been inconsistencies but the school had dealt with them. Marking was found to be good overall. Detention and removal from lessons were used effectively to deal with misbehaviour and poor work. The school had monitored this over a period of time and had dealt with inconsistencies between teachers and subjects.

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 for English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- New leadership and management that are committed to improving standards.
- Assessment procedures, especially in Years 10 and 11, that help pupils to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses.
- The contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development/
- The behaviour of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment, especially of boys.
- Literacy skills.
- The focus on developing basic skills such as vocabulary and spelling.
- Planning of work to match the needs of all pupils.
- The use of computers to extend pupils' learning.

89. In the 2002 national tests at the age of 14, results were well below average when compared to all schools and well below average when compared to schools with a similar intake. Pupils performed better in mathematics and about the same in science. Boys' results were well behind girls'. Results have fluctuated over the past five years. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, results were well below average compared to all schools, both in English language and in English literature, though slightly better in literature. They were well below average when compared to schools with a similar intake and well below average compared to pupils' prior attainment at the age of 14. Pupils did about the same in English as they did in their other subjects. Results had been improving from a very low level at the time of the last inspection, but declined a little in 2001. The unconfirmed results in 2002 show an increased percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C grades at GCSE. Girls outperform boys by more than is found nationally.
90. Standards in the work seen during the inspection at the age of 14 are below average. Standards have improved and are likely to improve still further because good schemes of work are being developed which ensure pupils progress through a structured course. Teachers introduce lessons clearly and pupils know what they are going to be learning about. In the best lessons this is reinforced at the end of the lesson. Assessment procedures have recently been introduced which show pupils clearly how well they are doing and how they can improve. These strategies have not yet had an effect on results, but are providing a good base for future improvements and are enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress from their below average attainment on entry. High attaining pupils read with understanding of plot and character, for instance of, 'Twelfth Night'. They produce interesting writing and are beginning to think about the effect their writing has on the audience, but make errors in spelling and punctuation. They develop their ideas in speaking. Middle attainers read modern texts, both fiction and non-fiction with understanding, and answer questions appropriately, though briefly. They write at length and use paragraphs, but are technically inaccurate. Lower attainers read simple texts, but struggle with more complex language. Their writing is brief and inaccurate, but they write in sentences when reminded. Girls are better than boys, but strategies such as seating boys and girls next to each other, and having lots of short, focused

tasks are having a beneficial effect in encouraging boys to strive harder. Pupils read, speak and listen better than they write. Their vocabulary is limited at all levels.

91. Standards in the work seen during the inspection at the age of 16 are below average. Standards have improved for similar reasons to those given at the age of 14. Again, boys' standards are below those of girls. Pupils' reading and speaking and listening skills are better than their writing, by a large margin. High attaining pupils show insightful understanding of literature and use quotation well. They are articulate and write accurately. Several pupils are reaching the highest grades. Middle attaining pupils compare texts thoughtfully and write reasonably accurately, though they make errors in spelling and punctuation. Low attaining pupils read well enough to see differences in character, for instance between the teachers in, 'Jane Eyre', and, 'Our Day Out', and talk about their ideas sensibly. Their writing lacks precision. Often in writing, good content is obscured by careless expression. At all levels of attainment, vocabulary is relatively poorly developed. Pupils make satisfactory achievement overall and many achieve well. High levels of absence through Years 9 to 11 severely affect standards because pupils lose the progression necessary for improvement. However, attendance is improving and achievement is improving, too, as a result.
92. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their English in line with the other pupils in their class. Teachers know who they are, but often do not know their specific needs. Insufficient resources are used which are specifically directed to their individual needs, and there is insufficient co-operation between teachers and learning assistants before lessons in preparing work for them. However, much individual help is given to pupils, both during lessons and outside them. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified, but rarely is anything designed specifically to motivate them. They make satisfactory progress.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is much teaching that is good, promoting good learning, and some that is very good, but a small proportion is unsatisfactory. It is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, because assessment procedures and the schemes of work are more embedded into practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well, so that pupils develop understanding. As an example, skilled questioning of a Year 11 group clearly evoked pupils' own memories of their primary school days so that they better understood the poem, 'In Mrs Tilcher's Class', that they were studying. Relationships in the classroom are good, and teachers maintain good discipline which results in an orderly and productive atmosphere. During a Year 8 lesson where pupils were questioning three pupils taking on the role of suspects in a murder investigation, they listened closely to each other and the teacher, putting their hands up when they wanted to speak, with the result that all pupils practised their speaking and listening, and learning was good. Teachers mark work regularly and show pupils where they can improve. This is especially good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are, therefore, aware of their strengths and how they can raise their standards. The annual pupil profiles also help to show very clearly what pupils can and cannot do and how much progress they have made. Where teaching and learning are less successful, work is not suitably targeted to the range of attainment within the group. Sometimes the work is too hard for the lower attainers, and too easy for the higher attainers, which results in pupils beginning to lose concentration. Methods are not sufficiently varied to maintain the interest of pupils and there is insufficient group and paired work. Pupils in Year 11, for instance, spent too long working from a course book and too little time engaged in demanding and thought-provoking discussion. Too little time is spent on practising written work, and too little on reinforcing the basic skills, such as spelling and punctuation. Teachers do not focus sufficiently on introducing new words to pupils

whose own vocabulary is limited. Computers, though used, are not used enough to extend learning, and to improve presentation.

94. English makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Lots of discussion takes place, for example about homelessness in the study of, 'Skellig', or good and evil in, 'Macbeth'. Pupils study texts appertaining to other cultures which introduces them to a variety of societies and religions. Year 9, for instance, were reading an extract from, 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings', about a black American girl. The additional drama lesson for all Years 7 to 9 pupils and many Year 10 to 11 pupils is a valuable addition to their experiences. The library, though small, is a lively and friendly place that pupils enjoy visiting. It is used well to develop pupils' interests in reading.
95. Leadership and management are good. Leadership is new, but already a clear vision for the future has been established and several valuable changes, for example in assessment and lesson planning, are developing though they have not been adopted completely as yet. Results and standards are carefully monitored. Teaching is not yet monitored sufficiently for best practice to be spread across the department, but a good base has been established by management on which to improve standards further.
96. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been good. Standards have improved for pupils aged 16. There remains a big difference between the attainment of boys and girls, but several strategies are in place to try to lessen this. The shortage of books for wider reading, mentioned in the last report, has been put right.

Literacy across the curriculum

97. The effectiveness of the whole school's contributions towards developing pupils' literacy is unsatisfactory. Standards of literacy are below average; pupils' reading and speaking skills are broadly average but their writing is below average. They spell and punctuate inaccurately and do not write grammatically. Many do not express themselves clearly in writing or speech and this affects their standards in a variety of subjects.
98. Work has been done to improve literacy skills and this has had some effect on helping pupils express themselves, but not enough. There is a new literacy policy, as the result of the work of group of teachers, but it is not yet fully implemented. Throughout the school there is a strong awareness of the need to develop pupils' literacy and in history and geography, for example, there are effective methods already in use. Most departments introduce important subject vocabulary carefully, though not all *teach* pupils how to spell new words or provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to read.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching and learning and teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Teachers seen have high expectations of behaviour and effort.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress is good.

Areas for improvement

- Attendance levels in lessons
- The use of ICT.
- Marking, so that pupils know what they should do to improve.
- Pupils' basic numeracy skills.
- Use of the 50-minute periods.

99. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests taken by 14 year olds attainment in mathematics was well below the national average for all schools and well below the average when compared with similar schools. They were also below the national average in terms of pupils attaining the higher, level 6. Trends over the past four years show a slow increase in average points scores but with a fall back most recently. In the most recently validated GCSE examinations for 16 year olds, in 2001, results were below the national average and, in terms of both percentage of pupils achieving A*-C and A*-G grades, were better for mathematics than both English and science. Girls performed better than boys. In the most recent examinations, in 2002, mathematics is weaker than both English and science, and girls continue to outperform boys.
100. Standards obtained by pupils age 14 are below average overall and their achievement is broadly satisfactory. Many pupils achieve well. Higher attaining 14 year pupils can, for example, use graphs of quadratic functions to solve equations competently. Pupils of average attainment work quickly, solving a range of linear equations of increasing complexity. Lower attainers work keenly on a range of quick-fire mental questions. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly when aided by support staff who helped to reinforce the correct use of mathematical terms. In none of the work seen is there a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, but boys' work tends to be less well organised and so less useful for revision. Pupils aged 14 show significant weaknesses when dealing with basic number or simple algebraic processes. Younger pupils who benefited from the National Numeracy Strategy at their primary school demonstrate a better understanding of, and facility with, both number and algebra.
101. By the time pupils are 16, achievement in mathematics is satisfactory overall, though standards are below average. Many pupils achieve well. Higher attaining pupils use algebra effectively to consider a range of problems to include inverse proportions. Pupils of average attainment rearrange algebraic expressions to solve complex linear equations. Pupils of lower attainment, most of whom have special educational needs, use the ICT suite to good effect using programs to add fractions and simplify the result. Again, the only gender difference is that the boys do not present their work logically or in a form suitable for revision purposes. Throughout lesson in Years 10 and 11 pupils continue to show weakness with simple numerical processes. For example, a girl in the final GCSE year calculated 3×7 by counting on her fingers.
102. The quality of teaching overall is good. Within this are examples of very good and satisfactory teaching. Teaching is stronger for 12 to 14 year olds than for those aged 14

to 16. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The best teaching is characterised by the teacher's high expectations of both behaviour and effort, well-targeted interventions and a good use of time. In these lessons teachers also make regular checks that pupils understand each step before moving on to the next. Progress of some pupils, particularly 15 and 16 year olds, is adversely affected by their low attendance levels. Teachers' good lesson plans are interpreted effectively, and learning is promoted through good basic teaching skills and good subject knowledge. Relationships between teachers and pupils are predominantly good or very good. In the majority of lessons pupils concentrate very well and display a lively interest in the subject matter so that the pace of the work remains high. Teachers regularly set appropriate homework but the marking of it and of classwork is not always accompanied by guidance as to what needs to be done to improve. Few teachers use ICT regularly in their teaching and this is a weakness. All pupils are given information about their performance and progress at three points in the year. This comes with realistic targets and details explaining the meaning of each level. These are shared with parents, and this is good practice.

103. The management of the department is sound overall. Mathematics is taught in a dedicated block of the school and this, together with carefully delegated managerial tasks, helps to create a strong team ethos. Schemes of work for 12 to 14 year olds have been revised to take account of the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy. Other departmental documentation is good, but reference to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs is thin. Test results from individuals and groups are closely monitored and evaluated within the department. Information gained is used to adjust teaching groups and schemes of work. Despite having run a successful whole school numeracy in-service training day, few departments have incorporated the material into their lessons and the school still lacks a numeracy policy. The national literacy strategy is influencing the work in mathematics through pupils being asked to give clear verbal reasons for their answers. Dissemination of the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to impact usefully on the work in Years 7 and 8 particularly. Current timetabling is unsatisfactory. Some classes have their four lessons split between two teachers because they are taught by part-time staff, and many classes have two of their four lessons on the same day. The very large site also means that pupils lose lesson time in moving from one part of the site to another. Teaching material currently lacks any specific link to citizenship. The department has yet to undertake formal monitoring of teaching and the subsequent sharing of good practice, though there are plans to do so.
104. Since the last inspection standards of work in national tests continue to be below average. Pupils' knowledge of mathematics tables has not improved. However, the overall quality of teaching has improved and is likely to lead to improving standards. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. .

Numeracy across the curriculum

105. Provision for numeracy is unsatisfactory overall because the new numeracy policy has not been fully implemented. A recent good whole-school numeracy in-service training day has not been followed through, with the result that different departments have moved forwards at different rates. Many have a numeracy policy in place but have yet to link it fully to their work. In science, for example, general weakness in basic numeracy slows the pace of work. Sixteen year old pupils did not recognise that a loss in weight should be represented by a negative number. In geography a numeracy policy is employed to develop good work on line graphs and bar charts and obtaining information from them. History makes good use of numeracy when looking at topics such as population growth and the hyper-inflation in 1920s Germany.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Good subject management.
- Monitoring pupils' progress and providing support.

Areas for improvement

- Some teaching; lack of challenge for some pupils and unhelpful marking.
- Insufficient use of ICT.
- A shortage of some resources, especially books.
- Strategies for improving literacy.

106. In the 2002 national tests for Year 9 pupils, attainment was well below average. The proportions of pupils achieving the nationally expected level 5 was below the national average and the percentage obtaining the level 6 or higher was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, their results were again well below average. However, this is an improvement on 2001, following a period of staffing difficulties which have very recently been resolved. In the 2001 GCSE examination, attainment was well below average; the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - G was just above the national average for all schools, whilst the proportion gaining the higher grades A* - C was well below average. When compared with similar schools, the proportion gaining A*-C was average. The boys performed significantly better than the girls. Overall, results have shown an improving trend over the past four years and in the recent unconfirmed GCSE examinations in 2002, more pupils gained the highest grades of A* or A than in the previous year. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C in science in 2001 was higher than that in mathematics and English, and in 2002, higher than in mathematics.
107. By Year 9 standards are below those seen nationally overall, but higher than those indicated by national tests. This partly reflects the increasing attainment on entry to the school, but also the recent strategies put in place to raise standards. By Year 9, most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of a range of scientific topics. For example, the more able pupils recall the structure, organisation and terminology of the respiratory system accurately, they describe the chemical reactions that take place between a variety of metals and water, and understand the functions of the different parts of a human joint. Pupils with lower prior attainment have less detailed knowledge and their recall of previous work is less secure. They can, however, explain that elements can join together to form compounds, describe, simplistically, how air passes into the lungs and understand the fundamental characteristics of magnetism. Pupils, across the ability range, show good 'thinking' skills. They predict outcomes and are able to make sensible and scientific suggestions when presented with open-ended questions, albeit to varying levels of sophistication. Literacy skills, however, are generally below average and are affecting overall standards. The department's spelling policy is having some positive impact, but pupils' expression and fluency are weak.
108. Standards in Year 11 are below average. The more able pupils have increased their knowledge and understanding of topics dealt with in Years 7 to 9. For example, they describe the complex structures of carbon compounds, appreciate the more detailed process of food manufacture in plants, and apply their numeracy skills to a range of

calculations in physics. Written answers to questions, however, too often lack the depth and detail to gain the highest grades in GCSE. Pupils with lower ability find the work for dual award science very challenging, but whilst their knowledge is generally superficial, some do show sufficient understanding to gain lower grades in the examination. Working at foundation level, for instance, they answer questions on the solar system accurately, describe the structure of an atom in simple terms and produce good graph work to represent data collected from experiments. Weak literacy skills, to varying degrees across the ability range, affect attainment in external examinations.

109. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory overall but it is starting to improve now that staffing is stable. Although attainment on entry of the present year 7 was broadly in line with the national average, that of pupils higher up the school was lower. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, most pupils are gaining examination results than might have been predicted. More teaching time has recently been allocated to Years 7 to 9 to match that of other subjects. This, together with improvements in monitoring and target setting, is likely to contribute to improving achievement. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are regrouped according to their attainment and build effectively on their knowledge and understanding of science. Investigative skills are further developed and by Year 11, some pupils are producing investigative work of a high standard. Progress for a significant number of pupils, however, is being hindered by absenteeism. Dedicated support from the special needs department ensures that pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time. There is, however, an absence of subject-specific target-setting and monitoring systems, that might raise achievement further. Gifted and talented pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and benefit from different grouping in Years 10 and 11. The recent extension of this policy to Years 8 and 9 may well contribute to improving their progress over time.
110. Teaching and learning are good, now that staffing is stable. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and much is very good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject material and these impact positively on pupils' progress. They plan and structure the lessons well. Almost all use questions skilfully, ensuring pupils think and contribute to the development of lessons. For example, in one Year 11 lesson, the teacher reviewed the results of an experiment on water loss in plants with searching questions, often rephrased, that guided pupils through a thorough evaluation of their work. A notable strength in teaching is the very good class management seen across the department; pupils are well organised and good discipline is maintained. Many lessons involve a variety of activities that keep pupils motivated and interested. A very good Year 9 lesson, for lower ability pupils, on smoking, for example, began with a brief review of the respiratory system. The pupils contributed enthusiastically to the well-led class discussion that followed, and after an excellent demonstration of the effects of smoking on an unborn baby, were able to complete a written exercise on what they had learnt. Expectations are sometimes high, as in one very good Year 7 lesson, where the teacher skilfully built on the pupils' previous elementary knowledge of food chains to develop complex concepts of feeding interactions in the environment. The pupils rose to the challenge of the work, discussing and questioning to learn more. In some other lessons, however, there is insufficient attention given to planning activities that challenge the full ability range or that take into account pupils' prior learning. Many teachers make use of work sheets to check learning effectively. However, some overuse is limiting the opportunities for extended writing and is having a negative impact on literacy. Wide application of number and graph work supports pupils' numeracy skills well and ICT is beginning to be used more effectively now that more resources have become available. Homework is set regularly, but sometimes lacks challenge. Marking is variable; some is helpful and constructive, but much does not indicate to

pupils how they can raise their standard of work. Teachers and learning support assistants are very sensitive to pupils with special needs, whose learning in lessons is consequently good. The science technicians work very hard indeed to ensure smooth running of practical work and demonstrations, both in and out of the laboratories, and their support is much appreciated by teachers. There is, however, a significant shortage of technical staff for such a large department.

111. Throughout all year groups and across the ability range, the positive attitudes of most pupils, together with their good behaviour, contribute significantly to learning in lessons. Their relationships with each other and with teachers are good.
112. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head and deputy head of department have a clear vision for improvement. The subject's performance is monitored and analysed well and new strategies have been put in place, especially in Years 7 to 9, in order to raise standards. The appointment of six new members of staff over the past 18 months has injected a burst of enthusiasm to move forwards. Monitoring of teaching, however, needs to be more rigorous to ensure consistency across the department. Formal assessment and systems for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Pupils know how well they are doing, though well-structured target-setting is still developmental. There is much extra, well-organised help for those who are identified as underachieving. The department is developing good links with primary schools that should improve continuity of learning between Years 6 and 7. There is a shortage of some resources in science and this impacts on teaching and standards. Although the library supports teaching effectively by providing classroom collections, there are too few course books available and none for pupils to keep at home. There are insufficient numbers of larger items of scientific equipment and there is some shortage of ICT resources to use with the newly arrived set of lap-top computers. The new and refurbished suite of laboratories provides a very pleasant working environment for pupils, but there is still a shortage that necessitates some classes being taught in non-specialised classrooms.
113. Improvement has been good since the time of the last inspection and GCSE results have improved. Recent upgrading of the accommodation and its relocation to a single area of the school has resulted in a more coherent department. Improved management structure within science, in particular the appointments of a Key Stage 3 coordinator and an advanced skills teacher, is beginning to have a positive impact on provision. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is becoming more structured and ICT resources have improved.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning.
- Pupils' positive response and their good attitude and behaviour.
- The popularity of the subject seen in the increasing number of pupils choosing to study it at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- The number of students gaining the higher grades in GCSE.
- Continuing work on strategies to improve the performance of boys.
- Improving pupils' independent learning skills.
- The use of ICT.

114. Results in the 2002 statutory assessments at the end of Year 9 were broadly average and better than in 2001, with girls doing better than boys. Over several years, attainment has fluctuated. The GCSE A*-C results in 2001 were well below the national average but showed a considerable improvement on the previous year's results. The proportion of students gaining at least a grade G was slightly above average. Boys achieved in line with national standards but girls were well below. The unconfirmed results for 2002 show the percentage of pupils gaining these higher grades has fallen due to the very poor performance of the boys. Pupils do better in art and design than in most of their other subjects within the school but not as well as is the trend nationally.
115. By Year 9, attainment is lower than that indicated in the 2002 teacher assessments. In the lessons seen and in the scrutiny of pupils' work, attainment overall was below average. For example, pupils in Year 9 produced imaginative work when producing their own version of a Wacky Jacket; however, their level of drawing skills limited the standard they could achieve. Only higher attaining pupils show a sound understanding of how the work of artists can inform their own work. Most pupils are confident in discussion and use appropriate vocabulary when encouraged but this is less evident in their written skills. Achievement is satisfactory. In Year 7 the course gives pupils an understanding of the formal element such as the use of line, tone and texture and they develop skills in a range of techniques. This is built on in Year 8, where pupils translate designs into papier-mâché fantasy shoes in the style of the art of the 1960s. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well when working in groups with supportive fellow pupils.
116. By Year 11, attainment overall is well below the national average, although standards vary quite a lot between classes. At this level pupils interpret whole class themes. Pupils working on a self-portrait project had produced drawings of an average standard and used colour competently but their sketchbooks demonstrated a lack of understanding of how to develop and research a project. Higher attainers show the ability to explore and investigate the work of artists but too many pupils just copy information rather than analysing it. Pupils are provided with a range of resources and creative opportunities and as a result of the good and very good teaching, pupils' competence, knowledge and understanding of drawing, painting and three-dimensional work is improving. A small number of pupils produce work to an above average standard. Most pupils enjoy art and work hard in lessons, but many are reluctant to pursue work in their own time. Although achievement is satisfactory in relation to prior standards, it is restricted by the lack of independent work outside of the classroom. Pupils use the Internet to find out about artists but it is rarely used to develop their own work.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good. In the best lessons, the teachers give very clear explanations, demonstrate techniques and build in a sense of humour to maintain pupils' interest. This gives pupils strong direction on what they have to do to achieve and results in good learning. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are given the support to respond confidently and teachers channel their strengths into successful outcomes. Extensions are built into the most effective lesson plans but this is not consistent across the department. This means the most able pupils are not always provided with the direction they need in order to achieve their best work. Teachers manage pupils well; they have developed clear accepted procedures that result in good use being made of time and resources. Strategies are in place to improve the achievement of boys. Specialised vocabulary is

built into projects and displayed in rooms and teachers positively encourage its use. Some teachers under-use homework and valuable opportunities are missed to develop pupils' understanding of artists' work and to develop pupils' independent learning skills. ICT is not consistently built into the planning of projects and the provision in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.

118. This is a large department and there have been a number of staff changes in recent years. It is now in a stable period and the staff are committed to improvement. They work well together and the new ideas and initiatives should impact on standards in the future. The management of the department is satisfactory. Although progress in lessons is good, over time achievement is only satisfactory. A marking policy is in place but there are no separate grades for effort and attainment; consequently pupils do not always have a clear understanding of the level they are working at or what they have to do to improve.
119. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory. The allocation of curriculum time in Years 8 and 9 is now generous and resources have improved. However, pupils are still very reliant on teachers and independent learning skills still need to be improved. Accommodation is good but there is insufficient of it. The rising popularity of the subject and the creation of more classes have meant that there are not enough specialist rooms to teach the subject in and this limits the range of experience offered. High quality displays in the arts building and around the school act as a stimulus to learning and raise the ethos of the subject within the school.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision for citizenship is **good**.

Strengths

- Very good planning for the introduction of citizenship.
- The quality of curriculum planning.
- The very good resources, and the careful use of designated budgets.
- Good use of community resources, to enrich the curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring provision of citizenship in its first year.
- Raising pupils' awareness of citizenship matters across the school.
- To monitor and evaluate teaching of the subject.

120. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards of work in Years 9 and 11. Delivery of the strands of citizenship is only in its second month, and both teachers and pupils are making a good start in considering the three areas, which are part of the programme. Teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 9, and is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, and pupils demonstrate overall good attitudes towards their studies.
121. In the lessons in Years 7 to 9 observed during the inspection, boys and girls were noted to be equally involved in whole-class and group discussion, and in practical work. Pupils of all ability made satisfactory progress because, whatever their ability, they had views on citizenship matters such as bullying and fairness, and were not afraid to present those views. A Year 9 group, for example, was orally unsophisticated, but the pupils could forcefully put across their opinions. This same group became animated as the lesson developed, and very much enjoyed the decision they had to make about punishment in a case study in which there were mitigating circumstances. In some

lessons in Years 7 to 9, the excitement of the pupils, together with movement about the rooms for group work, led to poor behaviour, and this affected the quality of pupils' learning. In another Year 9 class, a pupil with severe special needs was successfully enabled to take part in the lesson with strong individual support. In Year 10 classes observed, pupils demonstrated themselves to have limited knowledge of the legal system, and to have predictable and unoriginal thoughts about the topic.

122. Overall, in the six lessons observed in Years 7 to 9, and in the two Year 10 lessons, pupils showed that they have fairly limited awareness of citizenship matters, and unrealistic opinions, for example, about family concerns. Year 10 pupils thought it quite acceptable to get married at the age of 16, and could see no reasons why it could be inadvisable. Younger pupils demonstrated immaturity when role-playing ways of dealing with bullies. At the other extreme, Year 12 students revealed considerable responsibility in the lesson given to them by "Jigsaw", a local counselling organisation through which young professional workers give advice to pupils and students, and present highly effective workshops. In a Year 12 lesson, for example, the three young workers quite brilliantly delivered a presentation concerning sexually transmitted diseases. The Year 12 students learned a great deal, made intelligent statements, and asked mature questions. Aspects of citizenship are beginning to reveal themselves outside PSHCE lessons, as, for example, through drama lessons.
123. Teaching overall is satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11. Courses have been carefully prepared, and teachers have briefed themselves well in order to make lessons interesting. In one lesson, for example, a case study was addressed, through which pupils had to decide whether an old lady who stole £5000 or a young boy who stole £50 should have the more severe penalty. This type of hypothesis is challenging and thought provoking; it raised the interest of the pupils, and they made good progress in developing decision making skills through the lesson. Some teachers have difficulty moving between whole-class, small group and paired arrangements because they do not use this style in their subject teaching, and this gives rise to some pupil management and behaviour problems.
124. The citizenship curriculum for Years 7 to 13 has been very well planned overall. Carefully considered aspects of citizenship have been added to the personal, social and health education programmes of study, and departments are also delivering different aspects through discrete subject areas. A fully comprehensive trawl was made of parts of the three strands to identify missing elements, or parts which need reinforcing, and these parts have been added into the PSHCE schemes of work. The citizenship programme supports the ethos of the school, and its role within the wider community. There are clear aims and objectives for programmes of study across the school. Extra-curricular activities have been identified through which citizenship opportunities will arise. Teaching and learning strategies have been reviewed, and assessment procedures carefully worked out. Specific citizenship reports have been produced which refer to the progress made by pupils through social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and in political literacy. The school intends to award citizenship certificates to those pupils who demonstrate notable success in any areas of the subject.
125. Preparation for the delivery of citizenship in the school has been thoroughly thought through by the governors and senior management, and very well delivered by the co-ordinator. Overall leadership and management and delivery of the subject are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils, including those with special education needs, make good progress because the skills taught lead to more demanding tasks.
- The level and commitment in teaching.
- Quality of accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved at GCSE.
- The development plan for the faculty does not have targets for improving standards or the use of assessment to improve achievement.

126. Teachers' assessments in 2002 shows that standards are below the national average but are significantly better than the results for 2001. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, results at A*-C were well below the national average. The A*-G grades were also below the national average. The results show that the pupils have made progress and achieve the results expected for their prior attainment. The unconfirmed GCSE results for 2002 show that the percentage of A*-C grades has improved.
127. Inspection evidence shows that standards obtained in Year 9 are broadly in line with the national average, and are rising. The majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of the subject by the age of 14. They know how to use tools and equipment to a satisfactory standard. Their understanding and application of the design process are good and research and evaluation are strong elements of their work. They learn about a range of materials and they use a range of small and large equipment competently and safely. For example, they use hand tools competently to cut and shape acrylic sheet when making a small container in Year 7. Pupils demonstrate good organisational skills in Year 9 when producing Chelsea buns in a food technology lesson. Higher achieving pupils plan their work and evaluate it objectively against specific criteria. Lower achieving pupils have yet to develop design skills and the process of carefully evaluating how well they have worked. There are good opportunities for pupils to cover computer aided drawing and the use of computers in food technology. Lower achieving pupils particularly benefit from the use of computers to enhance their work. There were good examples of pupils' work in Year 7 showing how they had produced a book marker from acrylic using computer aided machining. There was very little evidence of work using textiles.
128. The review of pupils work shows that by Year 11, standards are broadly average in resistant materials, food technology and GCSE manufacturing. Pupils systematically solve problems using the worksheets provided. They question and have sufficient confidence to experiment and explore materials and processes when they develop their designs. The higher achieving pupils work well independently and are well motivated to succeed. Their work is thoughtfully and professionally presented. Pupils have good opportunities to use ICT, particularly to present their work but also when they are designing. In graphics, pupils' design work shows progression in development and a good level of craftsmanship in their execution. The higher achieving pupils critically analyse their work well. All pupils, regardless of ability, achieve well because teachers expect them to learn well. Standards of work are beginning to improve because pupils' progress and attainment are assessed on a regular basis and lessons are planned with clear learning objectives.

129. The overall quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching and learning has been effective in promoting good levels of achievement. The most effective teaching was imaginatively planned and derived from well-prepared lessons in food technology and resistant materials. A strong feature of this teaching is the quality and pace of individual help and tuition. In the most successful lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge engage and inspire pupils. Their skilful handling of materials and equipment enables pupils to be successful. All staff work hard to develop productive relationships with classes and these are generally good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The teaching is well planned and leads to a coherent learning programme that is well supported with prepared lesson notes and worksheets which can then be retained to build up a good picture of individual progress. The lessons are well structured and teachers' questioning is good. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and the good range of activities ensures that all pupils are actively involved in their learning. New knowledge is introduced as it is needed so that pupils can immediately use it to develop their understanding as observed in the Year 8 lesson, where pupils were making a cottage pie. They observed the demonstrations carefully and listened to the instructions about how to prepare and cook the vegetables and meat for the dish. In a Year 9 lesson they modified the design for packaging food to improve the capabilities of the design. In another Year 9 food technology lesson the teacher used examples of pupils' practical work to demonstrate key points to the group. In the best lessons there is a collaborative approach to the learning that encourages pupils to become curious and ask questions. The planning and purpose of lessons are sufficiently focused and the objectives are shared sufficiently with the pupils. There are adequate introductions which link with previous work and teachers use technical vocabulary to help pupils understand and extend their vocabulary. Teachers are familiar with the Key Stage 3 strategy and use the guidance to good effect when planning lessons and through their teaching. Teachers work well with pupils with special educational needs, and are aware of individual targets, but do not have copies of individual education plans.
130. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and, when available, classroom assistants are used well to support learning. There is a good level of support for lower attaining pupils through the use of design frames, helping them become familiar with the design process. Teachers support literacy well and are careful to introduce new words and provide writing frames. Pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively. Pupils generally work purposefully and demonstrate a positive attitude to the subject. However, younger pupils, particularly in Year 9, often demand a lot of attention from teachers, causing distraction. When this occurs it is well managed and does not hinder the progress of the lesson. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are more confident in practical work and help each other in their tasks, offering comment and criticism in a positive manner.
131. Progress is reviewed effectively in the plenary session at end of lessons. There is a sound stress on health and safety. Teachers work well with pupils with special educational needs. They support the teaching of literacy well and are careful to introduce new words. Teaching and learning are well supported by a very good technician and classroom assistants. There is an emphasis on health and safety during lessons.
132. The leadership and management are good. The head of department has a clear view of how the department should be developed and is fully aware of the need to provide support for pupils in Years 7 to 9 in the form of monitoring and assessment of attainment and progress and the systems in place are effective in raising standards. There are pupils currently in Key Stage 4 who will not get any accreditation for their

studies in design and technology – they have not been formally disapplied and are not following a course that will lead to a related qualification. However, curriculum development has been with a specific focus on providing courses that pupils will find interesting and relevant. Schemes of work are good and give details of long term planning to show what knowledge, skills and understanding it is intended that pupils of differing abilities should achieve. The marking and assessment system is satisfactory and gives feedback to pupils of the progress and attainment. The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to the schemes of work is not being used effectively to set targets to improve standards at the end of Year 9. There is analysis of outcomes at the end of Year 11 and comparisons made with predicted grades for individuals, but this information is not used to set targets for the department. The department has recently been refurbished to a very high standard. The quantity and size of accommodation in the technology areas are very good. The quality of the accommodation is very good. Overall, the level of resources is very good and includes computer systems and equipment for teaching computer aided design and manufacture. The development plan focuses on curriculum development and although in practice this is having a positive effect on standards, the details of how planned improvements will take place are not expressed in the development plan. Department meetings are used well to discuss issues to improve policy and standards in the subject. The department now offers a vocational GCSE manufacturing course and the pupils in the current Year 10 have a very positive attitude to the course. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision for drama is **very good**.

Strengths

- High standards of attainment.
- The interests and enthusiasm shown by pupils for the subject.
- Very good teaching.
- Very good extra-curricular opportunities.
- The very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- Attainment of boys is well below that of girls.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 based on specific criteria.
- Links with English.

133. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were average. These results have been maintained for several years and were similar in 2002. Drama is a popular subject with 72 entries in 2001. Girls' attainment is considerably higher than that of boys, more than is found nationally. Pupils do better in drama than in most of their other subjects.
134. Standards in the work seen by the age of 14 are above average. This is the result of very good teaching which develops drama skills systematically over the three years. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 do drama and all pupils are given the opportunity to visit the theatre. Most do. Pupils can sustain their roles in improvisation, many convincingly. They use techniques, such as flashbacks, effectively and analyse each other's performances sensibly and positively. All join in, both in group discussion and performance, but the girls have more ideas in their groups. All pupils achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs join in and develop alongside their peers. There are many opportunities for the gifted and talented to take on leading roles and to lead

discussion in groups. These groups are organised deliberately by the teacher to be mixed ability so that pupils learn to work with lots of different pupils; this works well.

135. Standards of work seen by the age of 16 are average. Pupils develop improvisations quickly and effectively. They work together co-operatively and weave different techniques together in their performances. Higher attainers are confident, and some are very talented. All think about staging and the use of space. They use technical terms such as reconstruction and re-enactment accurately. Pupils criticise each other's performances well, making good suggestions for improvements. Achievement is good for pupils of all levels of attainment.
136. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Very good subject knowledge and high expectations inspire pupils to give 100 per cent involvement. Excellent use of the teachers taking on roles themselves helps pupils to give convincing performances. In a very good Year 10 lesson, for example, an energetic performance by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson made the difference between naturalistic and non-naturalistic drama very clear. Relationships are excellent, with teachers and pupils working together to improve their standards all the time. There is a professional atmosphere in the best lessons and this ensures that pupils learn quickly and effectively. Effective assessment systems, especially for Years 10 and 11, help to make pupils aware of their strengths and weaknesses. In Years 7 to 9, assessments against specific drama criteria have been recently introduced. Pupils improve their speaking and listening skills considerably during drama. They also get the opportunity to read, and to practise writing, especially in their homework. Important drama words are displayed in the drama rooms and frequently referred to. Computers are not used a lot, but lighting and music are often employed to help enhance the atmosphere.
137. The department makes a very good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have the chance to explore many social and moral issues such as drug-taking and peer- pressure, and to step outside them and reflect on them. Teachers extend pupils' experiences of drama by giving a lot of time and effort to organising lots of clubs, theatre visits and regular productions. These are very popular with pupils. Year 7 drama club was so full in the week of inspection that pupils had to be turned away.
138. The quality of leadership and management is good. Though present leadership is new, the problem of boys' underachievement has already been noted and ideas for improvement are beginning. The Year 7 lighting club has already proved interesting for a large number of boys. Links with English are developing, with plans to reinforce the teaching of Shakespeare for the Year 9 national tests.
139. The department has made good progress since the last inspection, maintaining its high standards and developing still further.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Very good, dynamic leadership.
- Good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9; very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment.
- Teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Meeting the requirements of the GCSE examination board.

140. In teachers' assessments in 2002 the attainment of 14 year olds was broadly average and below the results for 2001. In the 2001 GCSE examinations attainment was well below average. The unconfirmed results of 2002 show not much change in performance, but the school was using a different examination course. The few girls who chose to study geography attained less well than the boys who attained close to the national average in 2001. Within school, progress in geography was satisfactory when compared with the same pupils' performance in other subjects and with their performance in the end of Year 9 tests in 1999.
141. Inspection evidence reflects results in Year 9. Though attainment on entry of the present Year 7 is at the national average, attainment on entry to the school of the previous year groups was below average and well below average for the current Year 9. Consequently, pupils make good progress between the ages of 11 and 14 because pupils achieve consistently well in class. Progress is visible in exercise books. The presentation of handwriting, diagrams and the use of colour improve quickly; thus the quality and accuracy of writing, the use of technical vocabulary and the ability to work out relationships between cause and effect are all seen to improve for pupils of all abilities. Year 7 pupils enjoy catching up quickly on the use of symbols on Ordnance Survey maps through a series of exercises and games. Year 9 learn to manage packs of information about the floating continents to solve a mystery about why there are fossils of a plant from Venezuela which are now found in Europe.
142. Standards of work seen in Year 11 indicate that attainment is below average but closer to the national average than previous examination results suggest. More girls of higher prior attainment have chosen to follow the subject. Those of higher prior attainment are confident, mature workers who choose technical vocabulary accurately and write efficiently in a style suitable for its purpose. This is displayed in work on comparing and contrasting the characteristics of world climatic zones. As a result, progress is accelerating across the GCSE course for most pupils. There remains a very small group of boys in Year 11 who resist these improvements. Overall, standards of coursework are good but performance is limited by insufficient ICT in their coursework, though this is already being corrected.
143. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but teachers do not have specific targets for them and individual education plans do not identify how pupils' special needs can be met in geography. Geography teachers make no contribution to termly reviews of progress. Consequently, whilst these pupils make progress as good as the rest of the class, mainly because of the efforts of teachers to make sure they are not disadvantaged, there is no measure of progress against the individual targets set for their improvement.
144. Teaching is good overall, being very good in about two fifths of lessons, good in two fifths and satisfactory in the rest; it is good between the ages of 11 and 14 and very good on the GCSE course. The teaching team has worked very hard to secure the present improvement in standards in both work and behaviour of pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, though some are not specialists and are supported by geography specialists. Subject knowledge is a strength and stands out in the wide variety of well-chosen materials used and the skilful way in which they are explained and used to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of the pupils. Visual aids are used effectively and pupils respond very well to this stimulus. Teachers use an interactive whiteboard well, for example, to show the impact of an earthquake. Videos provide strong images which have a powerful spiritual impact. Occasionally progress is

slowed when pupils have to share textbooks. Teachers use the globe, wall maps and atlases constantly so pupils learn a strong sense of place. Pupils have practical work and fieldwork in each year to practise their skills.

145. The department has developed its own imaginative style of teaching and pupils learn quickly because of it. Lessons contain a well-chosen, wide variety of tasks and activities. Teachers question pupils constantly and require pupils to link cause and effect to explain and develop their thinking. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils had to explain how a doctor was killed in an earthquake in Japan. Work is challenging and pupils are obliged to apply intellectual, creative and physical energy to their work. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils worked very well in groups to combine their individual work into a shared presentation about the characteristics of different climatic zones. Expectations of work and behaviour are very high. For example, it is now clearly understood that homework will be set regularly, and will be marked, and also that pupils will complete it. Planning is very thorough and materials are well prepared in advance. Teachers inform pupils of learning objectives at the beginning of every lesson, and they check their progress against them at the end.
146. ICT is not used enough because access to the school computers is random and this has a significant impact on the quality of examination coursework and pupils' willingness and ability to research, process statistics and write at length. There is insufficient extended writing, though teachers plan for it and understand that writing at length gives pupils access to the higher levels of the National Curriculum. Similarly, teachers plan for the development of numeracy skills and pupils manage quite difficult numbers. For example, a lower attaining Year 11 boy managed correctly a simple correlation exercise when comparing the characteristics of a number of countries. Generally, teachers make too simple demands on the pupils' numeracy skills.
147. The subject is managed very well, and is providing very clear direction for improvement. Staff are committed to improvement and work very well together to plan development. Resources are good and teaching rooms are close together, facilitating organisation and communication. Teachers continually review and improve the schemes of work but they do not analyse examination results in sufficient detail. Time is lost at the start of lessons because of long distances between classrooms. Once lessons start, time is well used. A teaching assistant attached to the department is used very well in lessons, assisting those pupils identified as having special needs, and in the distribution and collection of materials. Display is very good in the department; in one room the vibrant quality of display is outstanding. The department has changed dramatically since the last inspection and is well equipped to meet its future challenges. Improvement has been good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, with some very good features.
- The subject is well managed and staff are committed to high standards.
- Very positive relationships that encourage and support learning;

Areas for improvement

- Standards at 14 and 16.
- Improved access to ICT.
- A wider range of reading.

148. Standards of attainment by pupils at the age of 14, in teachers' assessments in 2002 were below average and lower than in 2001, but in keeping with the attainment of these pupils on entry to the school. At GCSE in 2001, the proportion of pupils obtaining A*-C grades was below the national average but broadly in line with expectations based on these pupils' performance in the national tests taken in 1999. The unconfirmed results of 2002 show an increase in the percentage of A*-C grades; attainment has improved in recent years. Girls did better than boys in line with the situation found nationally.
149. However, observation of lessons and analysis of pupils' work show that by the age of 14, attainment in class work is in line with national expectations, and better than the National Curriculum tests taken in 2002. All pupils use a wide range of materials including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, writing frames, card-packs and a range of primary and secondary evidence. The average attaining pupils develop a wide range of subject skills, including interpretation of evidence, prioritising of historical issues and the understanding of chronology. Higher attaining pupils analyse the complex issues of long-term and short-term causes of the 1914-18 war. Pupils across all ability levels successfully make good progress in their first three years in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with other pupils, because their teachers know them well, use good differentiated materials, and provide effective guidance in lessons. However, pupils' overall progress is hampered by their weak oracy and literacy skills. Nor do they have sufficient access to ICT to support their understanding of the subject and ensuring a high level of presentation of work.
150. By the time pupils are in Year 11, the standards of work are broadly average and pupils achieve well. By the age of 16, pupils use their analytical skills effectively and achieve well in lessons. For example, Year 11 pupils, studying the events of "Bloody Sunday" maturely analysed a range of sources to decide which factors determined the interpretation of the events of the day. They demonstrated, in clear language, by means of "a press conference", their understanding of the complexities and difficulties in establishing the truth against the background of partisan evidence.
151. Teaching is good overall, and it is very good in some lessons. A similarly strong profile of teaching applies to all years. Teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious love of it and this commitment is strongly communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of methods that support learning well. There is appropriate emphasis on literacy and there is an emphasis on reading and the correct use of technical language. However, wider reading outside the classroom is still not developed for the vast majority of pupils. Homework is set regularly and marking is well focused, supporting progress, learning and achievement.
152. Learning is good. Pupils learn successfully. They behave very well, with high concentration and focus. Very good relationships underpin learning because pupils listen intently to each other and work well together in all years. In several lessons, pupils worked very effectively in mixed pairs, a method of organisation thoughtfully employed by the department, mindful of supporting the attainment of both girls and boys. However, the overall attainment both across time and in examinations is hampered by the lack of retention skills, weak examination techniques and the lack of wider and deeper reading. All these impact deleteriously on pupils' attainment in examinations.

153. The subject is well led and managed. The very recently appointed head of department has already produced documents which are informed and informative and which underpin much of the good work of the department, particularly, but not exclusively, in the area of assessment. In this, she is supported effectively by her colleagues. She gives effective and efficient leadership of the subject. She is a good role model of commitment to continually improve standards.
154. Since the last inspection improvement has been satisfactory. The trend in standards since the last inspection at both key stages has been one of steady improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Much of the teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Resources are above the national average.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment, which is below average.
- Planning work for different ability groups in mixed ability classes.
- The quality of information about the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs.
- The use of assessment information.
- Effective teaching methods are not shared well enough.

155. In teachers' assessments of 14 year olds in 2002 attainment was broadly average and lower than the previous year when attainment was above average. However, it was in keeping with expectations for the year group. There were no GCSE examinations in ICT in 2001. Only a tiny percentage of pupils took the short GCSE course examination in ICT in 2002; no pupils took the full course. All of the pupils who took the short course gained a pass.
156. Standards of work in Year 9 are below average. Although most pupils can use word processing and desktop publishing to a good standard, their knowledge and skills in the wider aspects of communicating and handling information are restricted. They can use word processing packages to input and edit text, incorporating words and pictures. They can use 'Power Point' for presentations and higher attaining pupils can create slides, inserting text, pictures and movie animation. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of spreadsheet construction but only higher attaining pupils can use simple formulae. Pupils can create and retrieve information from a database but only higher attaining pupils can generate charts and graphs from the data. Only pupils with a computer at home and a self-developed interest in ICT know the major Internet search engines and can use them effectively to locate and research topics of interest. Experience of electronic communication, for example e-mail, is below average. All pupils have a very limited understanding of the use of ICT to solve problems by building models, constructing procedures and then measuring or controlling the results. Given their attainment on entry to the school, achievement is satisfactory.

157. By Year 11 standards are still below average. Standards for these pupils have been affected by the change of platform from Apple McIntosh computers to PCs, by major staffing changes and by the introduction of new courses. Given their attainment at the end of Year 9, achievement is satisfactory. Standards in communicating information and data handling are above average for approximately two thirds of Year 11 pupils. This is because the content of their GCSE course is heavily biased towards business studies. Other pupils have a narrow range of ICT skills, mainly in the use of databases, spreadsheets and word processing. Design analysis skills are weak and pupils are unable to apply real world applications of ICT to solve problems. Only higher attaining pupils are confident working in multi-media. Pupils generally are largely ignorant of the social, economic, ethical and moral issues surrounding the use of new technologies. Most are not yet confident and autonomous users of ICT and have not developed the independent learning skills expected of pupils of this age.
158. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Good subject knowledge is a common feature of the teaching and an important factor in motivating and encouraging pupils to learn. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They come to lessons on time and are prepared to listen to explanations and instructions at the beginning of lessons. Their behaviour is good and they are willing to learn. Effective classroom management ensures that the unhelpful lay-out of the ICT rooms is not allowed to disrupt learning. Relationships with pupils are good and gives them confidence to ask questions and risk making mistakes. In the teaching of mixed ability groups in Years 7 to 9, work is not always planned to take into account the needs of different levels of attainment within the group, and higher attaining pupils in particular receive few opportunities to develop independent learning skills. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Despite making satisfactory learning gains in most lessons, progress over time is unsatisfactory because teachers are given insufficient information about pupils' individual needs without which they cannot plan individual work.
159. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The focus for development is to raise standards. New courses have been introduced which are well matched to pupils' needs, for example, the new vocational GCSE course in Year 10. There are effective procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning. The department is innovative and imaginative, for example, in its links with Granada Learning. Pupils' assessment results at the end of units of work are carefully recorded but little use is made of them. For example, teachers of Year 9 pupils have no recorded information in their mark books or planners as to what pupils' results in ICT were at the end of Year 8 and cannot use them therefore to group pupils within the classroom. The department is staffed by a team of specialist teachers, nearly all of whom are in their early years of teaching. They are committed and enthusiastic and keen to develop and enhance their teaching skills, both through the sharing of the good practice in teaching that exists within the department and as they gain experience in the classroom. There is no mechanism by which good practice is shared between teachers of ICT. Resources have improved dramatically since the previous inspection and are now above the national average. These improved resources, together with improved staffing, are beginning to lead to rising standards. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leading to good learning.
- Good departmental management.
- Good use of assessment to identify pupils' learning needs.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum in Year 7.
- Provision of individual course books for older pupils.
- Targets for pupils with special educational needs.

French and German

160. In teachers' assessments in 2002, attainment was broadly average and similar to that in 2001. In GCSE in 2001 results in both French and German were well below the national average for grades A*-C. All those taking German got at least a grade G, which is above the national average, but in French more than five per cent of the pupils failed to obtain a grade G, which is below average. This was because too many pupils did not meet the course requirements for French. German was more than ten percentage points above French. French was below the school average, though not amongst the lowest performing subjects. In both languages girls did better than boys by a wider margin than is the case nationally. In 2002 standards in French improved and those in German declined; in both subjects pupils did better than predicted.
161. In the present Year 7 all pupils begin both French and German on an equal footing. From Year 8 upwards pupils take one language, French or German, which creates two parallel bands of four or five classes.
162. In work seen, standards in German were higher than those in French. By the end of Year 9 pupils taking German are average in relation to national standards whereas in French they are below average. This relates mainly to the prior attainment of those who choose German. Achievement is satisfactory. In the GCSE years, standards seen in German are below average, and in French they are well below. In relation to their attainment on entry to the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and there are some pockets of good achievement, for example where Year 11 pupils are taking GCSE German after only three years' work.
163. Pupils' relatively weak literacy skills hamper their achievement in their foreign language. In French especially, writing to record information is challenging for some, and creative writing is slow to develop. In speaking and listening, their skills are similar to their contemporaries in other schools. Pronunciation is a weakness, especially in German. Reading at the level expected is satisfactory. Skills in the use of ICT develop in languages learning. For example, some low attaining Year 8 pupils were proud to present print-outs of their colour graphics for inspection. Many get to use the department's shared set of laptops either in lessons or in the weekly lunchtime languages club. Pupils with special educational needs learn well in the short term because in both languages their learning needs are recognised and provided for. They respond well to the use of the interactive whiteboard. However, withdrawal from modern language lessons for additional computerised work in English does detract from their foreign language learning, which should be reflected in specialised targets set for them. Overall, pupils display good attitudes to foreign language learning and co-operate well with the teacher and with each other, but in some classes of lower attaining pupils there are some who demonstrate negative attitudes by not attending

school. For example, in one Year 10 special needs class in French fewer than half the pupils on roll were actually present.

164. Teaching and learning are good overall, in both French and German. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. There is no distinction to be drawn between the languages because the majority of teachers teach both. They are competent linguists and speak their languages well. Since the previous inspection they have increased the amount of teaching in the foreign language; this is making a positive impact on learning and could with advantage be further developed. Teachers manage their pupils well, plan their lessons well, and manage time carefully, with the result that the objectives set for the lessons are usually achieved. There is satisfactory provision for basic skills. All staff have taken advantage of training opportunities and in consequence are confident in the use of ICT. They now support pupils' mother-tongue literacy by an increased emphasis on grammatical teaching, allowing pupils to learn technical terms related to language. Numeracy features in the use of simple numbers in question and answer work. There is a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, not least by the opportunities offered for them to visit France or Germany. It is a characteristic of the department that teachers are sensitive to the learning needs of pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Gifted and talented pupils are identified but there is at present little special provision for them. Pupils' spiritual development is furthered only in the sense of bolstering pupils' self-esteem.
165. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Personnel management is a strength, as are the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Staff new to the school are well supported. Assessment is well developed and used to good effect in guiding pupils to further achievement. This has in part been due to a recently re-written departmental development plan, which has also led to better use of technology, more emphasis on grammar and more use of the foreign language in teaching. However, despite sound management and good teaching and learning, provision overall is no better than satisfactory because there are insufficient course books to support pupils' independent learning. Also, too many pupils experience interruption in their learning or even a change of language. Year 7 pupils at present risk getting confused between their languages and are not spending sufficient time on what will be their national curriculum language.
166. Since the inspection of 1997 the department has made satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained, though A-levels have been abandoned due to lack of interest. There have been improvements in the use of ICT and of assessment, and in the provision made for pupils with special needs. Morale is good, and expectations are improving.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision for music is **good**.

Strengths

- A new head of department who has the vision to take the department forward.
- Strategies to raise standards.
- Assessment procedures, through which pupils know at what standards they are working.
- Quality extra-curricular provision.
- Good accommodation, which is fully used.

Areas for improvement

- A review of teaching styles across the department.
- The development of the use of ICT.

167. The most recent teachers' assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed pupils to be attaining standards below the average, as they had been in 2001. Inspection evidence shows standards to be closer to average and that these assessments are too harsh. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry into Year 7 are overall well below average, though there are pupils from one feeder school, particularly, who arrive with good standards, and who are competent instrumentalists. Standards in the 2001 GCSE results were well below average, and were as predicted. The department has an open access policy, enabling pupils of all musical ability to take the GCSE course, and this is reflected in the results. The policy will continue.
168. In work seen during the inspection, standards were in line with the national average, with a number of more able musicians achieving well. This confirms the good progress pupils make across Years 7 to 9. Pupils are likely to meet or exceed the target the school has set. Carefully structured schemes of work across the three years ensure that pupils systematically acquire levels of musical literacy enabling them to compose and perform with success by the end of Year 9. From Year 7, they can successfully create and perform from graphic scores, using a range of elements, and with careful thought to interpretation. They understand basic forms such as ternary form, and confidently improvise and compose in this formal structure. They are introduced to families of the orchestra, and use this knowledge appropriately when they are appraising music they listen to. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are able to perform a 16-bar blues with accuracy and confidence. In one lesson observed, each pupil set his or her own target, and performed the blues melody in front of the rest of the class. About half of the class could perform in line with, or slightly higher than, the national average, playing a sequence of chords with the right hand and a jazzy bass line with the left hand. Only a few pupils in this class performed below the national average.
169. Standards overall are below the national average in Years 10 and 11. With the open access policy, most pupils start the course with modest practical standards of performance and understanding. This accounts for recent GCSE results, and why, despite good progress, the overall standards are below average. A few in each year are already good performers, and are on target to gain good results at the end of the course. By the end of Year 11, most pupils have a good understanding of developments in musical history, and can undertake stylistic analysis successfully. Most have good aural perception skills when analysing music. The practical performance standards of many in each year are low. The few who receive instrumental or vocal tuition outside the curriculum perform well, and have creative ideas for composition. One boy in Year 11 wrote an interesting quartet for brass instruments; another one, a competent organist with good aural skills, improvised outstandingly well on an electronic keyboard, using adventurous chord progressions, and impressive suspensions.
170. Overall, teaching is good, though in some lessons it is very good, and in a very small number it is unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good or very good, lessons are well prepared, the timing and pacing are appropriate, pupils of all ability are enabled to make progress, assessment procedures ensure that all pupils know at what levels they are working, and end of lesson performances demonstrate how well pupils have achieved. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, the timing and pacing of lessons are too slow, theory is not appropriately related to practice, there is little attempt to address the needs of pupils of all abilities, and there are basic teaching mistakes such as telling pupils to use the wrong fingers on keyboards.

171. Overall, pupils have good attitudes to music from Years 7 to 11. Most are well focused when using keyboards, they work effectively together in pairs or groups for practical work, they communicate well in performances, and they are very keen to perform in front of their peers. Where there are problems with teaching, pupils become restless.
172. Music technology is well used for the teaching of musical literacy. There is one unit of music technology in each of Years 7 to 9, using appropriate computer software. It is a problem that there are only enough keyboards to fully equip one of the teaching rooms, as this makes preparation for lessons unnecessarily difficult. There are a number of computers in one of the rooms, but they are not working, as they are not compatible with the school system. Action is being taken to address this matter.
173. The music department received a good report in the last inspection. There have been a significant number of changes of head of department since then, and there are now issues to be addressed. These include the quality of some teaching, the raising of standards at the end of Year 9 and 11, and the development of ICT.
174. The subject is well led and managed. The new head of department has made a good start to address issues she has already identified. She has methodically researched budgets from which she can obtain funds to improve delivery of the curriculum. It is excellent practice that pupils taking lessons with visiting music teachers do not have to pay for their tuition, and that the school pays for lessons. The department makes a good contribution to the social and cultural development of pupils. There is very strong extra-curricular provision, with performances by music ensembles enhancing the school's reputation in the community and abroad. The high quality of this provision is being maintained. It is good practice that pupils in Years 10 and 11 have to choose an option from music, drama, art or expressive arts, though, with the open access policy, this does affect levels of attainment at the end of Year 11 in music. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of some of the teaching.
- The positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- The range of after-school activities.

Areas for improvement

- A*-C GCSE results.
- Targets for improvement for individual pupils.
- Extending the most able pupils.
- The use of ICT.

175. In the end of Year 9 teacher assessments in 2002 attainment was below the national average but a little better than in 2001. GCSE results for 2001 were well below the national average for A*-C grades and were below the average grades for the rest of the school.
176. Standards in Year 9 are below average. Although a significant minority of pupils perform at levels well above the national average, the attainment of the majority of pupils is

below the national average in most areas of the physical education curriculum with the exception of swimming. Most pupils are able to apply the techniques, skills and where applicable, the competition rules to several aspects of the curriculum, including swimming, rounders and tennis, but performance skills overall are below the national average. In tennis, pupils in a Year 9 group who are below average ability displayed little accuracy or control in their stroke play. Boys in a Year 8 rounders group had catching and throwing skills that were well below average but girls in a Year 7 group had good striking skills and were able to throw and catch with reasonable accuracy. Pupils in a Year 9 swimming group had good technique in a range of strokes. A significant minority of more able pupils were not given the opportunity to extend their skills in several lessons. The ability of pupils at the end of Year 9 to observe and analyse performance is still developing but where it does occur it is contributing to their improvement in performance, especially in girls' lessons.

177. Standards of work of 16 year olds are below average overall. Evidence from course-work of pupils in Year 11 indicates a very good understanding of many aspects of the physiology and anatomy units but little coverage of the rest of the GCSE syllabus. Pupils in a GCSE practical lesson on football had a sound understanding of a range of passing skills and the majority were able to execute simple passes with reasonable accuracy. In a Year 11 GCSE practical lesson on rugby, pupils had good overall athletic and ball handling ability but specific rugby skills were well below average.
178. Overall the progress of pupils in lessons observed in Years 7 to 9 was sound. In a good swimming lesson, Year 9 girls improved their stroke technique and developed their life-saving skills. In a very good lesson on developing striking and fielding skills, girls of all abilities improved their striking skills considerably and developed their knowledge and understanding of the rules of rounders and of positional play. In Years 10 and 11 achievement in lessons for most pupils is also sound. In a lesson on health related fitness, girls developed a good understanding of how to use equipment in the fitness studio to develop their own fitness but did not fully appreciate the reasons for the improvement in their fitness. Year 10 GCSE pupils made satisfactory progress in a theory lesson which focused on factors affecting participation in sport. Year 11 pupils in a GCSE practical lesson on rugby made some progress on developing mauling and driving skills but were unable to apply this to a game situation and were not totally clear how this would relate to their practical assessment for the GCSE examination. In several lessons the progress of more able pupils is unsatisfactory because they are not extended. There is very little use of ICT even in the GCSE course. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and fixtures with other schools, where there are opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their skills. Over time, pupils throughout the school make satisfactory achievement.
179. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages. Most are enthusiastic, well behaved, and co-operative, demonstrating a real enjoyment of the subject. They are generally attentive and are able to sustain concentration throughout the lesson. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are usually very positive and this is a significant factor in the progress made in many lessons. There are very few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to undertake different roles such as coach or official, although there were more opportunities for independent learning in girls' lessons than boys'.
180. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages and was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. It was very good in one lesson, good in several lessons, and was better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. In the good and very good lessons a secure knowledge of the subject was regularly conveyed to pupils through perceptive

observation of performance, appropriate intervention and good teacher directed question and answer sessions. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies and an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning was also a feature of these lessons and discipline and class management was good. In the unsatisfactory lesson and to some extent in other lessons that were not so good, management of the pupils was unsatisfactory, planning was not specific or detailed enough, and the range and type of activities were not appropriate, particularly with respect to extending the most able pupils. The pace of lessons was often pedestrian and on many occasions lessons were very late starting. Most lessons are double lessons and while this is a much better alternative than single lessons it is important that time is used as effectively as possible and it may be possible for some indoor lessons, particularly to focus on more than one activity. Assessment of performance by teachers in the good and very good lessons is regularly used to enhance teaching but even in these lessons pupils are only rarely set clear targets for improvement. Observation and evaluation by pupils to help improve performance are still developing and are not consistently applied though they are much better in girls' lessons than boys'. The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to schemes of work and involving pupils to set their own targets are still being developed. The assessment of GCSE theory work is inconsistent and is not providing enough useful information for pupils to improve.

181. Although the curriculum meets statutory requirements throughout the school, opportunities for all pupils to develop skills, understanding and knowledge throughout both key stages are sometimes limited by inconsistent curriculum planning which results in some activities not being taught for enough time to ensure appropriate progress. Restrictions on choice of subjects for GCSE means that many high achieving pupils in Year 10 this year were unable to choose physical education. Schemes of work are still developing but in Years 7 to 9 they are sound working documents, although they do not provide specific guidance on developing the potential of the more able pupils. There is insufficient emphasis in many lessons on the importance of health related fitness and insufficient time to develop levels of fitness.
182. Management of the department is satisfactory and is good in many respects. A new head of department is beginning to provide a clear educational direction for the department. However, for all members of the department to be genuinely involved in the development of the department more time needs to be spent deciding on priorities and discussing procedures and curriculum development, with a clear focus on teaching and learning. The day-to-day organisation of the department is very good. All members of the department are committed, are generous with their time and are good role models. The departmental handbook clearly identifies most policies and procedures although it is still in many instances a statement of intent rather than a reflection of working practice. The head of department does not monitor the teaching and learning in the department and there are very few opportunities for the department to share good practice and for this to affect the overall quality of teaching in different activities. There were many examples of differences in practice and procedure between boys and girls.
183. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. GCSE A*-C results are still below average and performance in gymnastics is still below average. There is still some lack of challenge in several lessons especially with regard to most able pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils are still unsatisfactory. Most lessons now are double lessons and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The potential for improvement is sound, considering the commitment to improvement shown by the new head of department.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning.
- Rapidly improving attainment at GCSE.
- Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' literacy skills.
- More opportunities for developing skills of independent learning and writing at length.
- The helpfulness of marking in Years 7 to 9.

184. In the 2001 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well below the national average, and their average point score was well below the national average point score. On average, their performance was lower than in their other subjects. In the 2002 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was higher than in 2001. However, there has been a very significant trend of improvement over time. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils sitting the examination has doubled, while over the same period the proportion of them gaining grade A*-C passes has almost trebled.
185. In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 9 was below the expectations of the agreed syllabus for their age. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country, and of their origins and distinctive features. They have a satisfactory grasp of religious language, concepts and ideas. Their skills in making a personal response to religious questions are well developed. Their understanding of why the beliefs of practising members of faith communities are important to them, and how they shape their lives, is less secure. Their analytical, interpretative and evaluative skills are under-developed.
186. In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 11 was below the expectations of both the agreed syllabus and GCSE examination syllabus for their age. They have, for example, a basic knowledge and understanding of some of the classic philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God, such as William Paley's *Argument From Design*. They can make insightful personal responses to a variety of ethical issues. However, their ability to evaluate different religious and secular responses to questions of belief and morality is under-developed.
187. The achievement of both boys and girls is satisfactory overall at ages 14 and 16. This is because of good teaching and the good attitudes that most bring to lessons. They are challenged with work of increasing depth and complexity as they move through the school. Higher attaining pupils achieve well. However, despite good teaching and good attitudes, achievement is limited by the low baseline from which pupils start and the amount of catching up they have to do. These hinder the development of their subject-specific skills. This is particularly so in the case of lower attaining pupils, whose achievement is unsatisfactory because their literacy skills are unsatisfactory.

188. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is at least satisfactory, and is good or excellent in a fifth of lessons. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a very good grasp of their subject, know clearly what they wish their pupils to learn, routinely share their aims with them, and at the end of lessons evaluate with them how far they have been achieved. They have high expectations of pupils. They plan their lessons well to achieve their aims, and catch and hold pupils' interest through a variety of stimulating and challenging activities and tasks that are well matched to their individual needs. For example, Year 9 pupils made good gains in understanding the concepts of *Ummah* (Community) and Zakah (almsgiving) in Islam. This was because the teacher drew on pupils' own experience of personal and social responsibility to bring the topic alive, and led them step-by-step to grasp the significance of the concepts to members of the Moslem faith community. Year 10 and 11 pupils made good gains in understanding religious and secular responses to the ethical issues raised by capital punishment, and care of the environment. This was because the teacher planned very well to actively involve the pupils in their learning through imaginative and effective use of 'Power Point' visuals, group work, role-play and formal debates and presentations.
189. Teaching makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, Year 7 pupils began a lesson on pilgrimage in Islam with a brief period of meditative reflection, focused on the image of a lighted candle, while listening to sacred music. Consequently, they approached their work in a calm and reflective mood, better able to grasp why pilgrimage is a spiritual experience for Moslems. The outstanding display of religious images, artefacts and pupils' work in the specialist teaching rooms creates an ethos in which the spiritual can flourish.
190. Meaningful homework that extends the learning in lessons is regularly set. This good teaching is underpinned by the very good relationships that teachers engender with and between pupils. Pupils with special educational needs, or from minority ethnic backgrounds, can take risks in their learning, because they know that their contributions will be received with respect. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils were absorbed in the return of their homework, because the teacher placed explicit value on the efforts of all. In the same lesson, a minority ethnic boy with a low reading age felt able to take his turn in reading aloud, because he knew that the teacher would value his attempts, and his peers respect them.
191. Where teaching is less secure, some lessons lack pace and challenge because there is an over-emphasis on oral work at the expense of written work. Extension work is not always set for gifted and talented pupils. There are too few opportunities for developing skills of independent learning, research and enquiry, and writing at length. Marking, though conscientious and supportive, does not do enough in Years 7 to 9 to help pupils understand how to raise the level of their attainment.
192. The department is led and managed very well by a recently appointed head of department, who has a clear vision of the educational direction the subject should take if standards are to be further raised. She has done much to move the subject on in a short space of time. For example, she has introduced a wider variety of teaching styles, developed rigorous schemes of work for the new Doncaster Agreed Syllabus for Years 9 to 11, and improved assessment procedures. Such improvements are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and achievement. Non-specialist teachers enjoy very good support. The teamwork, commitment and enthusiasm that characterise the department make a positive contribution to raising standards.

193. There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection. Attainment at GCSE examination level has risen significantly. Improved pupil attitudes to the subject are evidenced in the much- increased uptake at GCSE examination level. The school and its governing body have effectively addressed the key issue of the previous inspection concerning their statutory responsibility to make appropriate provision for teaching the agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Overall, the quality of provision for vocational education is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils make good progress.
- Teachers are committed to the style of teaching and learning.
- Pupils enjoy the practical and individual learning set at their own level and pace.
- The work is perceived as directly relevant to pupils' need.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the arrangement of computers in one room to make visibility easier for the teacher.
- Improve access to computers for pupils having no home computer.
- Accommodation for leisure and tourism is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

194. Over 100 pupils chose this new vocational GCSE, introduced to the 14-16 curriculum only in 2002. It is available only to Year 10 in a double option.
195. The range of prior attainment on entry to Year 10 is wide, ranging from potential grade A to well below average, with more below and well below than above average. Achievement observed in class was never less than satisfactory and was good in half of the lessons observed. Those few of high prior attainment are competent, confident and quick computer users with good knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets. The top set are working at about grade C at GCSE double award; they have a good knowledge of word processing skills and use the spell checker confidently. The absence of access to a home computer causes one pupil in the top set to be less familiar with the operating platform commonly used on computers and therefore to under-attain compared with the others in the class. Achievement is well below average in the lower sets for those with low prior attainment. Progress is slow, and for a very few, is hampered by immature attitudes to work. Keyboard skills are limited; only a very few can identify more than one search engine and they cannot make an attachment to an e-mail.
196. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was never less than satisfactory and was good in 50 per cent of lessons observed. Where teaching is good, a good ethos for learning is created; consequently pupils enjoy their learning, behave well and make good progress. All lessons are well planned with a good structure which enables teaching and learning to take place. Clear lesson objectives enable pupils to know exactly what they have to do and why they have to do it. Pupils cooperate well in the best lessons to share their knowledge and understanding. Helpful teacher interventions enable learning and

accelerate progress. Skilful management of a few difficult pupils ensures that lessons are not disrupted for the majority.

197. The course is securely housed in a good departmental base but the arrangement of machines in one room makes it difficult for the teacher to see over the top of the units. Some pupils try to take advantage of this to misbehave.

Leisure and tourism

198. This new vocational subject was introduced into the 14-16 curriculum only in 2002 and is available only to Year 10 pupils. Prior attainment on entry to the course is mixed, ranging from secure GCSE potential to well below average; there are more below than above average pupils. Some pupils have special educational needs. Pupils are in their first half-term of a new course using a style of learning to which many are unaccustomed. Groups are observed to be cooperating in the preparation of a pack of leisure choices for a group coming to Doncaster on an exchange visit from the USA. Achievement overall is below average but all make good progress because they work at their own level and pace at tasks which suit their prior attainment. They acquire good social and learning skills in working together in groups. Girls achieve better at this than boys and naturally take control of groups; they agree and allocate tasks and check that work is done. All groups have difficulty in establishing the priority of tasks and some boys want to work by themselves, but this is corrected by good teacher intervention. Generally progress accelerates as confidence grows.
199. Teaching is good because the teacher is enthusiastic about this style of teaching and learning, and is skilled in its presentation; lessons are well planned too. The preparation of materials is a strong feature. The skilful creation of a positive ethos for learning, crucial to the success of this style of teaching and learning, is achieved. The teacher works very hard and manages pupils successfully. Expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour are high and are generally well met. Skilful teacher intervention maintains interest and motivation and quietly gives direction to the work by helping pupils think for themselves. Pupils with special needs are well supported and make as good progress as others. All enjoy the method of learning because pupils say they are more actively involved in their learning than in other lessons. They make constructive use of the freedom allowed to move round the room, to select and collect materials and to discuss work with other pupils and their teacher. Relationships are good and contribute significantly to the good pace of teaching and learning.
200. Vivid display provides a strong subject identity and the room has good basic equipment except for the absence of carpet which makes the room noisier. There are a small number of laptop computers available with Internet access. However, the room is shared with other subjects for 80 per cent of the week because the subject has no room of its own which can be fitted to provide a service environment and this does influence teaching and learning.

Manufacturing

201. Attainment on entry to Year 10 is well below average in an all boys group. Attainment in lessons is appropriate and pupils meet the criteria for the course. They achieve well and make good progress whilst making a hand clamp using different manufacturing processes. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate formal support and make as good progress as the rest of the group.

202. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and skills, demonstrated in the way they present and explain their materials. The new workshop provides a very good base which the teacher uses well to create an exciting and safe ethos for practical learning. Consequently the boys are enthusiastic and respond well to high expectations. Good demonstrations, for example of how to cut and shape metal for a mould, allow pupils to acquire satisfactory skills. Boys are confident with their skills and demonstrate a good range in handling and using tools competently. This is reinforced by good feedback from the teacher to individuals. Pupils are familiar with a range of processes. Literacy is reinforced through note making, and number skills are exercised in every lesson, for example in measuring and marking out materials.
203. This new vocational subject was introduced to the 14-16 curriculum only in 2002 and is available in Year 10 only.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for 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
Applied mathematics	18	44.4		5.5		1.05	
Art and design	10	80		10		2.2	
Biology	19	89.5		15.7		2.1	
Chemistry	8	100		62.5		3.75	
Drama and theatre studies	9	88.8		44.4		3.0	
Business studies	24	58.3		4.1		1.1	
Design and technology – product design	7	71.4		14.2		1.0	
English language and literature	25	100		20		2.4	
French	6	50		0		1.0	
German	3	33.3		0		0.33	
Religious studies	13	84.6		15.3		2.3	
Geography	3	66.6		33.3		2.33	
History	7	85.7		0		2.0	
Physical education	13	92.3		23		1.92	
Physics	17	64.7		29.4		2.05	
Psychology	17	94.1		17.6		2.47	

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	7	100	96	29	46	5.43	6.57
Biology	18	89	88	11	34	3.11	5.25
Business studies	12	92	92	8	32	4.50	5.50
Chemistry	8	88	90	13	43	4.25	5.90
Communication studies	6	83	93	-	31	3.33	5.53

English/Language	17	82	92	18	30	4.12	5.28
Design and technology	3	67	91	33	30	4.67	5.38
General studies	18	89	85	28	30	4.56	4.91
Geography	3	67	92	-	38	2.67	5.74
History	3	67	88	33	35	4.67	5.45
Mathematics	11	82	87	-	43	2.91	5.80
Physics	5	80	88	20	40	2.80	5.67
Religious studies	12	92	92	33	38	6.67	5.84
Sports/PE studies	2	100	92	50	25	6.00	5.09
Leisure studies	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.00	10.06

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ art and design	6	83		0		0	
GNVQ health and social care	11	55		0		0	
GNVQ leisure and tourism	1	100		100		0	
GNVQ ICT	15	66		0		0	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

204. The focus was on mathematics, chemistry and biology, and two physics lessons were observed. At A2 level, numbers are small and there is a wide range of attainment. Numbers, and standards, are a little higher at AS level. Teaching is good; there is a very positive awareness of individual needs and there is good academic interaction in lessons. Students show a very keen interest in their work and this impacts very positively on the good progress they make.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning are good, and often very good.
- Teacher/student relationships are very good.
- A-level results improved significantly in 2002.

Area for improvement

- A*-C pass rates for the GCSE re-sit programme are poor.

205. A-level results have been poor until the most recent examination in 2002, which produced a marked improvement in the number of passes gained. The department has an inclusive policy towards students wishing to follow AS or A2 programmes, so standards of achievement on entry are generally below average. In the light of this, progress made by the majority of students is good. As in past years, the results for students repeating GCSE mathematics have been poor. Of those students entered in 2001 four out of ten achieved grade C and no higher grades were awarded.
206. Standards of work seen were broadly at the expected level. A class of 18 year olds showed good understanding when dealing with differential calculus. They were able to call on previous knowledge to apply the chain rule effectively. Another class used iteration well to find the possible routes for equations of the third order and higher. Some students showed a weakness with basic algebra by failing to see the need for a simple substitution when dealing with an equation containing a hidden quadratic term.
207. Teaching in the sixth form is very good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, very good relationships with students, and plan lessons well. The pace of work is brisk and material appropriately challenging. Students are well motivated and respond well to the adult manner in which they are treated. The progress of the GCSE re-sit candidates is less secure, principally because of their poor grasp of number and of basic concepts. They nonetheless work hard and their pace of work is good. No lessons or samples of work for further mathematics were seen, as the only student was absent. The lesson plans and their content are entirely appropriate.
208. The management of the subject is good. The sharing of teaching groups allows staff to teach from their strengths. Monitoring of student progress is thorough and any evidence of a student not achieving expected standards brings a support system into play.

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Assessment is used to monitor students' progress effectively.
- Good support is given.
- The subject is well led and there is commitment to raise standards.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient resources to support and extend independent learning.
- Monitoring of teaching is not formalised.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped in teaching.

209. In the 2001 A-level GCE examinations, the proportion of students achieving grades A-E was in line with that seen nationally. The proportion gaining grades A-B, and the average point score, was well below the national average. The school is able to show that, relative to their previous attainment, most students did as well as was expected. Results over the past four years have fluctuated with the prior attainment of the group. Overall, most students have gained a pass grade. Results in the recent 2002 A-level examinations were disappointing when compared with previous years. This may be partly explained by the persistent absenteeism of a number of students. Although numbers had been falling over the past few years, they rose in 2001 and the present

Year 12 has seen a very significant increase. More females than males choose to study biology and, generally, tend to gain the higher grades. For a significant number of students, biology is their only science at this level, and many enter the course with only modest GCSE results.

210. Standards of work, seen amongst current students, are below the national average. In Year 13, there is a wide range of ability, but small class sizes contribute positively to their satisfactory progress over time. All have built on their prior knowledge and understanding of complex topics, such as the transmission of the nervous impulse and the functioning of the kidney, but to varying degrees of sophistication. The more able show a good understanding and discuss such topics fluently, but others are slow to grasp new concepts at this level and for many, a weakness in their knowledge of chemistry hinders their progress. Literacy skills, for some, are well below average for A2 level students. By the end of Year 13, there is a wide variation in investigative skills. The more able students produce coursework of a very high standard indeed, indicating in-depth planning and a very good appreciation of the relationships between their practical investigations and scientific theory. The coursework of those less able, however, is more superficial and their evaluation much more limited. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but are already extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. Many students are entering the course with lower than average attainment. They show poor recall of previous work, and their background knowledge of chemical processes is poor. Overall, students use their coursework books well for independent study, but their research skills are not extensive.
211. Teaching is good overall, but in lessons seen, varies from satisfactory to excellent. As a result, students learn well, within their own capabilities. 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 much sensitivity to the limitations of understanding in the group. Lessons are planned well to encourage development of students' confidence and independent learning skills. In the large AS classes, students do not benefit from tutorial style lessons, and teaching is less informal. Although the students are managed well, and there is good one-to-one support during practical sessions, attitudes to work of a minority of students are not as positive as they should be at this stage.
212. Whilst post-16 groups use ICT well for research, they do not use it enough for measurement and control. Homework is set regularly and day-to-day marking is helpful to students. Each year group benefits from the teaching being shared between two specialists. There are few extracurricular activities that enrich the curriculum. Adequate time is allocated to teaching per week, but its restriction to single periods only, on the timetable, hinders investigative practical work.
213. Work in the subject is well led and well managed. Three new enthusiastic and inexperienced teachers have joined the department over the past 18 months. They have been deployed carefully, but more formal monitoring is necessary to ensure consistency of teaching. Assessment and monitoring of students' academic progress are good. The new science accommodation is good. A good supply of computers has just been acquired, but there is still a shortage of data-logging equipment. A good library of websites and CD-ROMS is being built up, but there is an insufficient variety of up-to-date reading material to support students' independent learning, both in the library and in the department. Technicians work hard to support the teaching of post 16 biology and are much appreciated by the teachers. There is a shortage of technical support with appropriate expertise in the subject at this level.

CHEMISTRY

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

Strengths

- Results in 2002 were considerably higher than those in 2001.
- Work produced by Year 13 students is sound, and most have a clear sense of responsibility for their own learning.
- Teaching is good in Year 13 and is sound in Year 12.
- The subject is well led.

Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching methods to give students more opportunity to communicate, explain and develop their thinking.
- Continuity between lessons to enable students to build on their prior knowledge.
- Learning resources to enhance motivation and learning.

214. Results have improved in the last two years, with a substantial improvement in 2002. In 2001, the results were below the national average. In 2002, the results were better and all students obtained a pass grade. In most years the number of male and female students taking A-level chemistry has been roughly equal, and the total number has been small, at around eight. The number of students taking AS level in the current Year 12 has increased considerably, with more female students than male. There are no significant differences in their results over time.
215. The standard of work seen in Year 13 during this inspection indicates that attainment is in line with the national average. Students' experimental skills are good. They carry out sensitive procedures safely, and have a sound understanding of the concepts involved. In one Year 13 lesson, for example, students carried out an esterification experiment successfully. The higher attaining students explained the chemical reaction between ethanoic acid and ethanol and understood the name code. The middle and lower attaining students were less sure of the chemical formula for ethanol or the alkene it is derived from. In another lesson, most students gained a sound understanding of complexes and ligands. The lower attaining students were unsure of the meaning of an ion, and the difference between a complex and a ligand and the higher attaining students could not name the forces involved.
216. The work seen in Year 12 is at an appropriate level. Students are only a few weeks into the course. At least half have a sound understanding of oxidation and reduction, for example, and a similar number are able to carry out simple molar calculations with help. They are less sure of the definition of a mole in terms of Avogadro's number. Students had good, concise notes and page references to the class text given by teachers, and at least half had made their own notes, following good advice from teachers.
217. Teaching is sound overall. It is good in Year 13 lessons. Clear exposition of procedures and principles by teachers helps students to concentrate and apply themselves well to tasks. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain concepts well. This enables students to engage with the topic being taught. Lessons have good pace and classes are managed well. Teachers make good use of available resources. Homework is used effectively to support students and extend their learning. At times the range of teaching styles is limited and does not include enough opportunities for students to

communicate, explain and develop thinking orally. Students do not speak audibly and clearly, or engage in extended answers and explanations in lessons. Lesson planning is incomplete, and does not sufficiently take account of students' progress or previous learning.

218. The chemistry curriculum is satisfactory. Students are prepared well for external examinations, and teachers provide useful extra revision classes. The link with Sheffield University is beneficial. The inclusion of a wider context of chemistry with opportunities to discuss spiritual, moral and cultural issues, as for example, the 'big bang', and the formation of matter, or the morality of our dependence on fossil fuels, would enhance the coverage and broaden understanding.
219. Chemistry is well led, and available resources are used efficiently. There is a need to enhance the provision of learning resources further, particularly to support the relatively large numbers in Year 12.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

220. The focus was on design and technology. No other subjects are taught.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision for design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching by a committed and supportive staff.
- Students respond well to the many experiences they are given.
- The quality of accommodation.

Area for improvement.

- Numbers taking examinations are low.

221. In 2001 there were three entries for examination at A2 level. The results were satisfactory. Two students who took the examination gained a higher grade.
222. The standards of work of current students are below average. Students achieve well in relation to predictions based on GCSE results. In the lessons seen, they were doing well as a result of effective teaching, which was challenging. The lesson structure and range of activities clearly focused their learning. Students recall knowledge well, and apply it. Their project work is good, and shows the same confidence as their class work.
223. Teaching is good, and students learn well as a result. The principal features of the good teaching are clear objectives, sharp planning, brisk pace and a range of teaching strategies to bring about learning. The teachers have good subject knowledge, and use this well in questioning, and through the set tasks. Lessons provide opportunities for students to practise what has been discussed, and their skills and techniques improve as lessons progress. Teachers provide opportunities for students to carry out individual, detailed research work to formulate ideas, record their findings and prepare specifications. Students responded confidently to the activities.
224. Students learn well. They are attentive, work productively and respond very well to the supportive teaching and different learning styles they experience. In one of the practical

lessons seen, students learnt skills and techniques of cutting, shaping, machining and joining different metals. Their skills improved through practice. They rose to the challenge of designing products for a specific purpose. Time was used well in all lessons. Students support and help each other effectively and talk and listen to each other in groups in a mature way, as part of their learning. Students are always confident when offering ideas in more open discussion; this was seen in a lesson where they investigated the use and application of different metals.

225. The good teaching and learning result from work in the faculty being well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved, and to improving standards. The planning effectively reflects the course requirements, and determines the level for good teaching. Recording of progress and target setting, based on careful analysis of student performance through review, evaluation and assessment, is becoming established. Learning outcomes are sharply focused. In a lesson observed, students progressed well as a result of effective teaching, which demanded much of them. The lesson structure and activities clearly focused their learning. Students drew well on their knowledge of design, and meeting the requirements of a specification.

BUSINESS STUDIES

226. The focus was on business studies, and one lesson in NVQ retail was observed. Four Year 12 students were observed taking a level 2 NVQ retailing operation course, 'Hygiene at work.' In this lesson, students were taught well, worked well, and demonstrated a positive attitude to their studies.

BUSINES STUDIES

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

Strengths

- Good teaching, by committed staff, leading to good learning.
- The progress made by students.
- Leadership of the subject.
- Good industrial links, which enhance students' experiences.
- Good procedures for monitoring and assessment.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in examinations.
- Specialist accommodation.
- The insufficient range of vocational-oriented courses.
- Students' range of reading, and their retention techniques.

227. Business studies is part of the department of business studies and ICT. The department offers AS and A2 level business studies.
228. In GCE A-level business studies, both at AS and A2, the standards attained in examinations were below average in 2001. There are encouraging trends in examination figures, since, in 2002, more students attained grades A or B. There are similar trends in figures for AS standards, where there has been a sharp rise in A and B grades from 2001 to 2002.

229. The standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are at least in line with, and occasionally above, average. Students confidently and accurately use a wide range of business terminology. They demonstrate clear understanding of a wide range of business concepts. For example, Year 12 students, in their studies of business strategies, understand the potentially conflicting goals of shareholders and stakeholders in a business, and how strategic decisions take into account their different aspirations. The strength of the students' class work in both years is the steady accumulation of knowledge, which is well organised in their files, and in their basic understanding of the subject matter. Some students still have relative weaknesses in the interpretation and analysis of data.
230. Given the students' prior attainment on entry, there is evidence of good progress and of good value added. This is clearly seen in lessons. Students' progress in lessons is not fully manifested as success in examinations because of their failure to retain knowledge and understanding over time, and because of the lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject. This is an outcome of additional interests outside school which impact on the time they can devote to learning.
231. Overall, teaching and learning in the department are good. Teachers have an excellent rapport with students, and their expert subject knowledge underpins discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. This leads to a greater quality of students' learning. Lessons are carefully planned, and effective use is made of case studies, and other activities, to allow students to apply and extend their learning. However, a tendency to over-provide such help for the students is partly at the expense of ensuring that they have enough practice in the kinds of analysis that will enable them to become more independent learners. Some students are passive recipients, rather than active participants in their own learning. This is particularly true for female students. However, there is no evidence to show that female students do not attain as highly as their male counterparts. Students have very positive views about the subject. They particularly appreciate the very clear organisation of their courses, and the clear feedbacks on their attainment and progress.
232. Leadership and management are good. The head of department checks and analyses results carefully to identify areas in which teaching and learning can be improved. He sets clear targets for action, by both staff and students. Effective business links with Jaguar cars and Geest Foods have been established, which the department uses well to enhance the students' understanding of business. Resources are adequate. The department has good access to ICT. The accommodation is insufficient in terms both of numbers of rooms, and of appropriately constituted business rooms. Currently, staff are itinerant, and are often far removed from the full range of departmental resources. This impacts on the standards attained by students. The head of department has a clear vision for the future of the department. He is committed to continually raising standards, and he is particularly well supported by his colleagues in the department. He recognises the need to augment current provision with more vocation-oriented courses, including GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses. He intends to build on the new vocational GCSE courses in business studies to add vocational provision in the sixth form, in order to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of future cohorts of students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

233. The focus was on information communication technology. One lesson of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) ICT skills course was observed. The quality of teaching was

good. The teacher had a good level of knowledge and understanding of the application of ICT skills. Students made good progress with word processing skills, the use of spreadsheets, and the preparation of charts to present information for an audience. The activities followed the course work requirements and met the standards expected.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- The achievement of students.
- The working relationships between students.
- Leadership of the department.

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas required for improvement.

234. In 2001, the results of the GNVQ examination results were satisfactory. The majority of students gained a full award. Since the previous attainment of students who take this course is generally below average, the results represent good achievement. There is no significant difference in attainment by gender.
235. Standards are overall about average, and achievement is good, as demonstrated through work seen in lessons, in students' portfolios, and in their conversations. In general, students do well on those parts of the course concerned with their own ability to use software. They confidently create complex data systems, using linked spreadsheets with macros and data entry screens. They design, and start to create, relational databases. Standards are satisfactory on the parts of the courses concerned with understanding how organisations use ICT. Students talk in some depth about the real uses of ICT systems they have investigated. Their understanding of this aspect of the subject comes from textbooks, from work assignments and from the information they receive from the teachers' first-hand knowledge. Students work hard to ensure that their design will fully meet the needs of the intended user.
236. All students show an interest and enthusiasm for the subject. When they are working individually on computers in lessons, they are good at helping each other, and focused discussions are common. They are always relevant to the work, and contribute usefully to their good learning. Students work on computers in their own time. No students reported any difficulty in gaining access to the resources they need. In the lessons observed, they were doing well as a result of effective teaching, which demanded much of them. The lesson structure, and planned activities, clearly focused their learning.
237. Overall, teaching is good. The teachers have a very good command of the subject, including some first-hand experiences of uses of ICT in organisations other than the school. Teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the subject to their students. They are good at anticipating possible misunderstandings, and they make good use of questioning to check on students' understanding. When students are working individually, teachers generally make good use of their time, discussing work with students. Opportunities are taken to stretch students by asking challenging questions and showing them further possibilities. Teachers focus their attention on the quieter

students, ensuring that they understand what they are working on. They also direct the work of the more enthusiastic students. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and a high level of skill and expertise. They have high expectations, as indicated in the work planned. Students have the necessary skills to meet the demands of the coursework requirements, as demonstrated through the work presented.

238. Students make good use of easy access to a central network, the Internet and a good range of specialist software. The quality of the practical teaching rooms, which are well designed, and which have access to multi-media projectors for class demonstrations, enable good quality teaching of practical work.
239. The subject is well led and managed. A well-organised system of recording individual results for each unit, and comparing current standards with previous attainment, ensures successful monitoring of individual students' progress, and identifying any underachievement. The consistency in the quality of teaching has led to a rise of standards in the last two years. A good level of feedback is given to individual students about progress and attainment, and comments about how they might improve their work. There is a good level of student self-assessment. The attainment in Year 12 and 13 for current students is sufficiently high, and higher attaining students are likely to gain the highest grades.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

240. The focus was on physical education and travel and tourism. No other subjects are taught.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The very good attitude of students and the relationship between students and staff.
- Some good teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Marking, to clearly identify targets for improvement.
- Opportunities for students to use AS and A2 examinations regularly, to establish progress in all units of work.
- More opportunities to apply theory in practice.

241. In the GCE A2 examinations in 2001, both students achieved their predicted grades. In the GCE A2 examinations this year, most students achieved their predicted grades, and performed as well in physical education as they did in other A2 subjects. In the AS examination this year, most students achieved their predicted grades on the basis of prior attainment.
242. Standards of work of current students conform to standards expected in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. Written work for the majority of students illustrates a good understanding of much of the work covered, and there are comprehensive notes. There are limited opportunities for students to apply this knowledge to practical sporting situations, and to illustrate that they can apply their

knowledge and understanding to examination questions. There are very good notes on the psychology of sport linked to personality theories, but too little application to practical situations in sport. Some good investigative skills can be seen in students' performance profiles where knowledge of physiology and anatomy, and the principles of exercise, is applied to devising a personal exercise plan linked to a specific sport.

243. Teaching is good overall, and students learn well as a result. Good planning, appropriately varied teaching methods, and very good relationships with the students, were a feature of the good teaching observed. At times, objectives lacked the specific clarity necessary to ensure that students of all abilities made appropriate progress. Teachers illustrate good subject knowledge through their exposition, and through their question and answer sessions with students. This contributes to the good learning. There are good opportunities for students to work independently, to take responsibility for their own learning, and often to help others to learn. This was a feature of a well-structured lesson in Year 13, where students worked together to identify the differences between aggression and assertive behaviour.
244. Students learn well. They are co-operative and attentive, work productively, and respond well to the supportive teaching and different learning styles they experience. They work well in groups, support each other and listen well to each other's ideas. Most students in Year 13 are confident in offering their own ideas, although this was not quite so apparent in Year 12.
245. Effective leadership and management support good teaching. Day to day organization is good, and there is a clear commitment to improving standards, as exemplified by the extra lunchtime sessions organised by staff. The development plan does not identify in enough detail the priorities for the sixth form this year. There is not sufficient focus on specific learning goals, or on enough information from analysis of students' achievements, for accurate targets to be set. Marking is not rigorous enough. The procedure does not consistently identify targets for improvement. There are insufficient opportunities for students to produce work for in -depth assessment. There are restricted opportunities, and not enough encouragement, for students to utilise information technology on the course.

LEISURE AND TOURISM

Overall, the quality of provision for travel and tourism is **good**.

Strengths

- Students develop confidence, and increase their knowledge and understanding of this vocational area.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of students.
- Development of the key skills, particularly ICT.

Areas for improvement

- Developing links between the advanced and intermediate courses.
- Improving the popularity of the course.
- Improving resources, including the number of computers available in the teaching area.
- Reducing the total amount of staff teaching the course.

246. In 2001, five students entered AVCE leisure and tourism. Two gained merit awards and three gained distinctions. One student studied for the Intermediate GNVQ course and

gained a merit award. Only a small number of students are attracted to the course, with six in the present Year 12 studying AVCE travel and tourism, and four studying the Intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism. All students spend the equivalent of two full days studying the course in school, and one day on local work related placements.

247. The standards of work being produced by current students are in line with course expectations, with several students being expected to gain distinctions. These good results are achieved because of the high motivation of students for sustained, productive and increasingly self-organised work. Members of the teaching staff support them all very well. The accuracy of written work is good, and most students are able to write effectively for different purposes. They are also able to present information in graphical form, to derive information and to draw appropriate conclusions from statistical and graphical information. Overall good progress is made in the key skills of communication, number and ICT, which are related to realistic situations in the travel and tourism industry.
248. The overall quality of teaching is good, but with some small variation in the quality of individual lessons. Five members of staff teach students this year, and this is too many to ensure appropriate progression for all students at all times. In a Year 13 lesson, where the aims of the lesson were made very clear to students, they made good progress planning an event. They developed a good understanding of the importance of such issues as customer base, marketing, finance and time scale, which ensured that the quality of their planning was very good. They also used ICT very successfully to conduct their research and to help with analysis. They worked extremely well independently, and were very well supported at all times by the class teacher. In a Year 12 lesson, where planning was not quite so good, the students made satisfactory progress, some in developing knowledge and understanding of marketing, and others in the importance of environmental protection to the tourist industry. More progress may have been made if there had been some overlap in the work of the two groups of students. A significant feature of all lessons is the very good relationship between students and teaching staff. The high expectations of staff are rewarded by the commitment and enthusiasm of students.
249. Travel and tourism is co-ordinated very well by the head of sixth form who is given good support by other teaching staff. Courses are enhanced by visits, work placements and case studies. There is very effective communication between all staff involved in teaching. This is particularly important, as two members of staff are new to the school, and new to teaching. All are open and receptive to new ideas, and regularly take the opportunities presented for continuing professional development, to ensure that they are informed of recent developments in the subject
250. There is a carefully planned scheme of work. Well-planned programmes of assessment benefit students, and this helps them with their target setting.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

251. Health and social care courses were not inspected in detail. One GNVQ Intermediate lesson in health and social care was seen. Teaching was good and took account of students of all levels of prior attainment. Students were engaged purposefully, furthered their knowledge, skills and understanding and made good progress. Students were keen to share their knowledge and understanding with each other and were encouraged to do so.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

252. The focus was on art and design. Drama is also taught and one lesson was observed. Teaching was good and the attitudes of students were very positive. Standards achieved are broadly average.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Learning is well directed by a high level of individual support.
- The well-planned GNVQ Intermediate course has led to rising standards.
- Students achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment on most courses.
- The increased popularity of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Build on strategies to encourage students to use independent learning skills.
- Improve the opportunities for students to be involved in activities which would enrich the AS and A-level curriculum.
- Timetable provision, in order to provide opportunities for sustained periods of study.

253. The A-level results in 2001 were below average for grades A-B, but were slightly above average for grades A-E. In 2002, results fell slightly. Six students took the examination, and all gained a pass grade. The number of entries for this examination has risen since the last inspection, but the entry is still too small for accurate statistical analysis. At AS level, the 2001 results were below the national average, but improved in 2002. Overall achievement was satisfactory, and the achievement of two students was particularly good. The newly introduced course of GNVQ intermediate is increasing in popularity, and results are improving. In 2001 all students gained a pass, and in 2002, nearly half gained a merit, and one student a distinction. Many students started from a modest level, and their achievement was good.
254. The standards of work of current A level students are average. There is a wide range of ability in the small group of six students, but most are achieving well in relation to their GCSE results. They work with a sound degree of individuality and their work reflects a growing ability for in-depth analysis and exploration of ideas and styles. Studies based on 'Food' where students researched its portrayal in a variety of artists' work, resulted in a range of diverse work based on modern and traditional artists. Work by higher attainers demonstrated a critical analysis of both images and texts. Students in Year 12, following the AS level, are only a little way into their course, and their standard of work is slightly below average. They were, however, achieving as much as expected in the lessons observed. Students are building on areas of weakness such as research and investigation, and are beginning to demonstrate a growing ability to analyse, interpret and convey ideas. In a project on Futurism, the work demonstrated a growing awareness of how to use experimental, analytical and documenting skills. At both levels, sketchbooks revealed a lack of work completed in their own time, and the limited use of independent learning skills.

255. Achievement on the GNVQ course is good, and standards at this early stage in the course are slightly above average. Students rapidly build on the challenge of individual study, and this is the result of the well-structured course that gives students of all abilities the skills and confidence to achieve their best. Links with industry and community projects further raise standards and heighten interest. Sketchbooks showed a range of research on artists such as Naum Gabo and Henry Moore in preparation for participation in a public project to produce maquettes of sculpture to be built on a local bike track.
256. Teaching is good, and students learn well as a result. Teachers have a good supportive relationship with the students. Individual discussions of students' project work are well directed, and backed up by written comments. This good individual support enables students with differing backgrounds to make equally good progress. Teachers are always well prepared with examples, both to support critical analysis of artists, and to give direction on techniques. Discussion is a regular feature of all classes, through which students extend their ideas and develop an understanding.
257. Students have a positive attitude to work in school, enjoy art and respond well to the high level of individual attention they receive. Their skills of independent research undertaken on their own initiative, and not solely at the direction of the teacher, are less evident. For example, few students extend projects by visiting art galleries in their own time. Teachers frequently bring in their own resources to make sure students have access to a wide range of media, books and artefacts in school time.
258. In the past, students have worked with artists in residence, but presently there is little enrichment of the AS and A-level course. Because lesson time is short, and double lessons are rarely timetabled, activities of this kind are restricted. Valuable time is wasted on setting out and putting away work and equipment, and the students have little opportunity for long periods of concentration. The sixth form students have no room of their own, and because of the demands on the art rooms, it can be difficult to pursue work in private study time. The department positively encourages students to use whatever space they have available. The teachers use display well, and create a pleasant and stimulating environment within the art area.

HUMANITIES

259. The focus was upon geography, religious studies and psychology. One history lesson, and one sociology lesson were observed. Standards in history are above average. Teaching is good and students have a positive attitude to the subject. They work hard and with enjoyment. Standards in sociology are below average, but students have started from a very low base. Teaching is good and students learn well.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision for geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Very good leadership leading to improvements in teaching and learning.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Rising standards.

Area for improvement

- Continuing work to raise standards.

260. The provision in geography caters well for a low number of students following the A2 course, and a growing number following the AS course, all of whom, at this stage, intend to continue to the A2 course in 2003. There are more females than males on the AS course.
261. Standards on the A2 course have varied over the last four years. Generally, numbers have been too small to make safe comparison with national standards. When there were sufficient numbers, standards reached the national average, and students added good value to their prior attainment. Progress has been satisfactory, and students progress better in geography than in most other subjects. There are no national comparators yet for the AS course in geography, but two out of three students did not reach their target grades, and one is planning to re-take a paper.
262. Standards are below average but are much better than the previous examination results suggest. The present AS group is making rapid progress in its work on urban morphology. Students compare the shape of Doncaster town centre with a number of theoretical models. The annotated plan being produced is of a high standard. They show sensitive understanding of the changing influences now shaping the town centre. The same group use effectively what they already know and understand about the theory of marine erosion, to apply it to a case study of Holderness. They achieve well in class, and make very quick progress. Similarly, standards in the A2 class are rising, and they achieve well in lessons. In a lesson observed on the natural environment, students successfully used the British climate to improve their understanding of the weather conditions associated with the passing overhead of a depression. Achievement is good, and progress is rapid.
263. Teaching is very good in both years of the sixth form. Lessons have clear structure, based on very good planning, and they proceed at an appropriate pace. The very good subject knowledge of the specialist teachers is displayed in the way they manage a wide variety of materials to enable very effective learning. The same thinking skills are successfully employed in the sixth form as are used in the main school. Teaching challenges students to use what they already know and understand to apply it to case studies, and to apply case studies in different contexts. For example, theoretical knowledge of coastal processes is applied to erosion on the Holderness coast aided by a very good video clip. This enables students to apply what they already know in a local context, and extend their knowledge into soil slip in boulder clay.
264. The best learning is a learning dialogue between teachers and students where a conversation takes place between adult equals. For example, in the A2 lesson on the anatomy of depressions, the quality of learning accelerated when the teacher, using a projector and sitting among the students, illustrated how the fronts passed in turn over Doncaster, bringing with them their related weather patterns. The students related this to the patterns they had worked out for themselves, and made minor corrections in quiet conversation with their teacher. This was very good learning. Similarly, the AS group were heard to develop their use of technical vocabulary rapidly while describing different street patterns they had observed on an Ordnance Survey map. The students share well what they know, and understand, with each other in learning conversation. A student does not let another get away with an inaccurate statement, backed by wrong evidence. Well-timed, supportive interventions by the teachers build confidence quickly among students who generally lack confidence at this level.

265. Students are developing into autonomous learners who can research independently, using ICT and websites provided by their teachers, to produce carefully edited notes. They enjoy and benefit greatly from the two sessions of residential fieldwork in Whitby.
266. The leadership and management of the subject are very good, and induce ongoing change. Teachers work very hard to introduce and implement simultaneously the details of two new schemes of work. Teaching is shared among the specialist team. Teachers frequently discuss best practice, and share experiences. They are not yet fully familiar with the requirements of the examination board, and this reflects in the new schemes of work. Students know their target grades, but do not necessarily know how to improve, other than by working harder.

PSYCHOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Students make good progress.
- Students apply their knowledge well, particularly to investigations and to current and ethical issues.
- Teaching is very good.
- Students respond very well in lessons.
- The subject is well led.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for students to give extended responses in writing.
- Students' independent study skills are underdeveloped.
- Students do not evaluate and plan their own learning well enough.

267. Psychology was introduced into the sixth form two years ago with the first group completing the two year course in 2002. The subject has grown rapidly in popularity, with 31 students starting the course in September 2002.
268. In 2001, the AS results were below average with about a third of students gaining the higher grades of A and B, a substantial proportion gaining D and E grades and some attaining no grade at all. The pattern of AS results in 2002 shows an improved picture, but as yet there is no reliable national data with which to draw comparison. Standards attained are above those of other subjects in the sixth form and students do better than might be expected from their prior attainment. In 2002, the first group took the A-level psychology examination. Results for the group of 9 students were below average, with a majority attaining the lowest pass grade of E.
269. Much of the work seen is of a higher standard than the school's examination results indicate. The work of students who have just started their AS-level course and of last year's AS-level group shows a sound understanding of key psychological terms and methods. Students are beginning to offer independent criticisms of research and conclusions and to show understanding of how bias can arise. They attain well through the core study units and in their course on research methodology. However a main weakness is the lack of expanded responses by some students. Work of the highest attaining students, though, is highly detailed and thorough. It shows strong analysis of data and rigorous evaluation. The high standards achieved reflect some very good

teaching and the way in which work is marked consistently and constructively, with much positive feedback and clear targets indicating how the work can be improved.

270. A similar high standard was observed in lessons with Year 12. Students are very responsive and willing to discuss with their peers and with teachers. They frame hypotheses with varying degrees of precision and identify factors which make research unreliable. They also explain well the use of various statistical methods. Students recall very well earlier learning on studies on obedience. They effectively extract key ideas from articles and other texts and use this to give their own views to plan their own experiments which are ethically sound. They offer thoughtful critiques of others' proposals. As psychology is a completely new subject for all students in Year 12, they are making rapid progress.
271. Students in Year 13 gain a good understanding of the key features of offender profiling in their course on psychology and crime. All understand the idea of organised and disorganised criminals and offer possible explanations of the underlying factors which motivate criminal behaviour. They make thoughtful and articulate contributions and offer evidence to substantiate their views. Some students apply their knowledge to current cases very effectively, offering a critical analysis of information featured in the press.
272. Relations between the teachers and students are very good. All students are equally enthusiastic in their studies and all are diligent in undertaking preparatory work prior to the lesson and in completing their homework. Students relate well to one another and give and receive feedback on their work in a very mature and constructive way.
273. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Objectives for lessons are clear, planning is very thorough and a very good range of approaches and materials secures very effective learning. The three teachers all have a very good knowledge of psychology and of the examination specifications. A particular strength in the teaching is the way in which teachers encourage a high level of engagement from students by asking for their views and supporting evidence. Students respond well to this and think hard about the ideas and evidence for their work, giving confident and articulate replies and asking challenging questions of other students and of the teachers. The teachers are effective in securing students' understanding of key psychological terms and concepts and of approaches to research design and methods. Marking of students' work is very thorough. It is matched to examination requirements and shows students how their work can be improved.
274. Students learn very well, acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding at a good pace. In lessons they are attentive and show high levels of interest. Teachers expect much of their students and as a result they are motivated to participate and to undertake the research asked of them. They take pride in their work, producing work with care. They work very well in pairs and in discussion with the teacher. In some lessons, students do not have full opportunities to review what they have learned and, as a result, the next steps for their work are not identified clearly.
275. Students gain a range of skills and communicate particularly well in speaking. They use their reading and note-taking skills effectively. For example they extract some key features of studies on obedience in a Year 12 lesson. Work using numeracy skills arises in some statistical work and some students use ICT to present their work or to research topics. Working with others and problem solving are also developing well. Students have fewer opportunities for extended independent study and writing and for longer-term evaluation and planning of their own work.

276. The subject is very well led and managed. Schemes of work meet the demands of the examination specifications and employ teachers' individual strengths. The way in which the team of three teachers are involved in planning the work ensures good coverage of the subject requirements and encourages a variety of methods of learning. Resources to support students' learning are sufficient. There has been some useful analysis of examination performance. Students receive constructive feedback on how they can improve their work. Further work is needed to ensure that teachers' and students' evaluations of strengths and weaknesses are used to plan the next steps in learning so that the best possible progress and results can be attained.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision for religious studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning overall.
- Good achievement, and standards in line with the national average.

Area for improvement

- Students' skills as independent learners.

277. In the 2001 GCE A-Level examinations, the proportion of students gaining Grade A-E passes was in line with the national average. The proportion gaining Grade A and B passes was slightly below it. Students' average point score was significantly higher than the national average. On average, for the last three years, students' performance has been significantly higher than in other subjects. There has been a trend towards improvement over time that has exceeded the national trend for improvement.
278. In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of students in Year 13, studying ethics and philosophy, was in line with national expectations. Their analytical and evaluative skills are appropriately developed. For example, they can apply Kant's Deontological Theory of Ethics to contemporary ethical issues, such as those relating to the sanctity of life, and evaluate its usefulness as a tool for making moral judgements.
279. Students, including those with special needs, and from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well. This is because they are taught very well, have very good attitudes to their work, and receive very good support if they have special educational needs, such as dyslexia. Progress in lessons is very good. Progress over time is good rather than very good, because recent changes to the syllabus and schemes of work have yet to become fully embedded.
280. The quality of teaching is at least good, and is very good overall. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a very good command of their subject and very high expectations, and challenge students with work that fully stretches their potential. For example, very good planning led students step-by-step, through very skilled exegesis and questioning, and interesting and challenging tasks, to grasp the concepts of Virtue Ethics. By the end of the lesson, they could explain how in contrast to Virtue Ethics, Kant and Utilitarianism separate actions from the person. Where teaching is less secure, insufficient care is sometimes taken to involve all students in questioning and discussion, so that some play the part of passive listeners. Students' skills as independent learners are under-developed.

281. The very good leadership and management of the subject, and the commitment of all teachers, have a positive impact on standards. Students' views of the subject are very positive. They find the variety of work stimulating, and value the support they receive.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

282. The focus was on English language and literature. No modern foreign languages are taught because there is insufficient interest from students.

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision for English language and literature is **good**.

Strengths

- Students achieve well from a relatively low starting point.
- Teaching is good.
- Students work hard.
- Assessment procedures are good; students are made clearly aware of the assessment objectives for the course.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers to extend students' learning.
- The reading range of students and experience of the theatre.
- Participation in discussion.
- The size of some groups which are too large.

283. The English department offers an AS and A2 course in English language and literature. Students also have the opportunity to take communication key skills at level 2 and level 3, and to enter for a re-sit for English at GCSE. The focus during inspection week was on English language and literature, but one key skills lesson was observed. The quality of teaching in this lesson was good, with students developing confidence in delivering structured individual presentations. Assessment procedures are good. All students have a key skills 'passport' – a booklet to track their progress.
284. Results in the GCE A2 examinations in 2001 were below average. A smaller proportion of students gained grades A and B than average. Nearly all of the 17 students entered gained grades A-E. Results have remained similar for the last four years, though they were higher, at the national average, in 2000. In 2002, results were average, with a higher proportion gaining grades A and B, and all 17 students gaining grades A to E. In 2001, students did less well in English than in their other subjects, but better than in other subjects in 2000 and 2002. Entry numbers for this combined course of English language and literature are growing, especially at AS level. In 2001, 31 students took AS level examinations and did as well as their attainment levels indicate they should have. Few male students elect to take the course; their examination results are similar to those of the female students.
285. The standards of work of current students are below average. This represents good progress, for male and female students, from their attainment levels on entry to the sixth form. Most students perform as well as, or better than, predicted, based on their prior attainment. In Year 13, there are relatively few high attainers, but students are in line with course requirements. Students know their texts well, and analyse character motivation and relationships in some depth. They understand the language of

Shakespeare in, 'Measure for Measure', and use technical terms to examine language and literature appropriately. Written work, though not sophisticated, is accurately expressed, and students discuss well in small groups, and as a class. They do not use computers sufficiently to extend their learning, nor do they read enough outside their set texts to develop appreciation of a wide range of literature. They do not attend the theatre sufficiently to develop a good awareness of dramatic techniques and how playwrights work.

286. In Year 12, at this early stage of the year, students have made a good beginning to the course. Some are still reticent about voicing their opinions, even after having prepared the work they are discussing, but most join in keenly in small group discussion, focusing well on the topic. They can think independently, especially when well supported by information from the teacher. One group developed clear ideas on the lexical, grammatical and phonological features of the language of, 'The Wasp Factory', supported well by good quality help sheets from the teacher. They struggled to understand complex text in which meaning was not transparent, but could see the difference between spoken and written forms of speech.
287. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers know their subject well, and also the relatively new examination requirements. They make students clearly aware of the assessment objectives being covered in each piece of work they do. Work is well marked, with good advice on how to improve, and standards precisely analysed. Students know how they are progressing and what needs to be done. They enjoy the subject and value their teachers. Very good relationships between teachers and students mean that students progress quickly, asking pertinent questions and showing an interest in furthering their knowledge. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and teachers expect them to work very hard, both in lessons and in preparing work at home. In a Year 13 lesson on 'Murmuring Judges', students worked in pairs on a personal response sheet, which made them think independently, but gave them specific focus through which to do this. On occasion, a greater variety of strategies is needed to encourage all students to become involved in discussion. Large group sizes, especially in Year 12, make this more difficult.
288. The quality of leadership and management is good. The course is well planned, and detailed schemes of work are developing, which cover all objectives clearly. Standards and teaching are monitored carefully, and the course is constantly being improved as it develops. Targets are set, and students know what they are aiming for. There is good co-ordination between the various teachers of the course who work well together to raise standards further. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Students make good progress and teaching is good.