

INSPECTION REPORT

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Alford, Lincolnshire

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120697

Headteacher: Miss A Francis

Reporting inspector: Chris Christofides
7834

Dates of inspection: 3 – 7 March 2003

Inspection number: 249680

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Grammar (Selective)

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Station Road
Alford
Lincolnshire

Postcode: LN13 9HY

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Gina Bowler

Date of previous inspection: 3/3/1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7834	Chris Christofides	Registered inspector	EAL Citizenship	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
10481	Kantilal Patel	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2398	Terry Cook	Team inspector	Physical Education	
5944	Felicity Golding	Team inspector	Geography	
15977	Margaret Holling	Team inspector	History Post-16	Post 16 co-ordinator
11548	David Lee	Team inspector	Mathematics	
22005	Melinda Derry	Team inspector	English post 16	
10152	Andrew Turner	Team inspector	Science Biology Post-16	
1937	Anthony Burdis	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology Art and Design	
20747	Maureen Hanke	Team inspector	Music	
32235	Peter Shephard	Team inspector	Design and Technology	

2643	Kevin Haddock	Team inspector	History Business Studies	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30922	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages French Post-16	
15020	Andrew Scott	Team inspector	Religious Education	
12410	Stephen Lord	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Equal opportunities	
20966	J Catton	Team Inspector	Design and technology Post-16	
31290	C Hassell	Team Inspector	English	
32277	Bob Bates	Team Inspector	Chemistry Post-16	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is a smaller than average 11 to 18 mixed selective grammar school situated in the town of Alford in the County of Lincolnshire. There are currently 547 pupils on roll, well below the national average of 993. This figure has increased gradually since the last inspection. The school uses the Lincolnshire standard entrance procedures to admit the top 30 per cent of the catchment on ability. The current Year 7 intake comes from over 20 primary schools and some come from as far away as Grimsby 40 miles away. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (5.8 per cent) is below the national average and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (1 per cent) is low. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements (1.6 per cent) is well below the national average as is the percentage of pupils with statements of educational needs (0.4 per cent). Overall attainment on entry to the school is well above the national average. The school has low mobility; 6 pupils left the school last year and 13 joined other than at the usual time of joining or leaving the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is a very good school with very good sixth form provision. The quality of teaching is good and in over four out of ten lessons seen teaching was judged to be very good or excellent. Teaching and learning in the sixth form is consistently very good or better. Standards of attainment are high and in line with similar schools. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction, ably assisted by her two deputies and a well-informed governing body. Overall the leadership and management of the school are good and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The attitudes of the pupils and their interest, behaviour and relationships are outstanding and a strength of the school.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction focused on further raising standards.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and often very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
- The standards that pupils achieve are high.
- Attainment in English and mathematics is very good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Parents' views of the school are very good.
- Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is very good.

What could be improved

- Appropriate statutory curriculum is not in place. There is a lack of sufficient provision of information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of assessment data, to inform future planning, is inconsistent.
- Address underachievement in double award science in Years 10 and 11.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is overcrowded. There is insufficient time to develop pupils high order problem solving and thinking skills.
- The accommodation restricts the progress pupils make in some subjects, including physical education.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. The school has addressed most of the key issues that were then identified. Management and leadership have greatly improved with the appointment of the new headteacher. The school now has a clearer educational direction and the governors are also much more effective. Teaching has greatly improved and it is now good and often very good or excellent in the sixth form. There has been a rise in standards and in pupils' achievement. Effective measures of 'value for money' are now in place. Nevertheless statutory requirements for information and communication technology are still not met in Years 7 to 9.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	A*	A*	C
A-levels/AS-levels	B	B	-	

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards of attainment on entry to the school are above the national average. In the national tests at age 14, taken in 2002, results in English and science were very high and in mathematics well above the national average. Performance in the 2002 GCSE examinations was very high in comparison with schools nationally, with all pupils achieving 5 A* to C grades or better, placing the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally and meeting the school's target of 100 per cent 5+A*-C. Results are in line with similar schools. Standards of achievement are at least in line with expectations in all subjects in Years 7 to 9 apart from information communication technology, where they are below. Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 11 are well above the average in English, mathematics, geography, history, design and technology, French, music, physical education and religious education. Standards are below expectations in double award science at the age of 16. The school's results have improved since the last inspection and are the best ever. Standards of attainment at advanced level are above the national average overall, when compared with all schools with those in English literature, history, psychology, sociology and business studies being very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are outstanding.
Behaviour, in and out of	Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.

classrooms	
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are excellent. Pupils show initiative and personal responsibility towards all.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and well above the national average.

Overall pupils attitudes and values and their willingness to learn are outstanding and a strength of the school. Their concentration in lessons and their application to their work is excellent. They have an enthusiasm for school as well as their involvement in activities. Attendance at the school is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good. In 98 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory or better. More than eight out of ten lessons were good or very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection where 10 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and only half good or better. The best teaching is in Years 10 and 11 and Post-16, with over 85 per cent good or better. Post-16 the teaching is nearly all good or better with over seven in ten of the lessons very good or excellent. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is very good in mathematics, German, religious education and physical education. It is good in all other subject areas apart from information and communication technology. In Years 10 and 11 and Post-16, teaching is very good in English, mathematics, French, German, design and technology, music, art and design, physical education, religious education and information and communication technology. It is good in geography and history. Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are effectively taught. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is very good. Teachers' planning is generally good. Their teaching methods are generally good and their management of pupils very good. Their use of homework is very good. Teachers' assessments are satisfactory overall. Teachers do not always use their ongoing assessments to inform their future planning, especially in Years 7 to 11. Teacher expectations are good for meeting the needs of most pupils, but in some lessons teachers do not always challenge the more able effectively. Pupils respond very well to their teachers and their work is exemplary. They concentrate on their work and remain on task throughout.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a broad curriculum containing the required subjects with some further opportunities. All Year 7 pupils study business studies and in Years 8 and 9 German is taken as a second language. There is also a short course in citizenship in Years 9 and 10.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good throughout the school. Individual educational plans have recently been updated to conform to the revised Code of Practice requirements and these are proving to be effective.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Support is appropriately targeted and used.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. The pupils' moral and social development is outstanding. Their cultural development is very good and their spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very good standard of care for the pupils. Very effective procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' learning environment is safe, secure and free from hazards. The school has very effective child protection procedures in place.

Whilst there are many strengths in the quality and range of the curriculum on offer, together with a rich and varied extra-curricular programme, there is no provision of information and communication technology in Years 8 and 9 and therefore statutory requirements are not met. The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is very crowded with pupils studying up to twelve GCSE subjects. There is insufficient time to develop pupils' high order problem solving and thinking skills. The school has very good links with the parents. The parents have a very positive view of the school and a very high confidence in what it does to educate their children. They believe that their children make good progress at school and that the school helps them to achieve their best, instilling them with very good values. There is mutual trust and respect between parents and the school and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership that is reflected in the school's strong ethos, aims and values.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are good at fulfilling their responsibilities. They are beginning to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses but do not meet statutory requirements for information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The actions taken to meet the school's targets are good. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is satisfactory and improving.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

There is a good match of staff to the needs of the curriculum and the use of resources. Some aspects of the school's accommodation are inadequate, especially in physical education and this is affecting standards. Leadership and management are good and consistently strive to achieve best value. Child protection is very good. Overall, given the improvements since the last inspection and the standards achieved, the school gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall the majority of parents are happy with the school and what it achieves.• A very caring school.• The school reinforces their own home values.• Behaviour is very good.• Good support given to pupils with special educational needs.• They are pleased with the GCSE improvements especially the A*-C results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistency in setting the right amount of homework.• Information about their children's progress.

Inspectors support the positive views of the parents. The school expects children to work hard to achieve their best, furthermore the behaviour of the children is outstanding. The inspectors do not agree that the use of homework was excessive or inconsistent, but that the school made very good use of homework. The inspectors do agree that the information regarding children's progress should be made more specific and clearer.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

There are 114 students currently in the sixth form. The sixth form is small when compared with the average nationally. Since the last inspection there has been a steady rise in student numbers and these are the highest ever. Entry to the sixth form is determined by performance at GCSE. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is good with over 23 advanced level courses offered. Over seven out of ten students 'stay on' from Year 11 and an increasing number, twelve this year, transfer from other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provision at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good which leads to high standards of achievement. In comparison to all schools nationally standards of attainment are high. The leadership and management of the sixth form is very good and a strength of the school. The Head of Sixth form provides clear educational direction with strong inclusive pastoral and academic support that reflect the school's aims and values.

Strengths

- Standards of work seen are very good. Standards of attainment at A level and AS are very good.
- Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- The breadth and balance of provision and equality of opportunity are very good.

What could be improved

- The information, advice and guidance that are available for students, on careers and what to do after they leave school, must be better promoted and marketed.

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

IMPROVEMENT IN THE SIXTH FORM

The improvement in the sixth form provision since the last inspection has been good. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good and the cost effectiveness of the sixth form provision is good.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English	Excellent. Provision for A level and AS is excellent. Teaching is rigorous, stimulating and highly focused. Expectations of students are very high and they respond with commitment and enthusiasm. Standards are consistently high and results are excellent.
Mathematics	Very good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that students learn very well. The teaching is consistently very good and as a result the students make very good progress and high standards are achieved.
Biology	Very good. Provision is very good. Teaching is consistently very good. Students are well supported and make good progress. The standards that students achieve are high.
Chemistry	Good. The teaching is good and ensures good learning. Students have good attitudes to learning and develop effective analytical skills. Standards are high and students achieve results in line with expectations.
History	Good. The teaching is good with many strengths. This enables the students to learn effectively and make very good progress. Standards are well above average with a high percentage of A/B grades in the most recent A level results.
Geography	Good. Teaching is good and students make good progress due to good use of resources, including fieldwork and information and communication technology, and strong staff subject knowledge. Standards are high.
French	Good. Teacher's subject knowledge and linguistic skills are very good. Students are well supported and they make good progress. Students achieve good standards.
Design and Technology	Very good. The teaching is very good and the students respond very positively. A/S and A level take-up is increasing. Attainment is above national expectations.
Business Studies	Very good. A strength of the school. Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning experiences for students. Standards are consistently high.
	The provision in the following subjects was sampled.
Art and Design	Very good. Teaching and learning are good with good use of information and communication technology. Students make good progress and achieve high standards.
Sociology	Very good. Teaching is very good and the impact on students' learning is exemplary. Standards are high.
Psychology	Very good. Teaching is thought provoking and challenging. Standards are very high.

Key Skills	Very good. Literacy and numeracy and other key skills are taught very well across the sixth form.
Religious Education	Very good. Teaching and provision are very good. Standards are high. All students receive an appropriate entitlement.
Information and communication technology	Very good. High quality teaching and learning. Students have very positive attitudes to their work and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Pastoral and academic support is very good and the school's strong ethos enables students to achieve their best, but guidance and advice on careers and what to do after they leave school, must be better marketed and promoted.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. The leadership and management of the sixth form is very good and a strength of the school. The Head of Sixth form provides clear educational direction with strong inclusive pastoral and academic support. Working relationships with the senior management of the school and the Headteacher are very good and reflect the school's aims and values.

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"> Choice of courses on offer is suited to their talents and career aspirations. The school supports them well in their studies. They are challenged to do their best. They are helped and encouraged to study. Teachers care for them. They feel they are treated as young adults. They would encourage others to join the sixth form at the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better advice on careers and what to do after they leave school. A wider range of activities and enrichment courses.

The inspection team agrees with all the students' comments on what they like about the sixth form and feels that the students' attitudes and behaviour towards their studies are excellent and a strength of the school. The inspectors do not agree that there is inadequate advice and guidance on what students should do after they leave school. However, the inspectors do believe that the information, advice and guidance that are available must be better promoted

and marketed to the students.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are above the national average. The school uses the Lincolnshire standard entrance procedures to admit the top 30 per cent of the catchment on ability. In the national tests at age 14, taken in 2002, results in English and science were very high and in mathematics well above the national average.
2. Performance in the 2002 GCSE examinations was very high in comparison with schools nationally, with all pupils achieving five A* to C grades or better, placing the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally and meeting the school's target of 100 per cent 5+ A*-C. Results are in line with similar schools. Standards of achievement are at least in line with expectations in all subjects in Years 7 to 9 apart from information communication technology, where they are below. Standards in Years 7 to 11 are well above the average in English, mathematics, geography, history, design and technology, French, music, physical education and religious education. Standards are below expectations in double science at the age of 16. The school's results have improved since the last inspection and are the best ever. This is due to improved leadership and management and quality of teaching and learning.
3. Standards in English remain well above the national average by the end of Year 9. Pupils achieve results that are also well above the national average, all pupils attain Level 5 or above in their national tests. At the higher levels pupils also achieve very well. When compared to similar schools, English results are in line at Level 5 or above, and below at Levels 6 and 7. GCSE results have been improving over the last three years and in 2002 all pupils attained level C or above in their English Language examination. Although the proportion of pupils gaining A grades was twice as high as the national average, when compared with other subjects in the school, grades in English overall have been, for the last three years, relatively lower than those which pupils attain in other subject areas. However, results in English literature were outstanding and 2002 with 66 per cent attaining grades of A or A*. No girl achieved less than a B grade.
4. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 9 in 2002 were very high in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels improved in 2002, and were significantly greater than those achieved nationally. Over half the pupils achieved Level 7 or above and a significant proportion achieved Level 8. Generally boys and girls achieve similar standards. Standards achieved by pupils at GCSE A* to C grades remained high in 2002 when compared to the national average. The proportion of boys achieving the higher grades in mathematics was slightly better than girls. The school matched the national percentage figure for pupils achieving the highest grade, A*, in 2002, but was below the figure for grade A.
5. Standards in science by the end of Year 9 have improved over the past two years so that in 2002 all pupils gained at least Level 5 at the end of Year 9 in national tests. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades has risen significantly and now over 83 per cent achieve Level 6 or better. At GCSE approximately one third of pupils were entered for the three separate sciences in 2002 and two-thirds for double award science. Nearly all of the pupils gained the higher grades A* to C in the separate sciences which is well above the national average. In double award science pupils did less well with 55 per cent gaining an A* to C grade, in line with the national average but below expected standards. GCSE results have fallen in the separate sciences and particularly the double award science over the period 2000 to 2002, against the national trend, therefore results are currently unsatisfactory.

6. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are gaining considerable benefit from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The mental/oral starters are effective in increasing pupils' confidence and understanding of many basic number relations. Pupils are generally very confident with number calculations and work well with fractions, decimals and percentages unaided. Pupils are making very good progress with their mathematics. Attainment in lessons reflects this progress and at least matches the results achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002.
7. Overall, by the end of Year 11 pupils are achieving improved standards matched to recent examination results. Attainment in lessons of the current Year 11 pupils suggests that the GCSE examination results in 2003 will be as good as in recent years. Standards of work seen in the foundation subjects were particularly high in history, music, physical education, religious education, French and art and design and were at least good in design and technology, and geography. In information and communication technology pupils achieve standards below expectations by the end of Year 9, but achieve in line or above by the end of Year 11.
8. The school has met its statutory targets that have been set and agreed by the governing body. At GCSE in 2002, 100 per cent of the pupils achieved 5+ A* to C grades. The targets set were challenging. Similar targets have been set this year. School targets on the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A* to B are also more challenging next year. The average points score at GCSE in 2002 was 65.7, which places the school in the top 5 per cent nationally.
9. Pupils with special educational needs, in Years 7 to 9, always make satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress. In mathematics, English and science at the end of Year 11 progress is very good. Progress is best where pupils with special educational needs are supported by teaching assistants with appropriate expertise and skills, or teaching which builds on good subject differentiation, carefully structured schemes of work and teaching methods tailored to the needs of the pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress due to the school's efforts to support them in learning English or in taking modern foreign language GCSEs in their native tongue.
10. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy is excellent. The school has used the National Literacy Strategy audit to develop the leadership roles of heads of department. Provision for literacy across the curriculum needs to be included in all departmental schemes of work, but there is already much imaginative and thoughtful provision, intended to promote pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of the written word. The science department, for example, promotes pupils' development of reading skills and a poetry competition is featured on its notice board. As a result, this is a highly literate school.
11. Numeracy standards across the curriculum are high. The mathematics scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 has been re-written to include the objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy and the three-part lesson. Other subjects also provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in numeracy. A recent audit will help to clarify the way these opportunities can be managed coherently across the curriculum as a whole.

Sixth form

12. Standards of attainment in the sixth form are high and a strength of the school. Standards achieved at GCE advanced level are above the national average overall, when compared with all schools. Results in English literature, history, psychology, sociology and business studies are very good. The proportion of students staying on is increasing and now stands at the highest ever number. More students are also transferring to the school Post-16,

twelve doing so last year. The development of key skills, especially in literacy and numeracy, are very good. Challenging targets have been set for 2003 and 2004 in A level, with average points score per student of 350 and all students to achieve a minimum of three A levels.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have excellent attitudes and their behaviour is exemplary. Around the school, there is an atmosphere of harmony and order. The pupils are very committed to their school and they show a great pride and respect for school property and its environment. This is a strength of the school. They engage in many extra-curricular activities. Sporting clubs are well subscribed and pupils' many achievements in sports are celebrated with great pride by the school through displays of trophies and press cuttings. Pupils' other work, for example, in art and design, ceramics and technology, is also equally celebrated. Pupils clearly enjoy being in an environment of mutual support that is free from any oppressive behaviour. There is no evidence of aggressive or racist behaviour. Pupils are courteous, polite and show respect for other pupils, staff and visitors.
14. When opportunities arise, pupils are able to exercise their initiative and act in a responsible manner. At a recent charity week, pupils held various charitable events and raised more than two thousand pounds; these events were mainly organised and run by the pupils. A school council meets regularly, which deliberates on many issues concerning the pupils and their learning environment. Pupils value the opportunity to participate as their class representatives, and to put their point of view. This contributes effectively to their personal development. Year 12 pupils meet every week to discuss anti-bullying measures and to raise awareness of the issue.
15. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy good relationships with staff and peers. They are fully integrated into the life of the school and appreciate the work the school does in supporting them. One statemented pupil offered the comment that they wouldn't have done as well as they had if the school had not supported them as well as it had.
16. In lessons expectations of pupils are high. They are all expected to work hard and concentrate on learning. The pupils respond well to these expectations and pay full attention to the teacher and fully engage in purposeful activities. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with the teachers. They are supportive to each other and are willing to learn from each other. They work well together and are respectful to others' views when engaged in group or class discussions. They are articulate and confident to air their views, raise questions with teachers and debate issues to check their own knowledge and understanding and to further enhance their personal development.
17. The school has a positive ethos of achievement based on mutual respect, care and honesty. The pupils adopt the very high standards set by the school's ethos. Their very positive and responsible approach to their learning is a great asset to the school and this makes a very significant contribution to the academic and personal standards the pupils achieve.

Sixth form

18. Students in the sixth form also have excellent attitudes to their work. They take responsibilities seriously and are very proud of their sixth form. Personal development and relationships are excellent. Younger pupils are very appreciative of the support they receive from the sixth form students. The views of the students about their school are very good. They carry out their prefect duties with great pride, responsibility and maturity. They exhibit

a sense of confidence, self-assurance and act as perfect role models for the younger pupils. Their attendance and punctuality to lessons is good. Overall they make a very valuable contribution to the life of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In 98 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory or better. More than eight out of ten lessons were good or very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection where 10 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and only half good or better. The best teaching is in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is very good in mathematics, German, and physical education. It is good in all other subject areas apart from information and communication technology. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good in English, mathematics, French, German, design and technology, music, art and design, physical education and information and communication technology. It is good in religious education, geography and history.
20. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is very good. Teachers' planning is generally good. Their teaching methods are generally good and their management of pupils very good. Their use of homework is very good. Teachers' assessments are satisfactory overall. However, teachers do not always use their ongoing assessments to inform future planning, especially in Years 7 to 11. Teacher expectations are good for meeting the needs of most pupils, but in some lessons teachers do not always challenge the more able effectively. Pupils respond very well to their teachers and their work is exemplary. They concentrate and remain on task throughout. Overall pupils make very good progress throughout the school.
21. In English the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is almost without exception good, and never less than satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 it is almost always good or very good, and never less than satisfactory. Teachers make it clear to pupils that they are to try their hardest, that they are to contribute fully to lessons and they must strive for excellence. Pupils come to classrooms ready and prepared to work and do so with evident enjoyment and enthusiasm. Teachers' subject knowledge is a particular strength, particularly their understanding of and enthusiasm for literary texts, which enlivens and informs their teaching. Pupils carry out their own research very conscientiously and are very well prepared for their lessons. Almost all teachers explain clearly the purposes of their lessons. Pupils respond well to this clarity and are able themselves to articulate the purposes of their lessons. Teachers provide clear and unambiguous explanations of how to tackle examination questions. Within a context of almost all teaching in Years 7 to 9 being good, opportunities to extend and motivate the most able pupils are not consistently incorporated into the planning of lessons. As a result the attainment of the most able pupils is, on occasion, needlessly constrained. Provision for less able readers and writers is, however, good. Where teaching does not meet the high standards set by the department, it is not rigorously structured to ensure progression, nor delivered with the degree of enthusiasm that is characteristic of the teaching overall. In these lessons, which are few, the lacklustre teaching leaves pupils without a clear sense of direction and purpose and they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. Teachers' marking is generally thorough but it does not draw attention to level descriptors. As a result, pupils are less focused on what they have to do to improve their work.
22. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They work very hard at planning effective lessons that motivate and stimulate students to learn. In the very good lessons teaching is exemplified by very well planned and structured activities. Lessons start with an effective oral or mental activity. Expectations of pupils are very high. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs or have English as an additional language are fully integrated into lessons. These pupils make

progress that is in line with others in the group. Teachers develop very positive relationships with their pupils, which results in them gaining good learning habits, displaying excellent attitudes and very good behaviour in lessons. Teachers assess pupil performance largely through homework and class activities. However, insufficient use is made of the assessment data collected on pupils from national tests, and internally assessed pieces of work, to inform lesson planning. Pupils in Year 9 and 11 are aware of their current performance but they are not always given sufficient guidance of what they need to do to improve their grades. For teaching to improve further teachers need to build on the success of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have adopted the three-part lesson across Years 7 to 9. However, at the end of lessons, some teachers do not lead effective reviews of the learning that has taken place. This may be as a result of the very short length of some lessons. Marking of work is not always consistent and pupils do not always receive guidance on how to improve. In some situations teachers have not given enough consideration to the skills pupils will need to use in the planning of the lesson and consequently pupils do not make the expected progress in lessons.

23. In science the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is always good and would be improved further with greater focus on problem solving and thinking skills which at present are not well developed. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching varied more widely from occasionally unsatisfactory to mainly good and sometimes very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and support pupils' learning very well. They give clear explanations of difficult ideas and plan their work well. To improve teaching in Years 10 and 11 still further, teachers must use the last part of lessons to question pupils on what they have learnt and to use assessment to show pupils the progress they have made and the next steps in their learning. Pupils' attitudes to science are positive. They enjoy the subject and respond very appropriately and with enthusiasm. Pupils are attentive, involved and support each other's learning. They responded well to teachers' high expectations and showed an excellent sense of enquiry when engaged in practical work.
24. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In lessons teachers take account of different abilities and individual education plan targets are used to support planning. They use effective strategies to meet pupils' individual special educational needs. Teachers make good use of additional adult support in the classroom for statemented pupils. Pupils who have English as an additional language also make good progress throughout the school.
25. The teaching of literacy across the school is very good. In geography, Year 8 pupils are invited to consider how best to organise their writing. Spelling across all subject areas is consistently good. Effective use is made of reading mentors in a joint library and a special educational needs department venture to promote reading amongst those pupils who are less confident. Opportunities are actively sought in both art and design and music to extend pupils' cultural awareness through literacy. In art and design a reading of Keat's poem 'Isabella' had pupils spellbound. Poetry is also well used in science, where pupils wrote poetry, expressing their views on the future of science. Many subjects emphasise the importance of key technical terms and in science and in French opportunities to emphasise vocabulary were exploited well. In physical education, health-related fitness guides helped pupils to understand terms such as 'carotid artery'. The library's contribution to the promotion of literacy across the school is very significant. The librarian is well informed about how to attract pupils to read. As a result the library is well used.
26. The teaching of numeracy skills in mathematics and other subjects is very good. Other subjects also provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in numeracy. A recent audit will help to clarify the way these opportunities can be managed coherently across the curriculum as a whole. In science, teachers ensure that graphical work is accurate and appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils and include a review and

consolidation of the necessary numerical skills as appropriate to the science programme. In geography and history pupils are able to use tally charts and population tables.

27. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Better planning and secure subject knowledge has enabled pupils to make very good progress, which has resulted in improved standards.

Sixth form

28. Overall teaching in the sixth form is very good and a strength of the school. In over 85 per cent of lessons seen teaching was good or better. In addition over seven in ten of the lessons were very good or excellent. Sixth form teaching is very good in English, mathematics, French, German, design and technology, business studies, sociology, psychology, music, art and design, physical education and information and communication technology. It is good in religious education, geography and history. Their mastery of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is impressive. In business studies by the time students reach Year 13 they have had a very good experience of the work of a range of business organisations using a variety of research techniques. In history in a Year 13 lesson on Mary's problems in restoring Catholicism in England students were able to discuss confidently and at length the issues of compromise or force in achieving this. In English a Year 13 group were required to paraphrase part of Chaucer's Prologue, read it aloud, identify and explain key quotations, summarise and explain relevant critical theories and relate these to their own reading of the text.

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

29. The school aims to offer a broad curriculum containing the required subjects together with some further opportunities. In addition to what is usually found all Year 7 pupils take business studies and in Years 8 and 9 German is taken as a second foreign language. In Years 10 and 11 a good range of courses is available; surveys are used to ensure that what is offered is suited to pupils' interests and aspirations, although the work-related curriculum is confined to business studies and information and communication technology at present. A short GCSE course in citizenship is being piloted in Years 9 and 10. In addition to the timetabled lessons teachers are willing to provide additional advice and support for pupils at lunchtimes and after school and there are homework clubs.
30. The development of business studies has been made a priority with this subject being the focus of the school's recent bid for specialist status. The Year 7 course is well taught and leads to very good learning opportunities. It is an effective way of promoting pupils' understanding of business concepts and extending their awareness of issues affecting the local economy. The GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 is a popular choice with pupils and results are very good; many of those who take it go on to study business studies in the sixth form.
31. The school is committed to ensuring that the courses offered are right for the pupils and there is very good equality of access and opportunity. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum. Provision for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements, however. There is unsatisfactory provision for this subject in Years 8 and 9 since there are no timetabled lessons and relatively little use of it in other subjects. The need to improve pupils' entitlement to information and communication technology was identified as a key issue in the last inspection report and this has yet to be addressed effectively.
32. While the school is anxious to develop its curriculum provision in response to the needs of

its pupils and external factors, there are shortcomings in the way this is being managed currently. The timetable, for example, appears to have been adjusted incrementally as new demands have come on stream. The majority of teaching periods are 35 minutes each which does not support the most effective learning and teaching in some subjects, especially art and design. In art and design some single lessons take place in non-specialist accommodation. Lessons in modern foreign languages are timetabled so that pupils' work lacks continuity. The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is overcrowded. Curriculum development is rightly regarded as a key priority for the future, but a strategic re-assessment, taking account of the principles of Best Value, is needed to challenge current ways of doing things.

33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are taught within mainstream classes and have full access to the curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the principles of inclusion and has worked hard to implement the Code of Practice. The contents of Individual Education Plans are communicated to teachers through heads of departments and pupils' individual targets are readily accessible. The way that teacher assistants are organised to support pupils with statements helps them to make good progress. Whilst the number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is small, care is taken to monitor their progress and enable them to gain full access to the curriculum. The school seeks to identify gifted and talented pupils as they move up from primary school, running a Master Class for Year 6 and some older pupils from September 2002. Summer schools for gifted and talented youngsters have been running since 2000. However, provision for adjusting teaching to learning needs across the range of ability is not consistent across subjects of the curriculum.
34. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy is excellent. The school has taken an active part in the National Literacy Strategy using the results of the audit to develop the leadership roles of heads of department. Provision for literacy needs to be included in all departmental schemes of work, but there is already much imaginative and thoughtful provision, intended to promote pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of the written word. The science department, for example, promotes pupils' development of reading skills and a poetry competition is featured on its notice board. As a result, this is a highly literate school, in which literacy is valued by pupils and their teachers.
35. Provision for numeracy is very good. The mathematics schemes of work for Key Stage 3 include the objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy. Other subjects also provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in numeracy. A recent audit will help to clarify the way these opportunities can be managed coherently across the curriculum as a whole.
36. Extra-curricular provision is very good. Participation by pupils in extra-curricular activities is high and parents feel that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. There is a wide range of clubs and societies with links to many of the subject departments. There are also regular field trips, visits and foreign exchanges to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to enter competitions such as the British Physics Olympiad, UK Mathematics Challenge and Young Enterprise with a significant degree of success. Leisure interests such as chess are strongly supported. There are drama productions and musical events; *Grease* was staged last October. Pupils are encouraged to participate in fund raising events for national and local charities.
37. Provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, is good with effective coverage of health, sex and drugs education topics. There are timetabled lessons in all year groups; these are well planned and the teaching is good for the most part. Careers and vocational guidance is also good with good support from the Connexions service. The Careers Library was awarded a certificate of excellence last year. All pupils in

Year 10 have an opportunity to undertake work experience and they are well prepared to make the most of this opportunity.

38. The school regards the development of strong links with the community as a priority. This is not a simple task in a rural area with no major urban centres within easy reach. Over the years, however, the school has been successful in making links with a number of businesses and neighbouring institutions of further and higher education. These make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. The school's recent bid for specialist school status was well supported by local businesses, Grimsby College, the University of Lincoln and the Lincolnshire Educational Trust.
39. Links with feeder primary schools are good. At the time of the last inspection there were visits by representatives of the school, but there was insufficient attention to pupils' previous progress. This has now improved and more account is taken of information about pupils' needs and interests. There is also a strategy to identify gifted pupils as they move up from the primary schools, with master classes for Year 6 one night a week (October to July) and a two-week summer school, in August, to provide additional challenge and motivation.
40. The way the school supports the personal development of its pupils is very good and is one of its strengths. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Its impact may be seen in the very responsible attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and their commitment to the school. The headteacher and her staff show that they take pupils' views seriously and respond to their needs sensitively. Almost all the parents feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
41. Provision for spiritual development is good. As at the time of the last inspection there is a lack of overall planning of this element of curricular provision, but there are plenty of occasions when the work of the school is effective in promoting the pupils' spiritual awareness. Assemblies meet statutory requirements and make a useful contribution to spiritual development. A very good example of this was a whole school assembly on the concept of time which was very thought provoking with pupils being given very good opportunities to reflect on the key messages. On many occasions pupils take responsibility for organising assemblies.
42. Many subjects encourage pupils' spiritual development. In history where pupils study topics such as the English Reformation in Year 8 and the Holocaust and slavery in Year 9 they have good opportunities to explore values and beliefs. In science entries to a poetry competition capture some of the wonders relevant to the study of the subject. In physical education teachers develop a sense of curiosity through opportunities to reflect on pupils' own attitudes to concepts of fair play and the benefits of collaboration with others. In a number of subjects such as history, design and technology and geography pupils are encouraged to demonstrate concern, compassion and an empathy with others. More generally, in their management of pupils, teachers promote an ethos where pupils respect others and are respected themselves. There is good encouragement to share success and a sense of achievement.
43. Provision for moral development is excellent. Teachers promote a strong awareness of the difference between right and wrong and the importance of taking responsibility for ourselves and others. In physical education, for example, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. In design and technology pupils are encouraged to make reasonable and responsible judgements on moral dilemmas such as solar power issues, while in business studies they discuss the issue of animal testing in a commercial environment. Teachers demonstrate in their dealings with pupils appropriate ways of responding to others. This underpins the excellent relationships that pervade the school.

44. Provision for social development is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively. When they are in large classes pupils behave in an exemplary fashion and contribute constructively to whole class discussion. History promotes an awareness of the qualities fundamental to life in a civilised society, for example, in their work on the conflicts in German society 1930-33 in Year 10. In design and technology and geography pupils consider environmental issues and their impact on society. The work of the special educational needs department promotes an inclusive ethos with an emphasis on access for all within the context of a caring community based approach.
45. Provision for cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection when there was a need for the school to show more commitment in enhancing opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of the cultures of others. Many subjects now make a very good contribution in this area of the curriculum. In English, for example, pupils study stories from other cultures. The subject also promotes the cultural development of pupils through their involvement in poetry competitions, visits to drama productions and places of literary interest. In music reference is made to music from other cultures. History provides many opportunities to reflect on the influences that shape people's experiences in different cultures. Sixth- formers have, for example, produced a website on features of American society. In design and technology pupils study styles and types of clothing typical of Asia and Northern Australia in Year 10 textiles. More widely, the school takes appropriate action to promote racial harmony, and prepares pupils to enter an increasingly inter-dependent society.

Sixth form

46. Curriculum provision in the sixth form is good with 23 subjects on offer at GCE A level. All major subjects are on offer, with provision in English literature, history, psychology, sociology, business studies, and mathematics being a significant strength of the school. There is a strong personal, social and health education programme delivered as part of the very good tutorial programme. The students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are very good. Students feel respected and valued. They are well motivated, confident and achieve very well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school provides a very good standard of care for pupils. Very effective procedures are in place to ensure that the pupils' learning environment is safe, secure and free from any hazards. The school has very good child protection procedures in place. The headteacher and a deputy have received child protection training and they keep other staff informed and updated with any change in legislation or guidance.
48. The school grounds and buildings are well maintained. Regular safety checks on all electrical and fire appliances are carried out and any faults found are promptly rectified. Regular fire evacuation practice drills are held and these meet the school's evacuation targets.
49. The school has an excellent system of first-day follow-up with parents on all absences; this makes a very positive contribution to maintaining good attendance levels. Good working arrangements are in place with the educational welfare officer to ensure that any emerging issues, related to a pupil causing concern over attendance levels, are fully explored.
50. The provision for personal support to pupils is very good and meets their needs. This is ensured through a system linking pastoral support tutors and subject teachers, co-ordinated through the heads of school and the headteacher. The staff know their pupils

well, are very accessible and provide constant support. Pupils are regularly made aware of what to do in cases of bullying, racism, sexism and other forms of oppressive behaviour, through personal study tutorials every week. Such unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated and excellent procedures are in place to ensure any rare incident of such nature is appropriately dealt with.

51. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic progress is good. However, marking often does not refer to the National Curriculum levels and the current system of using outstanding, good and satisfactory grades for providing pupils' feedback on their performance, is not sufficiently precise.
52. There is a clear and effective structure for the identification and assessment of special educational needs, which conforms to the revised Code of Practice guidance. The school maintains records of statement reviews, individual educational plans and contributions from outside agencies for pupils with special educational needs. Annual reviews are carried out appropriately and involve parents. All the requirements on pupils' statements are fully met. Individual education plans are drawn up in accordance with recently revised requirements and subject departments are required to ensure that they are put into practice. Matters relating to special educational needs have a regular place in staff meetings. Pastoral care for pupils with special educational needs is good. Links with primary schools ensure a smooth transfer of pupils with already identified needs. Outside agencies are used well to help with assessment of needs and specific, additional support. Procedures for supporting pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language are very good.

Sixth form

53. Very good systems are in place to support the personal, emotional and academic development of sixth form students. Overall the educational and personal support and guidance for students and procedures for assessing their progress are very good. These are particularly strong in English, history, psychology, sociology, business studies and mathematics. There is a very good careers library and good procedures are in place for providing students with careers education and guidance for future courses, study or career opportunities. Nevertheless the school must market and promote these more effectively. Additionally, there are some very good links forged with the 'Connexions' organisation and an adviser visits the school once a week.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has very good links with parents. The parents have a very positive view of the school and high confidence in what it does to educate their children. They believe that their children make good progress at school and that the school helps them to achieve their best, instilling them with very good values. There is mutual trust and respect between parents and the school and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.
55. Parents are kept very well informed. There is a weekly newsletter from school, which contains good and up-to-date accounts of activities in the school, dates of forth-coming events and other issues of interest to parents and pupils. The newsletter is also used to celebrate pupils' achievements and to carry any special messages to parents; for example, a recent issue contained a copy of the school's Race Equality Policy. Copies of these newsletters and other general school information can also be seen on the school's website. The parents are also sent other ad-hoc letters highlighting either issues of concern, or to commend a particular achievement.

56. Information about pupils' progress is provided to parents via a mid-year interim report and a full annual report at the end of the academic year. This report contains information on what pupils have learnt and the standard of education they have reached. Though these reports are useful, the National Curriculum levels pupils have reached in all subjects are not always identified, especially in Key Stage 3. The current system of grades, with O for outstanding, G for good and S for satisfactory, is somewhat broad and not sufficiently specific or consistent to provide an accurate picture. Additionally, teachers do not always include comments that provide guidance on what pupils need to do next and how to improve.
57. The parents of pupils with special educational needs speak highly of the support that the school provides. Parents of children with statements of special educational needs are informed of their child's progress and are fully involved in annual reviews.
58. The school is very accessible to parents and attempts to involve parents at an early stage with regards to child specific concerns. Home/school agreements are in place and these were compiled in consultation with parents. However, the opportunities for consulting the parents are often missed by the school. Pupil planners provide a good vehicle for parents to communicate with teachers, though parents rarely use this method of communication. The day-to-day involvement of the parents in the life of the school is limited. However, it is evident that parents provide very effective support to their children and make a significant contribution to their learning. Overall the school's links with parents show an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are good. Taking up her position after the last inspection in 1997, the headteacher has been able to steer the school by taking positive action to bring about many improvements. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is able to communicate a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff who work effectively together. Senior staff now have clear roles and responsibilities and the creation of the new roles of second deputy and heads of lower, middle and upper school are appropriate. Although delegation takes place not all senior and middle managers help shape the strategic leadership and management of the school. By making good teaching and learning a main priority the headteacher has focused staff on the need for constant improvement. Subject leadership is now very good in English, mathematics, history and physical education, good in geography, design and technology, music, science and religious education. Leadership is satisfactory in information and communication technology and modern foreign languages. The school has made good improvements in addressing many of the issues from the last inspection report, for example, by improving the quality of teaching and providing a more strategic school development plan.
60. The school has a clear set of aims and values, which have helped to raise standards above those achieved since the last inspection. These are reflected in its work; especially in the rise of expectations amongst the staff and pupils. Standards at Key Stage 3 have risen and GCSE results are the best ever. The commitment given to the school by the governing body, headteacher, all members of staff and parents has improved since the last inspection.
61. The governors fulfil many of their statutory responsibilities well, but not those in relation to information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9. The leadership of the governing body is much improved now and governors are more effective. They now have an increasing grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses but their role in monitoring and

evaluating the school's performance is underdeveloped. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the information required by law. Monthly governors' meetings take place. In addition to these, various working parties and committees also meet. The governors receive information from the headteacher at these meetings on a range of issues, including the school development plan. Governors make regular visits to the school and are beginning to contribute to the formulation of the school development plan. Through their work on the finance, personnel and other committees, governors are able to be more effective in the management of the school. They are good at applying the principles of Best Value.

62. The school development plan is now an effective working document put together by the headteacher and the staff and focuses on curriculum issues for development and improvement. It is fully costed and identifies the school's weaknesses and lays out positive ways to address these. At the time of the last inspection the school development plan was ineffective and unsatisfactory. This issue has now been addressed and the school is now able to carry out a thorough analysis of its performance in order to further raise standards. There is a good monitoring programme through which this information is gathered. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is carried out by the senior management team and subject leaders. The school's evaluation of its own performance is now satisfactory and improving and more challenging targets are set.
63. Overall the match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is good. There is a mix of experienced and new colleagues, with a very good range of curriculum expertise. There is a high level of commitment from both full and part-time members of staff. The learning support assistants are very effective in their role and give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know their pupils well. The school secretary and other administrative staff enhance the smooth running of the school. The midday and kitchen staffs support the school ethos along with the caretaking and cleaning staff who maintain the buildings to a very good standard.
64. The provision made by the school for pupils with special educational needs is good and supports the school's aims and inclusive values, but there are some clear areas for development. The special educational needs co-ordinator has been instrumental in creating and developing a clear direction for special educational needs provision in the school which reflects advice in the revised special educational needs Code of Practice. Governors are kept informed of the school's practice in relation to their responsibilities. The school's budget expenditure for meeting special educational needs is targeted appropriately to support pupils. All statutory duties are met. However the special needs co-ordinator is not sufficiently involved in a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of teaching and learning across subjects. Individual education plans are still in their first year of implementation and these need to be carefully monitored and evaluated. The school does not have any designated room for special educational needs, which makes it difficult to hold planned and unexpected confidential discussions with pupils or parents. This would also allow for better storage and administration of records. The library is well resourced to support pupils with special needs. Good use is made of laptop computers to support identified individual needs.
65. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. Provision from the local education authority is used well, but opportunities are also sought from other providers. The induction of new members of staff and newly qualified teachers is good. Overall the school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is good.
66. The accommodation is generally very variable. It is well looked after but in some subject areas it is inadequate and does not meet the needs of the pupils. In physical education, for example, the lack of indoor facilities impacts on pupils' progress and standards. Overall,

the accommodation is satisfactory, but it does not always enhance learning and in some subjects does not allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school has an adequate range of resources to support the curriculum, but not enough new technologies including information communication technology. The school's use of new technology, including information and communication technology, to access the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Library provision is very good, serving the whole school effectively.

67. The school's administration systems are good, overall. The budget is managed efficiently by the governors, who are well supported by the headteacher and her staff. Financial planning is good, especially in supporting educational priorities. The finance committee works effectively and reports regularly to the full governing body meetings. Specific grants and additional funding made available to the school are used effectively and are linked to educational priorities. Specific grants for special educational needs are also used effectively.
68. Overall, taking into account the full range of criteria, the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of provision, the leadership and its ethos, the school is judged to be giving good value for money.

Sixth form

69. The leadership and management of the sixth form is very good and a strength of the school. The delegation from the headteacher and working relationships are very good. The contribution of staff with responsibilities in the sixth form is also very good. Leadership ensures clear educational direction reflecting the schools aims and values, giving rise to high standards. Students' pastoral and academic support is very good. The strong and inclusive ethos of the sixth form provides very good equality of opportunity. Resources are used well including information and communication technology. Overall the standards achieved in the sixth form are very high and sixth form provision is cost-effective.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to build on the improvements the school has made since the last inspection, further raise standards and strive towards excellence, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Meet statutory requirements by providing sufficient and effective information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9. Not only is there no provision at present in Years 8 and 9 but information and communication technology across the curriculum is also underdeveloped in many subjects. (Paragraphs: 31, 61, 94, 105, 124, 135, 141, 153, 168, 183)
 - (2) Improve the consistency with which assessment data is used to inform future planning, especially in Years 7 to 11. (Paragraphs: 22, 23, 51, 83, 93, 103)
 - (3) Address underachievement in double award science in Years 10 and 11. (Paragraphs: 2, 5, 99)
 - (4) Address the overcrowding of the curriculum in Years 7 to 11. There is insufficient time to develop pupils' high order problem solving and thinking skills. Carry out a full-scale whole school curriculum review in order to address this issue and its impact on pupils' progress and standards. (Paragraphs: 32, 111)
 - (5) Carry out an accommodation audit in order to prioritise an effective action plan to

meet deficiencies that impact on pupils' progress and standards. The accommodation restricts the progress pupils make in some subjects, including physical education, art and design, and business studies. (Paragraphs: 32, 66, 112, 176, 219)

Sixth form

- (1) The information, advice and guidance that are available for students, on careers and what to do after they leave school, must be better promoted and marketed. (Paragraph: 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	117
	Sixth form	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		143

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 – 11

Number	7	35	54	18	3	0	0
Percentage	6	30	46	15	3	0	0

Sixth form

Number	3	31	13	2	0	0	0
Percentage	6	63	27	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	433	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24	N/a

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.2

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	36	51	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	36	36
	Girls	50	48	48
	Total	86	84	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (99)	97 (99)	97 (99)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	80 (73)	91 (81)	84 (75)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	36	36
	Girls	50	50	50
	Total	86	86	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (100)	99 (99)	99 (99)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	87 (77)	94 (81)	78 (64)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	38	39	77

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	38	38	38
	Girls	39	39	39
	Total	77	77	77
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	100 (97)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	50 (48)	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	65.7
	National	39.8

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	20	20	40
	Average point score per candidate	19.1	19.3	19.2
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		81.0

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
530	17	1
5		
1		
2		
1		
2		
4	1	
2		

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)	33.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	24:10
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	21.9
Sixth form	15.9

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	1610794
Total expenditure	1564382
Expenditure per pupil	2980
Balance brought forward from previous year	5407
Balance carried forward to next year	51819

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.35
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11.35

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.25
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	552
Number of questionnaires returned	187

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	37	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	13	4	1
The teaching is good.	47	47	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	50	10	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	44	11	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	66	26	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	39	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	45	4	1	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Questionnaires were sent to 440 families and 187 replied. Overall parents have a very positive view of the school and very high confidence in what it does to educate their children. They believe that their children make good progress at school and that the school helps them to achieve their best, instilling them with very good values. There is mutual trust and respect between parents and the school and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **very good**.
Drama was inspected as part of the provision for English.

Strengths

- Good, very good and excellent teaching that prepares pupils well for the demands of examinations as well as fostering an appreciation of literature.
- Outstandingly good attitudes to work demonstrated by almost all pupils.
- Excellent standards of attainment in creative writing.
- Very good leadership by the acting head of department.

Areas for improvement

- Continuing to develop a curriculum focused on raising the attainment of the most able pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Clarifying the relationship between English and drama to ensure that both subjects benefit from sharing methodologies, approaches and expertise in teaching.

71. Pupils enter the school with attainment in English that is well above the national average and by the end of Year 9, they achieve results that are also well above the national average. At the higher levels pupils also achieve very well; in 2002 80 per cent of pupils at the school attained results of Level 6 and above compared with 32 per cent nationally. When compared to similar schools, English results are in line at Level 5 or above, and below at Levels 6 and 7.

72. GCSE results have been improving over the last three years and in 2002 all pupils attained level C or above in their English Language examination. Although the proportion of pupils gaining A grades was twice as high as the national average, when compared with other subjects in the school, grades in English overall have been for the last three years relatively lower than those which pupils attain in other subject areas. However, results in English literature have been outstanding, with 98 per cent of all pupils taking the examination in 2002 and 66 per cent attaining grades of A or A*. No girl achieved less than a B grade.

73. Attainment in lessons in Years 7 to 11 was almost always good or very good and never less than satisfactory. The quality of teaching and the excellence of the pupils' attitude to learning explain these high standards.

74. In Year 7, pupils are skilful speakers and attentive listeners and although a few lack confidence, the majority are able to contribute to discussions, speaking at some length and building on the ideas of others. In one class, in which pupils were asked to listen to each other's research into a subject of their choice, pupils took an active interest in what they were hearing and were able to summarise accurately and in detail what had been said. In the same lesson they demonstrated skill and maturity in taking into account the needs of their audience, introducing the topic under discussion and sequencing information logically in their presentations. By the end of Year 9, in response to very positive support and praise from their teachers, most pupils are highly articulate and confident, willing to contribute in class and able to develop answers to questions at some length. In Years 10 and 11, pupils demonstrate their confidence and competence when presenting talks to their peers; their

spoken expression is precise and accurate and they understand the need to find and maintain an appropriate formality of style. By the end of Year 11 pupils from across the range of abilities are accomplished and expressive speakers.

75. Pupils attain similarly high standards in reading by the end of Year 9. Reading aloud is often fluent, expressive and perceptive and undertaken with enthusiasm. Pupils are highly literate, with a breadth of reading that stands them in good stead in their GCSE studies. Reading in Years 7, 8 and 9 is insufficiently challenging for many pupils, but recent and well-judged revisions to the reading curriculum mean that by Year 9 texts are much better matched to the abilities of the most able pupils. By the end of Year 11 pupils demonstrate increasingly sensitive understanding of character as well as a growing awareness of the writer's intentions. An exploration of Juliet's soliloquy before her faked suicide reflects the reader's awareness of Juliet's growing sense of panic, but also of the place the scene has in the structure of the play as a whole, pre-figuring her actual death. The breadth of pupils' reading and study is reflected in their knowledge of the social contexts in which novels and plays are written. The very able reader understands and writes about the very particular horror for a Victorian child of confronting an escaped prisoner from one of the convict hulks. Less able readers make steady progress through their GCSE studies; their work, for example, in exploring character in 'An Inspector Calls' reflects thorough teaching and a sound understanding of the key themes and ideas presented by the text. Their knowledge of the texts they are studying is almost always good.
76. Pupils develop rapidly as writers throughout Years 7 to 9. The best writing is in response to literature, with pupils of all abilities offered a range of tasks, many of which capture their imagination and promote writing of the highest quality. By Year 9 most pupils structure paragraphs well, cite textual evidence to support personal opinion, and show control over narrative technique, for example, sustaining at length a story in the present tense in which the writer reflects on the past. The majority of pupils write accurately and deploy the full range of punctuation with some skill. Because the writing carried out is for the most part literary, pupils do not have sufficient experience of a range of writing genres. The most able pupils demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of persuasive and analytical writing but are not yet given opportunities to extend themselves in writing, for example, information or explanatory texts. The department is aware that this is an issue that requires addressing, and the breadth of writing required in Year 9 has begun to be extended.
77. The most able writers demonstrate outstanding attainment in creative writing by the end of their GCSE studies. They draw on well-furnished literary imaginations to create narratives that are consciously crafted for effect. Such sophistication of writing is also apparent in pupils' writing about literary texts, in which insights are developed in depth and written about in coherent and substantial essays, for example, in sensitive comparison of Marvell's poem 'To his coy mistress' with a contemporary poet's view of love. Less accomplished writers also achieve good standards of writing. No evidence was found during this inspection of pupils' significant writing difficulties identified in the previous inspection report; the writing of pupils in lower sets is usually both competent and accurate. On occasion, however, the relatively undemanding tasks set for pupils in these groups did not present sufficient opportunities for them to extend their writing skills and attempt work at the higher levels.
78. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is almost without exception good, and never less than satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 it is almost always good or very good, and never less than satisfactory. Teachers are sensitively authoritative in classrooms. They make it clear to pupils that they are to try their hardest, that they are to contribute fully to lessons and they must strive for excellence. As a result substantial amounts of homework are set and completed and no time is wasted in lessons. Pupils come to classrooms ready and prepared to work and do so with evident enjoyment, enthusiasm and zest remaining on task and engaged throughout lessons. In a drama lesson pupils undertook improvisations

with the utmost seriousness, working unselfconsciously in front of the video camera, and wasting no time in re-recording sections with which they were not satisfied.

79. Teachers' subject knowledge is a particular strength, particularly their understanding of and enthusiasm for literary texts which enlivens and informs their teaching. An improvisation between a teacher and pupil of a conversation between Joe Gargery and Pip kept the class enthralled and has led to pupils having a lively appreciation of the texts being studied, underpinned by an informed understanding of the social contexts in which they were written. Such teaching bears fruit in Years 10 and 11, where even less able pupils write knowledgeably about a range of Dicken's writings and use their understandings of Victorian England to illuminate their reading of 'Great Expectations'. Pupils carry out their own research very conscientiously and are very well prepared for their lessons.
80. Almost all teachers explain clearly and concisely the purposes of their lessons, and in some instances the methodologies they are going to use. Pupils respond well to this clarity and are able themselves to articulate the purposes of their lessons. In a Year 7 library lesson pupils assimilated the criteria the teacher had outlined to them by which their oral work was to be judged, and referred to the criteria when assessing their own work. Teachers provide clear and unambiguous explanations of how to tackle examination questions and engage in a supportive dialogue with pupils during lessons, helping them in particular to meet the challenges of national testing.
81. Within a context of almost all teaching in Years 7 to 9 being good, opportunities to extend and motivate the most able pupils are not consistently incorporated into the planning of lessons. As a result the attainment of the most able pupils is, on occasion, needlessly constrained, for example, when very able pupils are restricted by the pace imposed by a whole class question and answer session led by the teacher. Provision for less able readers and writers is, however, good; they benefit from structured teaching and are supported particularly well in the range of writing tasks that they are asked to undertake. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to write both less challenging empathetic pieces and this enables most pupils to achieve well in their written work.
82. Where teaching does not meet the high standards set by the department, it is not rigorously structured to ensure progression, nor delivered with the degree of enthusiasm that is characteristic of the teaching overall. In these lessons, which are few, the lacklustre teaching leaves pupils without a clear sense of direction and purpose and they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. In these lessons pupils' attitudes to learning, while satisfactory, do not reflect the same high degree of motivation seen when teaching is of a higher quality.
83. Although pupils are confident in knowing the grades they are aiming to achieve at GCSE and the grade at which they are currently working, in Years 7 to 9 pupils are not aware of levels. This is because marking does not draw attention to level descriptors, and for less able pupils is, on occasions, sketchy and imprecise. As a result, pupils are less focused on what they have to do to improve their work and an opportunity for improvement is therefore lost.
84. The acting head of department provides a very good role model as the leading professional in his department, sustaining a very high quality of teaching in both the main school and the sixth form. Since joining the school at the start of the academic year, the acting head of department has identified appropriately areas for development and change – in particular looking at ways to raise the attainment of the most able pupils in Year 9. As yet, however, the precise relationship between English and drama has not been established, and opportunities for cross-fertilisation between the subjects have not been fully exploited. Leadership of the department is good. Overall the department has made good progress

since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Standards achieved are high.
- Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are excellent.
- Effective leadership providing clear educational direction.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use and application of information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve marking and assessment of pupils' work, to help inform future planning.
- The plenary part of the lesson especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Provide more interesting and stimulating mathematics books for the school library.

85. Standards of attainment by pupils by the end of Year 9 in 2002 were very high in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels improved in 2002 and were significantly greater than those achieved nationally. Over half the pupils achieved Level 7 or above and a significant proportion achieved Level 8. This improvement has occurred largely as a result of good teaching and the increase in pupils' numerical confidence. Generally boys and girls achieve similar standards.

86. Standards achieved by pupils at GCSE A* to C grades remained high in 2002 when compared to the national average. The proportion of boys achieving the higher grades was slightly better than girls. The school matched the national percentage figure for pupils achieving the highest grade, A*, in 2002, but was below the figure for grade A.

87. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are gaining considerable benefit from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The mental/oral starters are effective in increasing pupils' confidence and understanding of many basic number relations. Pupils are generally very confident with number calculations and work well with fractions, decimals and percentages unaided. Pupils are making very good progress with their mathematics. Attainment in lessons reflects this progress and at least matches the results achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002.

88. Overall, by the end of Year 11 pupils are achieving improved standards compared with recent examination results. Attainment in lessons of the current Year 11 pupils suggests that results in the GCSE examination in 2003 will exceed those of previous years.

89. The overall achievement and progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. The achievement by highest attaining pupils is improving and more pupils are being considered for the higher tier paper of the national tests at the end of Year 11. This is likely to increase the number of pupils achieving the higher grades, A and A* in the GCSE examination.

90. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. Teachers work very hard at planning effective lessons that motivate and stimulate students to learn. In the very good lessons teaching is exemplified by very well planned and structured activities. These lessons start briskly with an effective oral or mental activity to develop pupils' basic numerical skills. Expectations of pupils are very high and they are expected to listen and respond in lessons.

91. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs or have English as an additional language are fully integrated into lessons. These pupils make progress that is in line with others in the group.
92. Teachers develop very positive relationships with their pupils, which results in them gaining good learning habits, displaying often excellent attitudes and very good behaviour in lessons. Teachers assess pupil performance largely through homework and class activities. However, insufficient use is made of the assessment data collected on pupils from national tests, and internally assessed pieces of work, to inform lesson planning. Pupils in Year 9 and 11 are aware of their current performance but they are not always given sufficient guidance of what they need to do to improve their grades.
93. For teaching to improve further teachers need to build on the success of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and extend the ideas to other aspects of the mathematics curriculum. The inconsistency that exists in the marking of pupils' work should be addressed so that all pupils receive guidance on how to improve their work. In some situations teachers have not given enough consideration, in the planning of the lesson, to the skills pupils will need to use and consequently pupils do not make the expected progress in lessons. The three-part lesson has been adopted by teachers across Years 7 to 9. However, at the end of lessons, some teachers do not lead effective reviews of the learning that has taken place, and thus pupils are not always in a position by which they can assess their work. This may be as a result of the very short length of some lessons.
94. Currently there is insufficient provision in the mathematics curriculum for the application of information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11, and this impacts on pupils' learning.
95. There are few interesting and stimulating books about mathematics for pupils in the school's library. Extra-curricular provision is strong through a range of clubs and challenges for all ages and abilities.
96. Revision classes feature regularly and teachers are readily available to support individual pupils with their work. A master class for mathematically able primary children deepens their knowledge and enjoyment of mathematics prior to moving to the school.
97. There are good facilities for the teaching of mathematics. The mathematics department is effectively led and managed. The head of department provides very clear leadership and educational direction. There is a strong and supportive team of teachers who work effectively together. Teachers are well qualified and are able to teach across the ability range and to all levels. Overall the department has made good progress since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- High quality staff – pupil relationships enhance learning.
- Subject knowledge, hard work and commitment of teachers in the department.
- Balance of theory and practical work ably supported by the science technician.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in lessons is exemplary.

Areas for improvement

- Address underachievement in double award science.
- Integrate marking and assessment for learning into the style of teaching to give pupils better feedback on their progress and the next steps in their learning.
- Adopt a teaching style that involves the development of thinking skills and ensures pupils take more responsibility for their learning.
- Improve strategic planning across the department, in particular identifying how aims are to be achieved.
- Increase pupils' use of information and communication technology in data handling, data logging and modelling.
- Make effective use of the National Strategy for science.

98. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment above nationally expected levels, although below most other grammar schools. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 has improved over the past two years so that in 2002 all pupils gained at least Level 5 at the end of Year 9 in national tests. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades, Level 6 or better, has risen from 58 per cent in 2000 to 83 per cent in 2002.

99. At GCSE approximately one third of pupils were entered for the three separate sciences in 2002 and two-thirds for double award science. Nearly all of the pupils gained the higher grades A* to C in the separate sciences which is well above the national average. In double award science pupils did less well with 55 per cent gaining an A* to C grade, in line with the national average but below expected standards. In particular boys achieved significantly lower grades in double award science than they did in their other GCSE subjects. One third of pupils gained A and A* grades in the separate sciences whereas only 4 per cent of pupils gained these grades in double award science. GCSE results have fallen in the separate sciences and particularly double award science over the period 2000 to 2002, against the national trend, therefore results are currently unsatisfactory.

100. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, made good progress. Value added data shows pupils to be making good progress. Year 8 pupils were able to measure accurately the increase in mass of magnesium as it reacts with oxygen to form magnesium oxide and to show that the ratio of magnesium to oxygen is always the same, leading to the derivation of the appropriate formula. Pupils' practical skills in measuring, graphical representation and analysis were well developed but they need to be given more opportunities for designing their own investigations and making predictions based on prior knowledge. Pupils are highly literate and numerate and put this to good use during investigative work.

101. In Years 10 and 11 pupils made good or very good progress in separate science lessons. Their achievements were in line with expectations for pupils of this ability. Pupils were able to use their prior knowledge to answer searching questions and could accurately predict cause and effect, for example, when the number of turns on a transformer coil was varied. In some double science lessons, particularly the lower sets, pupils did not make sufficient progress. Pupils were still using words to describe chemical reactions rather than chemical symbols and were reluctant to take responsibility for aspects of their science work, for example, deciding on an appropriate scale for graphs or the format of results tables. In these lower sets there was too little progression from when a topic had been studied in Years 7 to 9, and pupils' expectations of their own ability were generally too low. These pupils are achieving below their potential.

102. Pupils' attitudes to science were generally very positive. They enjoyed the subject and responded very positively in lessons where they were full of enthusiasm. Pupils were

attentive, involved and worked very well in pairs, supporting each other's learning. Pupils responded well to teachers' high expectations and showed an excellent spirit of enquiry when engaged in practical work.

103. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 was always good and would be improved further if there was a greater focus on problem solving and thinking skills which at present are not well developed. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching varied more widely from occasionally unsatisfactory to mainly good and sometimes very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and support pupils' learning very well. They give clear explanations of difficult ideas and plan their work well. To improve teaching in Years 10 and 11 teachers must use the last part of lessons to question pupils on what they have learnt and to use assessment to show pupils the progress they have made and the next steps in their learning. Staff give freely of their time at lunchtimes and after school to support pupils falling behind.
104. The department is well led and managed although recent difficulties with staffing have prevented the department moving ahead as quickly as it might have with its planned developments. However, the current management team are experienced, hard-working and committed to implementing the department's agreed objectives. The subject development plan must identify how objectives are to be reached and who is responsible for developments.
105. Resources and accommodation in the department are good, although a lack of access to information and communication technology resources inhibits teaching and learning significantly, preventing the use of modelling, data logging and data analysis. Technician support in the department is very good, but the school is well below the recommended level of such support and this is impacting on pupils' development of practical skills.
106. Since the last inspection standards have been improved in Years 7 to 9 with more pupils gaining the higher levels but have declined in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching is generally still good and leadership and management are still satisfactory. Accommodation is considerably improved.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Specialist teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Good use of information and communication technology to support research.
- Good integration of literary and art history appreciation.
- Behaviour in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure that all art and design lessons take place in specialist accommodation.
- The use of teacher assessment data to inform future planning.
- The use of a wider range of strategies to differentiate the curriculum.

107. By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national expectations for two and three-dimensional work. The best work results from the integration of literary and art history appreciation and the use of information and communication technology to support research for a range of projects.
108. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above national averages when compared with all

maintained schools. Eighty-seven per cent of pupils attained A* to C grades at GCSE in 2002. This compares well with all schools nationally but attainment in art and design is below that of other subjects in the school. The department has set itself challenging targets to improve standards in externally accredited courses and to increase the proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grades. Standards have improved since the last inspection when standards were below the national averages.

109. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are able to select and use a range of material to produce observational paintings, drawings and two-dimensional collages. They make good progress in developing and using the vocabulary of the subject that they use to good effect in lively class discussions. For example, in a Year 8 group discussion about the relationship between the poetry of Keats and the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. By the end of Year 9 they demonstrate achievement expected for their age. However, for higher attaining pupils this does not represent good progress and there is some under achievement for this group.
110. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make good progress building on their knowledge about the subject. Their rate of learning increases enabling them to achieve standards above national averages by the end of Year 11. They apply different techniques to their own work, for example, water colour and make good use of information and communication technology to research examination topics and manipulate images to model alternative designs. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils talk confidently about the range of artwork they have done demonstrating their knowledge of artists and the history of art. For example, pupils investigate the work of native Australian artists and incorporate their techniques into their studies.
111. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall. Teaching is well planned ensuring pupils have a broad range of art experiences. Relationships are good and pupils are well behaved. The impact of teaching is limited by the short length of some lessons and limited subject knowledge. In some lessons there is insufficient challenge to extend pupils' thinking and depth of knowledge about art concepts.
112. A subject specialist teaches all lessons in Years 10 and 11 in the dedicated art suite. These two factors have a positive impact on pupils' rate of learning. Teaching is well organised to cover all aspects of the course syllabus and ensures that all pupils and students experience the full art curriculum.
113. There have been improvements in the management of art and design since the last inspection with an improving trend in attainment over time. Increased use of information and communication technology and technician support is having a positive impact on the provision. However, there is still a need to focus on extending higher attaining pupils and developing curriculum extensions.
114. The head of department must improve the monitoring and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of the subject to inform future actions to further raise standards.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship as a short GCSE course in Years 9 and 10.

- Good teaching of the subject.
- Effective integration of citizenship into tutorial schemes of work in Years 7 to 11.

Areas for improvement

- Improve lower school schemes of work and identify clearly national curriculum requirements of the subject.

115. Overall, pupils reach above average standards in citizenship by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. They are involved in their work, they remain on task and achieve good standards.

116. Citizenship, in Years 7 to 9, is mainly delivered within the tutorial programme. All form teachers are involved in the teaching of the programme and this is co-ordinated by the head of lower school. The programme is comprehensive including the development of personal responsibility, identifying the reason for rules, fund raising, the school's history, contributing to the annual school fete and how to deal with incidents of bullying. In all lessons seen the pupils were totally involved in the activities and responded positively to difficult questions and were able to analyse and give differing points of view and justify their answers. The lower school tutorial schemes of work integrate aspects of citizenship within the main tutorial programme. Given statutory changes, this scheme of work needs updating in order to identify clearly the national curriculum requirements of the subject.

117. From September 2002, all Year 9 and 10 pupils have been following a GCSE short course in citizenship. The course is well structured and comprehensive. The guidance materials and other resources made available to teachers are good and enhance learning. Consequently pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards.

118. Teaching was consistently good. Teachers were well briefed and delivered the programme of work with commitment and enthusiasm. Subject knowledge is good and their expectations are high. Teachers make good assessments of pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress in citizenship and all lessons are inclusive and meet the needs of all.

119. Good leadership and co-ordination of the programme both in the lower and middle schools has enabled the introduction of the subject to fully enhance the school's Personal Social Health Education programme that is enriched by the subject especially in Years 10 and 11.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers secure knowledge of the subject.
- Standards are improving and GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils that lead to good levels of motivation and achievement.
- Enthusiastic leadership and effective management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- To increase the use of information and communication technology.
- To provide appropriate resources for the teaching of computer-aided manufacture.

- Give more attention to the marking of pupils' work so that it shows them how to improve.
- To continue to improve standards at GCSE.

120. Overall standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection. In Years 10 and 11, GCSE short courses are offered in resistant materials, electronics, food technology and textiles. Food technology results at GCSE have declined in recent years. During the last two years GCSE results in electronics and graphics have improved. Results are now well above the national averages. In all design and technology subjects there were fewer pupils achieving the higher grades of A* to B than would be expected. Girls achieve slightly better than boys.

121. By the end of Year 9, pupils have developed confidence in the use of a range of equipment and techniques. They produce practical work of a good standard in resistant materials. In all design and technology subjects research and design work is recorded in teacher prepared booklets that provide an appropriate structure for well presented project folders. Pupils are proud of their work. Many projects have been photographed and carefully mounted as a display that enhances the learning environment.

122. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment in the subject is well above average. They deal confidently with a wide range of practical activities as their experience grows. They produce projects using a range of materials using some high level techniques. Pupils are patient and committed to completing their work and achieving a high standard of craftsmanship. This is a real credit to the pupils as they only receive 70 minutes of timetabled time per week. Pupils work additional hours during their lunchtimes under the supervision of a teacher. In one class pupils were seen making products that included a jewellery box with a roller top, a stand for an electric guitar and a desk for studying at home. These projects and others were of a high quality in terms of design and construction.

123. In all of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. It was good or better in two-thirds of lessons seen. Pupils' learning was good where the standard of teaching was good. Characteristics of good and very good teaching included careful preparation, a good range of teaching styles and effective use made of the time allowed, with a range of learning activities used. In all lessons learning objectives were clearly set out and made clear to the pupils. Literacy skills were developed through pupils reading aloud and through key words being introduced so that pupils could use them appropriately in their oral and written work. In all of lessons, pupils are managed very well and high standards of work and behaviour are achieved. Current pupils in Year 10 are achieving high standards of graphical skills. Pupils produced isometric drawings using techniques that enhanced their three-dimensional illustrations. The quality of folder work in the Year 10 resistant material course reflected pupil achievement to be of the higher grades at GCSE.

124. The scheme of work provides an effective framework to enable pupils to experience all aspects of design and technology. It meets all of the requirements of the current programme of study for the subject. The schemes of work clearly identify opportunities for teaching and reinforcing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The use of information and communication technology is limited due to inadequate provision of hardware and appropriate software for computer-aided manufacturing. Homework assignments are planned in advance and are designed to support and extend pupils' learning. Due to the permanent teacher for food and textiles being on sick leave a non-specialist supply teacher was seen teaching these subjects. Lessons for these classes were well planned giving pupils the opportunity to make good progress and be exposed to a range of learning styles. Appropriate resources, for example, commercially produced biscuit packaging, were used in a food lesson. This provided a stimulus for pupils

in a Year 7 lesson to design their own packaging.

125. The head of department provides a clear direction and vision for the subject within the school. Leadership of the department is very good. Resources and staff are effectively managed. Storage of equipment makes for easy access for pupils who take care of the tools and appliances when using them. The teaching and preparation spaces are well organised making it possible to teach effectively with limited technical support. The learning environment is inviting and stimulating. Health, safety and hygiene guidance are effectively implemented. Pupils are taught the correct procedures when being introduced to a new process. In one lesson pupils were taught the importance of protecting their hands when layering glass reinforced plastic. Marking and record-keeping of pupils' work is in line with the school policy although it does not always indicate to pupils how they might improve. The recently revised scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 provides a firm foundation upon which to build further improvements at GCSE.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 9.
- Students achieve well in GCSE.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard.
- The quality of teaching is good and teachers support pupils' learning well through helpful feedback.
- The topics they study are relevant and up to date.
- Geography makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work.

126. Standards in geography by the end of Year 9 are well above average judged by the numbers of pupils who achieve Levels 7 and 8. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 11 standards achieved at GCSE, over the last three years have been well above national average and pupils generally do better in geography than in many of their other subjects. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades, A* and A, could be higher. Pupils have good geographical skills and their locational knowledge is above average. For example, in Year 7 pupils explained that climate, terrain and soil quality were some of the factors effecting population density in different parts of the world. By Year 9, pupils compared the effects of earthquakes in San Francisco in 1989 with the devastation of the Indian earthquake in 2001 and identify what factors lead to these differences. Pupils studying for GCSE make good progress in undertaking geographical enquiries such as recognising the pattern of land use when studying the central business district of Kingston-upon-Hull. Currently standards are higher in Year 10 than in Year 11.

127. Pupils enjoy their geography lessons in the lower school. They respond keenly to questions, work at a fast pace and try hard. They find the topics they study interesting and take care with the quality of their presentation, often using computers to word-process accounts or use tables and graphs to show data. Pupils show sensitivity to issues such as the plight of individuals caught up in natural disasters. In GCSE classes, pupils in Year 10 enjoy their lessons and try hard showing a willingness to work collaboratively with one another. In Year 11 pupils are more passive in their responses and show greater

dependence on the teacher.

128. Pupils make good progress in their learning because the teaching is good across the school and because they work hard. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and expect the pupils to achieve highly. This has a positive impact on the amount pupils learn in lessons. Teachers are explicit about the aims for each lesson enabling pupils to know what they are learning and why. The single lessons are conducted at a fast pace and pupils work to sharp deadlines. The short length of lessons, however, restricts the opportunities given for group work or for personal reflection on their learning. The homework they do supplements their learning in class well and is one factor that enables pupils to make such good progress in geography. Another is the high-quality feedback teachers give when they mark work. A very good example of this was the detailed assessment of extended pieces of work on the pressures leading to change in the Amazon rain forest produced by pupils in Year 9. The marking gave a clear evaluation for the pupils and sensible advice for them to take action on in the future.
129. The curriculum in geography is well balanced. Pupils in each year group have the opportunity to undertake fieldwork visits to such locations as Malham, Skegness and Kingston-upon-Hull. Geography makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development by giving pupils a chance to empathise with those living in poverty in other countries and by looking at issues such as resource allocation. Their social and cultural development is also well supported through the study of such issues as hazard management in lesser economically developed countries.
130. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with better use of the national curriculum levels when planning work for pupils in Years 7 to 9. These levels could be shared more explicitly with the pupils. The quality of leadership in the department is good. The department staff are focused on raising standards and have the capacity to see sustained improvement in the future.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- In lessons all pupils make good progress.
- Teaching and pupils' learning are always at least good and sometimes very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are always at least very good and are often excellent.
- Leadership of the subject is very good and ensures clear educational direction.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' use of information and communication technology needs to be further developed.
- More effective management strategies are needed to ensure consistently high quality teaching.

131. In Years 7 to 11 the great majority of pupils attain levels well above national expectations. Teacher assessments for the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate a very high proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 with many at Level 6 and above. The GCSE results for 2002 show a pass rate of 93 per cent for A* to C grades which is well above the national average. Over 40 per cent of the pupils passed with A* or A grades. There is little difference between the results of girls and boys. Results in 2002 at the end of Years 9 and 11 were broadly in line with those in previous years. History is a successful subject at the school and pupils' GCSE results have been better than the average of other subjects for the last three years.

132. Evidence from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 9 shows high levels of attainment and suggests that teacher assessments in recent years are realistic. Pupils are capable of evaluating different historical interpretations and respond well to challenging tasks. In a lesson on the origins of World War 1, for example, they were very successful in taking account of a wide range of factors responsible for the conflict and were able to appreciate the individual standpoints of each of the major powers involved. Pupils' factual knowledge is often very good and learning activities of a more challenging nature such as problem solving can be undertaken readily.
133. Pupils have very good basic skills in literacy and numeracy and can quickly deal with source material, including statistics. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on the Battle of Jutland, pupils evaluated the relative impact of the outcome on Britain and Germany by referring to a number of factors including the relative proportions of the fleets lost. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils evaluated the relative merits of written and pictorial sources with reference to the Bayeux tapestry. Overall, progress throughout Years 7 to 9 is good for pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs.
134. Attainment amongst pupils currently taking GCSE is also good. In a lesson on the rise of Nazism, for example, Year 10 pupils were very knowledgeable and well able to analyse the appeal of extremist parties in times of economic crisis. In a Year 11 lesson pupils evaluated the terms of the Treaty of Versailles from the perspectives of different nations. In Year 11 pupils' folders work on the twentieth century showed a good understanding of the events and changes of the period. Progress by pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good.
135. Pupils' learning is always at least good and sometimes very good. Pupils demonstrate high levels of effort and commitment. They are eager to answer teachers' questions and contribute well to discussions. The short length of many of their lessons limits the opportunities for this, however, and there were several occasions when pupils were not able to reflect on the issues raised and fully develop their thinking. For example, in the lesson on the origins of World War 1, more time would have allowed pupils to weigh the relative importance of various factors in a properly developed plenary activity. This pressure on time also reduces the opportunities to develop skills in extended writing. Apart from this, however, pupils engage in a range of learning activities with confidence, although they have insufficient access to information and communication technology.
136. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are always at least very good and are often excellent. The atmosphere in classes is extremely positive and relationships are excellent. Pupils are very co-operative with their teachers and supportive of each other in a variety of contexts. They work well on individual, small group or whole class activities.
137. Teaching is always at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers communicate enthusiasm for the subject, have very good specialist expertise and manage pupils very well. They have high expectations and have a very good awareness of what pupils' need to do to succeed in public examinations. There is much effective practice that has a very good impact on pupils' learning, but there is also some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. More opportunities are needed to share examples of the most effective approaches, for example, in different ways of managing the shorter lessons. The range of resources is good on the whole and their use is very effective, even in one of the classrooms where space is limited.
138. The leadership of the subject is very good. The head of department has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. He recognises, for example, the importance of implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy, and the need to further raise the attainment of

the most gifted pupils thus enabling them to achieve A* grades at GCSE.

139. Overall, management is good, although some aspects need further development. A good range of monitoring and evaluation strategies are being introduced, for example, but more work is needed to ensure their effective use to secure more consistently high quality teaching within the department. Schemes of work are good in many respects, but more attention needs to be given to identify effective approaches to teaching, for example, in the use of information about pupils' progress.

140. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall and has improved more recently. The good features reported five years ago have been maintained, although the need for the department to encourage pupils to make more progress in the use of information and communication technology still remains an issue to be addressed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision of information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9 is **unsatisfactory** and fails to meet the statutory requirements for the subject. In Years 10 and 11 provision is **good**.

Strengths in Years 10 and 11;

- Very good teaching and lesson planning.
- Ease of access by pupils to assessment data.
- Good use of information and communication technology to support differing learning styles.
- Behaviour in lessons.

Areas for improvement in Years 7 to 9:

- Planning to ensure all pupils receive their full National Curriculum entitlement for information and communication technology.
- Planning to ensure all staff and pupils fully understand appropriate levels of attainment.
- Ensure parents receive an annual report for the subject.

141. Pupils join the school with a wide range of differing knowledge, skills and understanding of information and communication technology. Little account is taken of pupils' previous attainment and no comprehensive whole-school assessment takes place in Year 7, to inform what pupils are able to do. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are unsatisfactory and pupils are failing to undertake all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teacher assessment identifies a high proportion of pupils achieving beyond the expected level in 2002. Evidence from the inspection of pupils' work for the current cohort of pupils does not confirm these high standards.

142. The rate of progress through Years 10 and 11 is good and almost all pupils attain high standards in Intermediate GNVQ.

143. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are able to manipulate text and graphics, use spreadsheets, access the Internet to gather information, and in Year 7 apply their knowledge to model a mini football league. However, by the end of Year 9 pupils have had insufficient opportunities to build on their knowledge and skills across all aspects of the curriculum and therefore pupils are not achieving standards they are capable of. For example, there was no evidence in the lessons observed, or in the limited amount of previous work, of pupil's using computer interfaces that respond to switches or sensors. Weaknesses in curriculum planning impact on the achievement of both boys and girls.

144. By the end of Year 11 the externally accredited courses provide a structured learning programme and pupils extend and develop their information and communication technology skills. They make good progress as they move through Years 10 and 11 achieving high standards by the age of 16. Pupils are able to work with a range of business software to explore such uses of information and communication technology such as e-mail, the Internet as well as issues related to health and safety and information and communication technology's impact on society.
145. Pupils' attitudes to the subject have a positive impact on their learning in all lessons. They are well motivated and work collaboratively to solve problems.
146. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. The impact of teaching is limited by insufficient time allocated to the subject and unsatisfactory subject planning. Teachers plan insufficient opportunities to develop information and communication technology skills in particular lessons and in subjects across the curriculum. While teachers mark using the schools marking system this does not help pupils gain a thorough understanding of what they have to do to improve their work. In the lessons seen, pupils were motivated by the tasks set but there was insufficient challenge built into the activity to extend higher attaining and computer literate pupils.
147. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good. Lessons are well planned and pupils respond with enthusiasm to the challenges set by the teachers. Teachers explain clearly what they are to do in each lesson and usually provide teaching materials that are matched to the pupils' abilities. Teachers make good use of technical support staff to provide additional help. Teachers make good use also of the available technologies such as digital projectors and interactive white boards to extend the range of teaching strategies and ensure pupils understand the purpose of the lesson. Assessment procedures are clear and understood by all and support pupils' self-evaluation of their work.
148. The school has a ratio of one computer to every seven pupils. Much of the work in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form takes place in the school's well equipped suites. In addition computers and interactive whiteboards are available in some classrooms and laptop computers are part of the school's additional support for pupils with special educational needs and those who do not have access to a computer at home.
149. The management of information and communication technology is fragmented. A lack of co-ordination in Years 7 to 9 leads to pupils not receiving their full entitlement. However, in Years 10 and 11 the subject is well co-ordinated, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Whilst there are plans to develop the management of the subject across the whole school currently there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Insufficient progress has been made in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection. Better progress has been made in Years 10 and 11.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Quality of teaching is good with much use of the foreign language.
- Results are well above the national average in both French and German.

Areas for improvement

- Quality of spoken French.

- Professional development of teachers.
- Access to and quality of information and communication technology.
- Arrangements for pupils taking two languages in Years 10 and 11.

150. In Years 7 to 9 teacher assessment, over recent years, demonstrates that 80 per cent of pupils are at Level 6 or above which is significantly above the national average. Pupils begin German in Year 8 and make very good progress quickly. GCSE results are almost double the national average in both French and German. Given the quality of the intake, however, there are insufficient top grades, particularly in German where there were a very high number of C grades in 2002. Only small numbers continue to take both French and German at GCSE and the year group entry is split evenly between the two languages. The trend is towards most pupils taking one full GCSE course in French or German.

151. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in both languages. By Year 9 pupils acquire good listening skills. Pupils in one German lesson on parts of the body and injuries watched a video clip and made very good progress in learning a wide range of expressions. Many picked up new words almost without being prompted. Good use of an overhead transparency reinforced newly acquired vocabulary and the correct use of the definite article. This detailed planning of the lesson enabled all pupils to progress very well. Repetition work resulted in good German being spoken by pupils.

152. In Year 7 French, pupils are very keen and have acquired a good level of pronunciation but many pupils become anglicised in their spoken French by Year 8. Insufficient attention is given to this skill in French.

153. Access to information and communication technology is very limited. Its motivational qualities were in evidence in a Year 8 German lesson, however. The pupils enjoyed using computers to enhance their linguistic skills and consolidate vocabulary but the range of available software for languages is minimal.

154. In Years 10 and 11 there is little evidence of written work using complex language structures beyond that used in preparation for the oral examination. There is no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls. In both languages pupils make best progress in reading and listening. In one Year 11 French lesson, the whole class listened to a prepared oral presentation from a pupil and at the end were asked challenging questions by the teacher who elicited idiomatic phrases and a range of tenses from them. Work in both languages is carefully marked with helpful comments.

155. The majority of lessons observed demonstrated some good and some very good teaching. Pupils make good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Throughout the school pupils work neatly and with accuracy and are motivated. Some skilful and formal teaching steers pupils through challenging work. Pupils are well prepared for examinations. There is a strong emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary and on grammar which provides a sharp focus to the lessons but can lead to lack of stimulation and excitement in language learning.

156. The very positive attitude of the pupils has a significant effect on learning. Current course books are outmoded but a new course is to be introduced in French in Years 7 to 9 for the next school year. Teachers show good subject knowledge, but some anglicised pronunciation in French pervades and has an impact on levels of attainment. Lessons have a good pace but the plethora of many single lessons sometimes leaves little or no time to review work covered. Teacher expectations are low for some pupils outside the top sets.

157. Teachers and pupils make good use of the target language in lessons. The quality of paired work in both French and German is good and the pupils' attitude to their work is excellent. They follow their teachers' instructions with little hesitancy. The pupils' use of the target language in lessons has improved since the previous inspection. All teachers in the department use French or German for the majority of the lessons and pupils' listening ability is very good.

158. Pupils' cultural education is developed through a strongly supported exchange with Alford's twin town of Conlie in France. There was also a Rhineland visit last year. Two members of staff offer lunchtime Spanish lessons.

159. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. Documentation is not strong although the level of informal planning is good. Teachers work hard and co-operatively. They give freely of their time to provide extra tuition for pupils, particularly those in Years 10 and 11.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The examination results at GCSE are well above national average.
- The standard of pupil's work throughout Years 7 to 9 is above national average.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The music education accommodation is excellent.

Areas for improvement

- The challenge of how best to implement the culturally diverse sections of the new scheme of work.
- The department needs to implement a system for regularly collecting and storing recordings of pupil's compositions and performances.
- The department needs to increase, and upgrade its instrumental resources.
- The department needs to increase access to information and communication technology music software in Years 7 to 9.

160. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are very good and since 2000 all students taking GCSE music have achieved an A* to C grade. All examination students have an individual target grade that is regularly reviewed. Such detailed target setting has enabled the department to plan specific activities to meet the needs of each examination pupil and therefore made a significant contribution to the standards achieved at GCSE. Progress throughout is very good and all pupils in Year 10 are confident musicians achieving a standard of composition above national expectations and in line with their predicted target grade.

161. In Years 7 to 9 standards are good. In Year 7 pupils are able to compose with an understanding of chords and to compose by successfully combining three layers of musical ideas such as a repeated simple percussion rhythm, a middle layer of chords and a top part of two melodies. Compositions throughout Years 7 to 9 have clear structure and good phrase shapes. Year 7 pupils are able to sing three-part rounds in tune and with good expression.

162. In Year 8 pupils compose and perform more sophisticated music. They learn about specific styles, for example, the blues and pupils are able to improvise in the style using a clear rhythmic pattern in time with a steady beat. By the end of Year 9 most pupils are achieving in line with national expectations and many are doing better. The higher ability pupils have the musical skills, knowledge and understanding to make improvements to their own work

and the work of other pupils.

163. Music teaching is very good. The teacher has a very secure understanding of music and is able to carefully plan lessons explaining the learning objectives to the class, taking account of the individual learning needs of the pupils. Teaching is enthusiastic, energetic and a clear strength of the department. The teacher has a very good understanding of how many different activities the pupils should be expected to successfully complete in the lesson and how the tasks can enable pupils to develop both team skills and independent learning skills. Pupils learning to play instruments throughout the school, play their instruments in music lessons as part of a whole class teaching style. They are able to apply their musical knowledge to support their standards of achievement in class particularly in the use of shared vocabulary. A noticeably strong feature of the teaching is the introduction and expectation of the teacher that pupils will use subject specific language. As a result pupils throughout the school have a very good general musical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 7 are able to refer to scales, time signatures, key signatures, major and minor keys. For some tasks higher ability pupils would benefit from more challenging work but those with special educational needs progress well.
164. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. A new scheme of work has been written, piloted and implemented in Years 7 to 9. This enables pupils to build on their musical achievements each year and therefore make good progress in their musical skills, knowledge and understanding. A good feature of the scheme of work is the regular opportunities it provides for pupils to reflect on and evaluate both their own work and the work of each other. Evaluating and making improvements to work impact on attainment in Years 7 to 9 and the new schemes of work enable pupils to learn these important skills. The scheme of work also reflects recent changes in the GCSE syllabus. Ensuring the full breadth of musical styles and genre identified in the scheme of work whilst maintaining the present quality of teaching is a specific area for development.
165. There is a good assessment policy in Years 7 to 9, designed and implemented since the last inspection. At the end of each unit of work pupils' musical compositions or recordings are marked in line with the school's marking scheme. The department is developing a way of maintaining records of pupils' work and therefore evidence of progress is collected regularly throughout Years 7 to 9.
166. The department offers a good standard of instrumental lessons to pupils and the numbers of pupils taking lessons at school has increased since the last inspection. The school has a range of instrumental ensembles and an enthusiastic junior choir that is skilfully and sensitively led by a sixth form student. The department arranges regular opportunities for the ensembles to perform.
167. The leadership and management of the department are good. The music department development plan reflects the school development plan's whole school targets and shows a good understanding of the challenges facing the development of music throughout the school. The department needs a wider range of acoustic instruments and to upgrade its electronic keyboards.
168. Information and communication technology resources are weak. GCSE students have to share computers and pupils in Years 7 to 9 have no regular training in how to use and apply dedicated music composing and performing software.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Most of the teaching is very good or excellent.
- Standards are above those nationally and pupils achieve well.
- Effective management of pupils promotes very good behaviour, constructive relationships and leads to a positive learning atmosphere in lessons.
- There has been positive improvement and development since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to review areas for development identified in the department improvement plan, for example, curriculum balance in Years 10 and 11.
- Consolidate developments made in assessment, lesson planning and delivery to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities.
- The constraints imposed by the lack of adequate indoor sports accommodation.

169. Since the last inspection the standard of work pupils achieve by the end of Year 9 has improved and is now consistently above that expected nationally. Both boys and girls are attaining equally as well as each other. All pupils recognise how to prepare for activity and most are developing a good knowledge of muscle groups and their function. Pupils are encouraged to become increasingly responsible for their warm-up and cool-down exercises as they move through Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, they are confident and competent in devising and carrying out these routines. All pupils are aware of health and safety issues related to physical education and move equipment safely and efficiently. A key area of strength, developed within the pupils is their critical awareness of their own and other's performance. They evaluate the work of their peers and willingly give advice on how to improve. Also, they are good at evaluating their own performance, devising strategies to bring about personal improvement and explain the reasons for their decisions. For example, in gymnastics pupils are able to develop further their control and technique by adding sequencing, precision and consistency to their performance.

170. The percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades in GCSE is high in relation to national figures, whereas the number gaining A* and A grades has been low. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the higher attaining pupils currently studying for GCSE are addressing the under-performance at A* and A and are achieving highly. Grades are likely to improve as teachers have become more experienced, and developed effective methods of planning and delivery of lessons and the use of assessment strategies and feedback to cater for the highest attaining pupils in already highly attaining groups. For example, pupils are not only developing their skills and technique in personal performance but in coaching technique as well, where they are able to utilise good oral skills to modify and develop performance programmes for others.

171. Standards of work in the statutory non-GCSE physical education programme are high with pupils in the current Year 11 achieving highly in relation to national standards. For example, in health related fitness (HRF), pupils display not only high levels of oral response in relation to knowledge and understanding of the principles of HRF, but also advanced skills in

performance. They are able to evaluate and, as a result, develop and modify a performance through skilful and incisive evaluation. They are enabled to achieve this high standard through a combination of excellent teaching and good relationships with each other and their teacher.

172. Behaviour in physical education is never less than good and is often excellent. Pupils throughout the school have a very good attitude towards the subject. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are of the highest standards. Teachers are seen as excellent role models who motivate pupils and enable them to not only follow rules and procedures but also, when required, to act independently and take initiative and responsibility for their activities. The pupils are clearly motivated by the teachers' enthusiasm for their subject, their use of praise and the setting of individual targets. For example, on a very cold day on the netball courts, the attitude and behaviour of the pupils was very good. They had great enthusiasm for their activity and respect for the teacher. The very good teaching generated this.
173. Overall teaching is very good and at times excellent throughout the school. Strengths within teaching stem from an excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject and by thorough lesson planning and preparation. Challenging targets are set. For example, in Year 7 gymnastics a video of previous lessons was used to evaluate performance, identify strengths and areas for development and to set challenges to devise creative and innovative ideas to refine personal and group performance. Also, in many lessons the teachers make very good use of directed questions to extend the knowledge and understanding of pupils with different abilities within classes. For example, in a Year 11 GCSE lesson the teacher started the discussion with short knowledge-based factual questions and gradually increased the complexity of the questioning to extend pupils' understanding.
174. A distinctive and very strong feature of the teaching is the development of appropriate attitudes towards competition and co-operative activities. For example, this was demonstrated in a Year 7 netball lesson, where competitive games greatly encouraged skill and tactical development, as well as team play and an appreciation of the tactics of the opposition. This attitude was evident throughout the school and became highly developed at GCSE physical education coaching and skill development sessions.
175. All lessons observed exemplified the very good use of variety of activity, pace and the taking of opportunities by the teacher to underpin numeracy and literacy work. For example, a Year 11 HRF lesson highly motivated pupils through the pace and variety of the activities and the inclusion of numeracy and literacy skills to support their learning. Literacy skills were also highlighted in a Year 10 GCSE lesson and are included in reinforcing understanding of technical words and language in many Key Stage 3 lessons. All teachers set very high standards in ensuring the pupils are very clear of the expectations of lessons and the outcomes and targets to be achieved. To support this process they check the pupils' knowledge and prior understanding and within the lesson move constantly between individuals and groups to assist, prompt and challenge. This ensures pupils' learning is aided and progress is made in relation to the challenge set.
176. Leadership and management of the department are excellent. The head of department has clearly evaluated the department's strengths and areas for development and has a clear vision for the way forward. He provides commitment and inspiration and all members of the department support him by being excellent role models for pupils and first rate teachers. There is a determination, and a commitment, to not only maintain the high standards already achieved but, to strive for excellence in all areas of activity. This is despite the

constraining effects of very poor accommodation facilities for indoor activities. However, the caretaker keeps the current facilities up to a high standard of cleanliness and state of readiness for the teaching of the subject.

177. All teachers of physical education are aware of the strengths and areas for development within the curriculum and of pupils' previous performance. They know increasingly where and how improvements might be made and this is already having a positive impact on the performance of the higher attaining pupils. Areas in need of improvement and development, identified in the departmental development plan, are being effectively addressed. The department is addressing the issues it has identified in need of improvement and the department development plan is already addressing the issues in need of development. In addition the department provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and has achieved success in sporting fixtures against other schools, and gained county and international honours.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Standards, attainment and achievement throughout the school.
- Quality of teaching and learning.
- Quality of planning and schemes of work.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour and contribution to moral and social development.
- Contribution to the development of literacy skills.

Areas for improvement

- The provision and use of information and communication technology, to further develop the subject.
- Contribution to spiritual development by increasing planned opportunities for reflection and creative expression, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Contribution to cultural development by provision of visits to non-Christian communities and places of worship.
- Greater focus on the development of higher order skills in Year 9.

178. Standards, attainment and achievement in Years 7 to 9 are good, being above the expectations of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus. Standards, attainment and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are very good. All pupils receive their entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11 through a 'short' GCSE course, and some attend weekly extra-curricular sessions to enable them to be entered for the 'full' GCSE course in religious studies. Adherents to religions other than Christianity are able to follow GCSE courses related to their own faith backgrounds. In 2002, results for both the short and full course were well above the national average and pupils entered for the full course in 2002 generally performed better in religious studies than they did in some other subjects.
179. All sixth form students receive their entitlement to religious education through the daily programme of assemblies, an annual sixth form conference and the AS course in General Studies. Advanced level sociology students cover a unit on religion as part of their course. Numbers of students choosing to follow an A level course in religious studies have trebled in recent years and are continuing to increase.
180. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching is very good overall. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching is never less than good, and mainly very good. Teachers are specialists with excellent subject knowledge. They are articulate and provide clear explanations of complex

philosophical and theological ideas, using examples with which pupils can identify and draw on their own personal experience. They have high expectations and ask appropriately challenging questions in order to move pupils on to the next steps in their learning. They are responsive to the needs of individual pupils and the quality of relationships is excellent. Lessons take place in a relaxed but effective working atmosphere and move forward at a brisk pace with a clear sense of direction and purpose. There are clearly defined objectives and a variety of activities well matched to their realisation, although visual resources, including artefacts and videos, are under-used. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but more detailed written comments on the part of teachers would provide guidance as to how the quality of pupils' work could be further improved. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are regularly assessed in relation to assessment levels contained in the agreed syllabus and the levels are recorded in performance tables.

181. In Years 7 to 9 pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good overall and pupils learn effectively. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently excellent and they learn very effectively. The great majority of pupils are motivated, focused, confident and articulate in discussion and when responding to questions. Throughout the school, pupils take pride in their written work, which is detailed and accurate and shows secure knowledge and depth of understanding. Good progress is made in lessons. Pupils quickly grasp the meaning of new concepts and immediately use them appropriately. They show the capacity to retain newly acquired knowledge and understanding, and to relate it to previously acquired knowledge and understanding. Opportunities to act both as independent and collaborative learners are plentiful, and pupils demonstrate effective note-taking skills.
182. Religious education contributes effectively to the development of literacy skills. Pupils are provided with many opportunities for extended, empathetic and personal writing; and in Years 7 to 9 writing frames are sometimes used to structure written work. Opportunities to develop information and communication technology skills through the use of computers are very limited. This is a priority for development. Religious education makes highly effective contributions to moral and social development and effective contributions to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, although planned opportunities for reflection and creative expression identified in the scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 could be extended further. Since the school's previous inspection, annual visits to Lincoln Cathedral have been introduced for Year 7 pupils, and visits to Alford parish church and Walsingham for Year 10 students; but pupils still do not have the opportunity to visit non-Christian communities and places of worship.
183. Accommodation for the department is adequate, with one dedicated room featuring attractive displays of pupils' work. Recent spending on resources means that there are now sets of textbooks and artefacts related to all the major world faiths and the library contains a good selection of texts relevant to the modules being covered. The range of resources needs to be extended further to include posters, picture packs and CD ROMs. A classroom computer would provide opportunities to develop the use of information and communication technology in religious education, and the department hopes to purchase a projector for Powerpoint presentations and possibly an interactive whiteboard.
184. At the time of the inspection, the second in department was managing the department very effectively during the absence of the head of department who was on extended sick leave. The second in department is highly committed and has written detailed and effective medium-term plans for all years, characterised by an effective mix of 'systematic' and thematic' units. Helpful pupil guides are provided for those following GCSE courses. Activities identified for Year 9 within the scheme of work place too great an emphasis on the acquisition of basic knowledge and understanding rather than on the development of higher order skills, such as evaluation, explanation, analysis and synthesis. Effective systems for

monitoring and evaluation are in place. There have been significant improvements since the school's last inspection and areas of relative weakness have been effectively addressed.

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

In the inspection, 9 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	
		Scho ol	Engla nd	Scho ol	Engla nd	Scho ol	Engla nd
General Studies	1	100	77	-	19	1.00	1.92
Mathematics	1	100	62	-	15	1.00	1.51

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		Scho ol	Engla nd	Scho ol	Engla nd	Scho ol	Engla nd
Art and Design	3	100	96	33	46	4.67	6.57
Biology	6	83	88	17	34	3.67	5.25
Chemistry	4	100	90	25	43	5.50	5.90
English Literature	16	100	95	56	37	7.00	5.91
French	1	100	89	100	38	10.00	5.59
Full Design and Technology	2	100	91	50	30	7.00	5.38
General Studies	22	100	85	45	30	6.45	4.91
Geography	6	100	92	50	38	5.67	5.74
German	4	50	91	25	40	3.00	5.81
History	9	89	88	33	35	5.78	5.45
Mathematics	10	100	87	20	43	5.40	5.80
Music	5	100	93	20	35	5.60	5.74

Other Social Studies	8	100	87	50	34	7.25	5.30
Physics	7	100	88	29	40	6.29	5.67
Religious Studies	6	83	92	17	38	4.00	5.84
Sociology	11	100	86	91	35	8.36	5.32

Advanced GNVQ

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		Scho ol	Engla nd	Scho ol	Engla nd	Scho ol	Engla nd
Business	9	100	n/a	11	n/a	89	10.45

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Quality of teaching is very good.
- Standards achieved are high.
- Students' attitudes are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Marking commentaries on pupils' work.

185. In 2002 the standards achieved by four students at GCE A level A to B grades was lower than the 2001 national average, with only boy students achieving the higher grades. All students achieved a grade A to E in 2002, which was considerably above the national average for 2001.

186. Of all students who took AS level in 2002, a quarter achieved the higher grades. Five students did not achieve a grade. This represents satisfactory achievement in comparison with their predicted grades. Four students have returned to complete the A level course. A further two students have returned to retake their AS modules. Students currently studying A level mathematics are achieving very highly in lessons. Learning is rapid and secure.

187. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and experience effectively in teaching the methods and principles needed to approach standard problems in each of the modules studied. Students in Year 12 have made a most encouraging beginning to their AS studies. This is because teachers in their planning are building on prior attainment, and plan activities that reinforce students' knowledge and understanding. The teaching of mathematical methods is evident in students' work and is underpinned by the high quality of student's note-taking and supporting examples.

188. Where teachers challenge students about the various methods used to solve problems and why they work, students begin to evolve a greater insight into understanding how and why these methods do or do not work. This provides the teacher with a clear indication of what students' know and can do, and where they are uncertain. In all lessons students receive effective individual support, praise and encouragement. This enables them to consolidate their learning and move on with greater confidence. However, teachers currently do not make enough use of open-ended tasks or encourage students in independent research.

189. Although students' work is marked and assessed, written comments do not always suggest ways for a student to improve. With more in-depth marking the resulting assessment would enable students to be made more aware of their weaknesses and how they should go about improving. However, discussion in class does much to dispel any major issues a student may have. The department has begun to analyse assessment information on each student and is able to set points score targets for them to reach in the forthcoming examinations. This enables students to set themselves targets to achieve.

190. The enthusiasm shown by all the teachers of the subject has a considerable impact on students and their attitude to learning, which is often excellent. Students are attentive, work well together, support and help each other. Lessons are challenging with high expectations because teachers are very experienced and use their excellent subject knowledge effectively to create interesting and stimulating lessons. This motivates students to learn.

191. The overall leadership and management of this phase of the subject are very good. Teachers share their expertise and are experienced practitioners. Resources for the teaching of AS and A level are good and used well. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

In science the focus was on biology and chemistry, but students' physics work was sampled. In A level physics, examination results are in line with national standards. The impact of teaching on the students learning and progress was judged to be good.

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- Support for students' learning in lessons and through assessment.
- The degree of challenge offered students of different abilities.
- Relationships between the teacher and students.
- Subject expertise.

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology in lessons.
- Access to the library and information and communication technology facilities for private study.
- Teaching time should be increased in order to cover the syllabus.

192. The GCE A level results in 2002 were good although the number of students was small. There was an increase in the proportion of students gaining an A grade compared with 2001. Students achieve well at A level. In the AS examination in 2002 all except one student passed. The majority of AS students go on to take the full A level after two years. Boy and girl students perform equally well.

193. Standards of work seen were high. Students in Year 12 were able to describe the shape of an oxyhaemoglobin dissociation curve and to explain the effect on the curve of an increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide, linked with the need for haemoglobin to release oxygen in tissues which are respiring at a high rate. Students showed a reasonable level of

practical skills, for example, when using a microscope to study the distribution of different tissues in a pine leaf. The lack of access to information and communication technology facilities in the department limited students' use of spreadsheets to display and analyse experimental results, to log data and to access relevant web sites for information.

194. Students in Year 13 were working at a high level. They were able to demonstrate a good understanding of biochemical pathways when studying the breakdown of protein to form urea in the liver. They were able to make connections with other aspects of the subject, for example, linking the structure of cholesterol with the action of bile as an emulsifier when breaking down fats. Year 13 students were able to answer questions well and to formulate their own, following a line of an argument and demonstrating a high level of responsibility for their own learning.

195. Teaching overall is very good. The teacher has an infectious enthusiasm for the subject, conveyed to students, and excellent subject knowledge. Teaching is supplemented by fieldwork. Planning is very good and resources are used to good effect. Teaching is very efficient with little wasted time. Nevertheless teaching is rushed due to the low time allocation for teaching the subject and this impacts adversely on students' learning. Oral work is very good in lessons with in-depth questioning developing students' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The teacher has high expectations, which results in good quality work from students. Assessment is effective with students being given good feedback on the strengths, weaknesses and areas for development in their work. Students respond very well in lessons. They are well motivated and have an excellent relationship with their teacher and an enthusiasm for the subject. Students are confident and have a positive approach to learning being prepared to follow up their own ideas during private study. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

196. Leadership is good. Links with the examination board and access to relevant websites enables the head of subject to keep up to date with developments and to use this knowledge to the benefit of his students. Teaching methods are reviewed and adapted to suit the demands of students. Resources are well organised and used to good effect. The technician provides good support for the teacher and students. Each student is set minimum target grades based on their GCSE performance and ongoing monitoring of student performance against these targets is good.

CHEMISTRY

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

Strengths

- Standards achieved are high.
- Teaching is good.
- Provision is good and the department well resourced.
- Leadership and management are good providing a clear educational direction to bring about further improvements.

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Areas for improvement

- Procedures for assessment of students work and the use of assessment to inform students of their targets and how to achieve them.
- The use of assessment data to guide teachers' planning.
- Increase the number of students attaining A to C grades thereby narrowing the range of attainment at AS and A level.

197. There have been considerable variations in the A level results over the last five years but

the pass rates for the last two years has been 100 per cent which is higher than the national average. The distribution of grades is considerably wider than expected for a school of this type but the higher attaining students are attaining the grades expected of them. There is some underachievement by those of average and below average attainment. The A level results over the last few years do not reveal any clear pattern of underachievement by boys or girls.

198. The standard of work of the Year 13 A level student was well above the national average and the standards of the small group of AS students were slightly above those nationally. Students are making good progress and achieving well, particularly this term since the appointment of the new head of chemistry. Those in Year 12 can explain fully the reaction mechanism for the electrophilic addition of alkenes. In all the lessons observed the level of challenge was consistently high; the teacher setting and maintaining high expectations. The Year 13 student is able to explain the formation of diazonium salts from phenylamine at low temperatures. Progress in the use of information and communication technology is satisfactory. Opportunities to use information and communication technology are rare although students are encouraged to make use of computers when undertaking their assignments. The role and scope of the use of computers in AS and A level chemistry is not yet an integral part of the provision and in particular the use of spreadsheets for analysing data is an important area for development.
199. Teaching is good overall and students benefit from the very high quality teacher explanations; always characterised by excellent teacher subject knowledge and probing questions that build upon the students' existing knowledge and understanding. Added relevance is provided by references to industrial and commercial applications of the chemical processes being studied. High quality open questioning requiring speculation and explanations are extremely effective in deepening and extending students' scientific understanding. Students acquire good presentational skills and the pace of lessons is appropriately high. The relationships between teacher and students are such that the students feel well supported but are sufficiently secure and confident to accept high challenges and apply previously learned concepts to new or unfamiliar situations. They are sufficiently curious to ask their own questions.
200. Until recently the assessment of students' work has been a weakness. The use of constructive marking comments to guide students on how to improve and the use of assessment to inform teacher planning represent weaknesses that the new head of department has begun to address.
201. The quality of students' learning is generally high. They benefit from effective use of models and analogies to clarify particularly difficult, abstract ideas. Students are extremely motivated and show a very good response to the carefully planned tasks and questions demanded of them. Their behaviour is very good at all times, they are supportive of each other and sustain high levels of concentration that contribute substantially to their good progress. Students now feel much better supported than previously when staffing problems adversely affected the levels of support given to them.
202. The department is now well led and managed since the appointment of the new head of chemistry in January 2003. He is well aware of how to address the important issues relating to assessment and the use of information and communication technology and has a clear view of the actions required to effect these improvements. He is well aware of the need to increase the uptake of the subject Post-16 and is currently evolving plans to make the subject more popular at Key Stages 3 and 4 including forging links with external agencies such as universities and industrial companies.
203. A programme of lesson observations to monitor and evaluate the teaching of the subject in

GCSE courses and at Key Stage 3 is planned for the coming year. Time allocations for AS and A level chemistry are small compared with those of other schools and colleges but taken in conjunction with the very small numbers involved and the encouragement given to independent working, the students overall benefit from an adequate provision. The department is well resourced and the capitation allowance for the subject is sufficient to purchase any items of equipment required. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision in design and technology is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently very good.
- Students achieve high standards.
- The numbers of Post-16 students studying the subject is steadily increasing.

Areas for improvement

- Computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture resources are dated and limited in capability and there are insufficient information and communication technology resources within the subject to support study at AS and A level.
- There is insufficient curriculum time allocated to the subject in Year 13 and timetable clashes further reduce the time that some students are able to spend on the subject.
- There is insufficient technical support time for the subject.

204. Over recent years very few students have opted to study the subject in the sixth form. In 2001, one student gained a grade B and the other gained a grade C at A level. In 2002 the A level student gained a grade B. These results were above national average as were those of the AS students in 2002. Girls, although few in number, achieve at least as well as boys. Currently, there are 6 students in Year 13 and 7 in Year 12.

205. The standards of work seen during the inspection are above the national average. Students demonstrate good knowledge of materials and processes, and sensitivity in their use when designing. In Year 13, students are compiling design folders of a high standard and making very good progress. They produce a range of high quality illustrations in a variety of media. Some very impressive use is made of Pro desk top software for computer-aided design such as the excellent illustrations for an electric motor control unit and an associated Gant chart for production. However, poor access to this design tool limits attainment within the group.

206. Year 12 students also demonstrate good knowledge of the subject. They are confident in their use of a range of materials including brass, aluminium, fibreglass, plywood and steel. They are able to describe alternative solutions to problems such as adapting a bolt to become a fixing between oval tube and a wooden plinth, or using a keyway to fix a gear wheel to a shaft so that it will slide sideways.

207. Teaching is very good. Teacher subject knowledge is secure across all areas of the subject. Students respond very well to the enthusiasm of the teacher and his lively, pleasant and respectful manner with them. Lessons are well-planned and supportive artefacts gathered to illustrate and explain. Expectations of students are high and students are constantly encouraged to work hard and quickly. An effective feature is the way in which the teacher ensures that every student considers what they need to do before the

next practical lesson, in order to avoid wasting any time. The use of targeted questioning is a strength and students are challenged to clarify and extend their thinking. Individuals are well supported in their learning and a stimulating learning atmosphere is generated for all students.

208. Students respond well; they are genuinely excited about their work in the subject and enjoy their studies. They are very willing to participate and are on task throughout lessons. They discuss and question intelligently and confidently, such as the Year 13 students who debated the design issues surrounding the Sinclair C5 electric car. Their notes and designs are technically correct and well presented. They learn quickly and apply their learning with skill and precision. Year 12 and Year 13 students have developed skills in removing waste accurately; one student devised an effective solution to producing a batch of large radius curves in acrylic by fixing a router to a long, pivoting arm.
209. Design and Technology is adequately resourced with hand and machine tools. The workshop is a good size and the adjacent clean room is a great asset. Post-16 study is limited by the lack of modern equipment for computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture. Similarly, the computers within the department are insufficient in number and specification. There is insufficient curriculum time allocated to the subject in Year 13 and timetable clashes further reduce the time that some students are able to spend on the subject. A technician is available two mornings each week. There is insufficient technical time to support the subject.
210. The head of department provides a clear vision for the subject and is succeeding in raising the profile of the subject across the school. He arranges resources and staff well. A department improvement plan is in place and is effective in raising standards. The learning environment is inviting and stimulating. Matters of health and safety receive prompt attention and are dealt with effectively. All courses are well managed. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

BUSINESS STUDIES

The quality of provision in business studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards are good and students achieve well.
- The teaching of the subject is very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- The way the subject promotes independent learning.

Areas for improvement

- More specialist accommodation is needed.

211. Standards overall are very high. In 2001, the most recent year for which national comparisons may be made, results were well above the national average. Of the ten candidates entered eight passed with distinction. These results were similar to those achieved in previous years. In 2002 14 students achieved the double AVCE award with 86 per cent A to C grades. Of four students who took the single award three achieved A to B grades.
212. Evidence from lesson observations and the scrutiny of students' work in Years 12 and 13 shows high levels of attainment. Students have a good understanding of business concepts. They use business terminology very confidently in both oral and written communication. In a lesson following a visit to a local engineering firm, Year 12 students

used specialist vocabulary in discussing the features of this particular company. On a number of occasions their ability to apply what they have learned to their case studies involving real organisations was particularly strong. In their investigations students are sensitive to the potentially different perspectives of businesses and their customers. Year 13 students dealing with customer service issues showed a critical awareness in evaluating the policies of a number of companies from the standpoint of their customers.

213. Students have very good numeracy skills and can interpret financial data relevant to business activity. In a Year 13 lesson, for example, students showed a good understanding of the different elements in a financial statement. They then undertook a challenging task requiring them to turn a trial balance into a profit and loss account for a business partnership. They were also able to cite the relevant legislation applying to a business organisation of this type such as the Companies Act 1985 and the Partnership Act of 1890.
214. In lessons and in their individual assignments students achieve well and make very good progress. The subject caters effectively for students with a wide range of prior attainment and experience. Although some students have studied business studies before entering the sixth form while others have not, very good teaching and careful planning ensures that everyone is able to succeed. More gifted students have good opportunities to work to their full potential. Students' attitudes to the subject are excellent and their effort and commitment are very good. Their studies in the sixth form often encourage them to apply to study business related courses at university.
215. The development of the students' personal and learning skills is very good. Many assignments require students to show considerable initiative in organising their research. They take responsibility for negotiating entry to the companies involved some of which are located a significant distance from the school. In a Year 12 lesson, for example, a student was planning for an interview with the human resources manager in a firm where she is also employed on a part-time basis while others in the class were engaged in research using the Internet. By the time they reach Year 13 students have had a very good experience of the work of a range of business organisations using a variety of research techniques. Their mastery of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is impressive.
216. The way the subject promotes independent learning is a particular strength. Two-thirds of the students' final assessment is based on coursework tasks. They become very effective in evaluating their own learning using the appropriate criteria. They make very good use of their time and work well to deadlines.
217. The students' achievements and the quality of their learning are the result of very good teaching. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge and the planning underpinning the work of the department is excellent. Teachers have high expectations and have a very good awareness of what students need to do to succeed. Assessment criteria are highlighted whenever new tasks are introduced and students know what is required to achieve the higher grades. The policy of entering students for external assessments at a relatively early stage in the course builds confidence well. The regular monitoring of individual's progress is excellent and records of contacts between students and teachers are detailed and informative. Teachers have a realistic approach to the development of students' learning with the aim of giving them increasing independence within a reasonably tight framework.
218. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department provides clear direction and has a very good understanding of the strengths of the subject and areas for further development. The impact of the teaching is monitored and evaluated systematically, leading to a very good awareness of the strengths of the subject, and the identification of appropriate priorities for further improvement. The range of learning

resources is good and the building of links with local industry and commerce is rightly seen as key priority. Access to information and communication technology is also good.

219. The accommodation available for the teaching of the subject is good in some respects, but more specialist accommodation is needed especially as the subject is also popular outside the sixth form.

220. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. High standards have been maintained and new syllabus requirements have been accommodated successfully. The subject continues to be a strength of the school and seemed a natural choice when the decision was made to apply for specialist status in business and enterprise.

HUMANITIES

221. The focus was on geography and history. In addition several lessons were sampled in sociology and psychology. Both are very popular sixth form subjects. In sociology results are well above average. Teaching is very good and because of this students learn very effectively and achieve consistently very high standards. In psychology results are also well above average. Teaching is very good and engages students in their learning. Because of the very good teaching in both subjects and students' excellent attitudes they are able to make very good progress.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Results at A level are above the national average and improving.
- Teaching is consistently good with many strengths.
- The progress that students make because of the good teaching and their very good attitudes.
- Assessment procedures and students' self-knowledge of their learning.
- Good, well planned and structured courses.

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject.
- Provision for gifted and talented students.

222. The GCE A level examination results for 2001 were above the national average with a high percentage of A and B grades. The results in the most recent examination in 2002 exceeded these with an increase in the percentage of A and B grades that is likely to be well above the national average once comparative data is available. The school's performance data indicates that the majority of students achieve well against their prior attainment. There is no significant difference between the attainment of female and male students.

223. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average. The majority of students are making very good progress in all modules of the course. Full notes are kept in well-ordered files. Essays and other work show a good breadth and depth of knowledge of understanding of the Tudor period. Students have good analytical skills and are able to select and use historical information to support well-structured arguments both in essays and discussion. They have a good understanding of relative concepts and historiography and are able to use appropriate vocabulary effectively in investigating historical questions.

224. In Year 12, standards of work seen are above average and the majority of students are making good progress in their study of twentieth century Russian history. Knowledge and understanding of post revolutionary Russia is developing and higher attaining students have an appropriate grasp of communist ideology and its application. Written work is of a high standard though a number of students are reluctant to air and exchange views in questioning and discussion. In both years gifted and talented students make good progress, though they would benefit from the regular provision of more challenging learning activities, such as the reading and analysis of a greater range of historical texts.
225. Teaching is consistently good and in some lessons it is very good. A key feature of this very good teaching is well-paced lessons that include skilled, wide-ranging questioning which challenges students and enables them to think for themselves and deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 13 lesson on Mary's problems in restoring Catholicism in England where students were able to discuss confidently and at length the issues of compromise or force in achieving this. In all lessons teachers have very high expectations and secure subject knowledge and this enables students to feel well supported and gain in confidence. Occasionally too much is planned for the short single lessons and students themselves feel that there is insufficient time for reflection or consolidation of their learning and this often leads to lost time in going over work from a previous lesson. Though teachers usually plan well and set clear learning objectives for the lesson, these are sometimes not explicitly shared with students which can lead to a lack of clarity about what they are expected to learn. A very good contribution is made to the teaching of literacy skills but very little use is made of information and communication technology within lessons and this was the case at the time of the previous inspection.
226. The majority of students acquire very good learning skills. They are expected by their teachers to become confident, independent learners. The learning is very good because of this good teaching but also because students have outstanding attitudes to their work. They are mature, considered, articulate and highly motivated. They usually participate well in lessons, though this was more evident in Year 13, and are diligent and conscientious and apply themselves fully to any task set. A significant factor in the progress that students are able to make is the high order literacy skills that the majority of students bring to their lessons and are able to develop further through their study of the subject.
227. AS and A level modular courses are being developed and are well selected and planned to build on earlier learning. Teachers know the students well and procedures for assessing their attainment and progress are very good. High quality written feedback in the marking of work and the use of examination criteria contributes effectively to students' own very good self-knowledge of their learning and how to improve. However, there is some inconsistency within the department in relation to quality of feedback and the regularity of use of some recently implemented departmental procedures.
228. This is a relatively new department. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear vision of what needs to be achieved and central to this is the raising of standards. Targets for improvement are mostly appropriate. Good use is made of prior attainment data to negotiate challenging targets with students and these are regularly reviewed. Examination results are analysed though more attention should be paid to the analysis of trends and attainment by gender. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored though there needs to be more sharing of good practice. The provision of a handbook will help to formalise practice and achieve a more consistent approach. Learning resources are only adequate at present and particularly deficient in the availability of a good range of textbooks. However, there is a realistic plan to make further provision.
229. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the most recent examination results indicate further improvement. There is strong and determined

leadership to secure higher standards in the future. The use of information and communication technology was an issue at the time of the last inspection and now needs to be addressed with some urgency.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards at A level are above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students make good progress due to good use of resources.
- Teachers help students to improve by giving them helpful feedback.
- Students learn well because they enjoy the subject and are clear about what they are learning.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the take up of the subject.

230. Overall, results achieved at A level are just above the national average. In 2002 all students achieved a pass at A level with two-thirds gaining grades A to C. Results in Year 12 at AS level were below expectations in 2002 and a number of students chose not to continue to take A level in geography. The school failed to meet its targets for AS grades. The numbers of students in each year group are small making comparisons from one year to another difficult.

231. Standards of work produced by the current students in Year 13 are above average. They are achieving well in their lessons. One high achieving student discriminated well between different types of hazards and classified them correctly. In one of the lessons seen, students defined terms associated with volcanic activity accurately and articulated the difficulties associated with predicting when earthquakes might happen. All students use geographical terms confidently and manage a wide range of geographical information well.

232. Students in Year 12 are making good progress in most lessons. In one of the lessons observed, students made very effective use of their knowledge about locations when identifying places on a world map for patterns of refugee migration. They responded well to challenging questions showing a good strategic overview of the causes of migration together with a good awareness of the cultural factors that affect the quality of life for migrants.

233. The quality of teaching is good overall, with many strong features. Students learn well as a result. The main strengths of the teaching include effective use of subject knowledge so that the teacher explains geographical processes clearly and builds new learning on what students already know. Students are encouraged to be actively involved in their learning by undertaking geographical enquiries. The teacher shows an enthusiasm for geography and ensures that students know what they are to learn. Students are expected to work hard and to use geographical terms correctly.

234. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the examination requirements at both AS and A level and provides students with very detailed feedback on their progress in meeting these. Marking is up-to-date and relates directly to the aims of the lesson. Students learn well because they know what they must do to improve. Many students have very full and thorough folders of notes and show a commitment to hard work.

235. The subject is well lead and provides a curriculum at AS and A level, which is well balanced and builds on the students' prior learning. The topics chosen are relevant and up to date, and good reference is made to current information from websites and other sources. The short lessons can hinder extended analysis so that the students need to undertake much private study at home. They also overcome the difficulty of accessing computer facilities during lessons by using them in their own time. The groups in geography are small and the department has sensibly begun to survey student opinion to find ways to encourage more students to choose the subject in the future. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

236. The focus was English literature and French. A double lesson in German was sampled. Literacy across the curriculum was also sampled in the sixth form. Students bring to their AS and A level studies a range of highly developed and sophisticated skills in reading and writing that enable them to meet the demands of their curriculum. In English, science and history students are required to read and research their chosen subjects and they carry out this work to a high standard. In science students write monographs and are invited to express their opinions in depth and detail in mathematics. The library supports students' wider reading well, with a range of attractive periodicals across a range of subjects which students regularly consult. In English and mathematics students keep accurate and detailed notes, in which they take a pride and which help them both in revision and in English in particular in writing detailed essays. Throughout the sixth form students are confident and articulate in expressing their opinions.

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English literature at AS and A level is **excellent**.

Strengths

- Standards are high.
- Teaching is rigorous, stimulating and highly focused on the requirements of the examination syllabus.
- Expectations of students are very high and they respond with commitment and enthusiasm.
- Teachers know their students' capacities and individual potential and are conscientious in addressing their individual needs.

Areas for improvement

- None at present.

237. The proportion of students attaining the higher grades at A Level English Literature rose markedly in 2001, with a quarter of students attaining an A grade. Since 1999 the overall average point score for students taking English Literature at A Level had not differed significantly from national averages, but in 2001 the school's results were much better than those attained nationally. Data for making comparisons between school and national results at A Level in 2002 was not available at the time of the inspection, but the school's

own data indicates that a slightly smaller proportion of pupils attained the highest grades than was the case last year. However, the small size of the cohorts involved means comparisons of results year on year need to be treated with caution.

238. Standards of attainment in lessons and in the work seen in the inspection are very high in Year 12 and often excellent in Year 13. Students are able to distinguish confidently between the viewpoint of an author and the viewpoint of a character, whether in a novel, play or poem. For example, a student writing about the servant Nelly's conventional, Victorian view of Catherine's death in 'Wuthering Heights' made it clear that Emily Bronte was exposing very precisely the limitations of such a view. Such critical analysis is often very well expressed, with students drawing on a wide vocabulary to make apt and relevant commentary. Writing about Larkin's poetry a student describes his 'impassive stance' and the significant contribution made to the tone of his writing by his choices of 'colloquial metaphor'.
239. At both AS and A level students are taught thoroughly and well the skills of filleting examination questions and extracting the essentials – as a result even less able students address examination questions purposefully and relevantly, wasting little time in digression or generalisation. There is a marked improvement between Year 12 and Year 13 in how students start their essays, giving way to much more succinct and focused explanation to the reader of the direction that the argument expressed in the essay is to take.
240. Similarly good progress is made between Years 12 and 13 in students' capacity to use argument to good effect, to cite textual references and to avoid retelling the plot at the expense of critical commentary. Students supplement teaching with extensive independent research, bringing to their studies in class good understandings of social and historical context which they apply in their reading, for example, when considering the social standing of characters in Chaucer's Prologue. They are thoroughly well versed in the texts that they study, showing an impressive knowledge of the details of plot, characterisation and theme.
241. Although on occasion students, particularly those in Year 12, are reluctant to tackle issues of language without direct prompting from teachers, they nevertheless are competent critics, for example, recognising Chaucer's depiction of the youngest son in the tale of the Pardoner as the deliberate subversion of an archetype.
242. Students' written work on occasion shows a similarity of interpretation, particularly when working on poetry. In lessons it is clear that some pupils are very confident in articulating responses that do not match those of their teachers. They in turn, while always conscientiously seeking to find out the views of their students through questioning, do not always promote opportunities for disagreement, or openly approve of challenge. Many students are developing an independence of taste and judgement; more could be encouraged to do so.
243. The quality of teaching and of learning in the sixth form is very good or excellent. The pace of learning is very fast and students rise well to the challenge that this presents. Teachers are able to maintain this pace in part because lessons are well planned and thoughtfully structured, but also because pupils are committed to their studies and willingly complete substantial assignments for homework. They come to lessons well prepared. For example, a Year 13 group was required to paraphrase part of Chaucer's Prologue, read it aloud, provide close annotation of the paraphrased section, identify and explain key quotations, summarise and explain relevant critical theories and relate these to their own reading of the text. Students carried out this assignment conscientiously, providing in particular some lively paraphrases that captured some of the irreverence of the original.
244. Teachers are skilled in using questions to squeeze out from pupils increasingly more

accurate, focused and measured responses to their reading. In a Year 12 lesson this resulted in rapid progress, particularly for boys, who responded particularly well to this demanding – but gentle – teaching style. By the end of the lesson, they were able to cite textual references without being prompted, and moved much more briskly from making a point to offering a developed explanation of it.

245. A particular strength of teaching is the effort that teachers put into maintaining students' self-confidence while correcting misconceptions as they arise. Students struggling to discriminate between the viewpoint of Chaucer the pilgrim and Chaucer the narrator were guided tactfully to a better understanding but maintained confidence in the validity of their own viewpoint. Teachers are equally tactful and thorough in their marking of students' work. Both essays and notes are marked with the former assessed in considerable depth. Students are very appreciative of the fast turnaround their teachers achieve in marking their work and also of the detailed and constructive commentaries that they received. Teachers are seen by students to be approachable and ready to discuss work, for example, during lunch times.

246. Where teaching is a little less than excellent, it is because provision for the most able students in lessons is not always sufficient to ensure that they are learning as rapidly as they might. On occasion such students have to wait during question and answer sessions for other students to catch up, which inhibits their progress.

247. Students' attitude to the subject makes a positive contribution to the quality of their learning. They come to lessons well prepared and are highly motivated and conscientious in completing their work. In interviews during the inspection they spoke with the warmest appreciation both of their enjoyment of the subject and of the quality of teaching that they consistently receive; the evidence from the inspection confirms their judgements. Leadership is very good and progress made since the last inspection is good.

FRENCH

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

Strengths

- The teaching is very good.
- Planning and resources are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Variations in the quality of students' oral French in Year 13.
- Basic grammar in Year 12 work.

248. Standards of work seen during the inspection are good in Year 13. Understanding of both spoken and written French is good. A variety of registers are employed and the students are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and structures. Highly relevant and authentic materials are used to stimulate discussion and written work. Contemporary film, related website material and other good sources are provided for the students enabling them to use sophisticated French. Within the small group of students there is a range of confidence in oral work from very good to satisfactory. Students are able to put across their ideas despite some errors in communication. The topic of racism was of interest to the students who expressed mature opinions. Progress in the lesson observed was good.

249. In Year 12 the student was keen and worked hard but struggled with some concepts of grammar and vocabulary. The student is very willing and positive. Good progress was made in the lesson observed.

250. The teaching is very good. There is extensive use of the target language and students were challenged by it. They thereby develop good listening skills. The pace of the lessons is very good and the careful planning makes the use of all four skills seamless. Good questioning enables the students to try and respond using the new vocabulary and concepts acquired. Homework is carefully linked to the work set in class.
251. Students enjoy their work and are keen to succeed. They benefit from an intense professional relationship with their teacher because of the small class sizes. They are encouraged to research using contemporary sources. They are aware of the demands of the course and the standards expected in order to achieve their target grades.
252. Management of the sixth form French course is very good. Work is thoroughly prepared and the teacher has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of all students and is committed to working with them and for them so that they can achieve as high a grade as possible.
253. Over recent years the results have been good but the numbers taking the subject are too low to provide valid evidence about standards in relation to national expectations.
254. Time allocation for A level is low, as numbers taking languages Post-16 are very low. Other timetable commitments mean that one of the Year 13 French double lessons is disrupted by two students having to go to another class. To a certain extent this is compensated for by the use of the French assistant.
255. During the inspection one lesson of Year 12 German was observed. This class had one student. The lesson was well planned. The use of the target language was extensive and enabled the student to learn new vocabulary and concepts. An appropriate video clip of asylum seekers was shown in the lesson observed. Although the student was tentative in the use of German, the progress made in the lesson was very good. There was a clear link between the theme of the lesson and the grammatical work that ensued from it. Progress made since the last inspection is good.