

INSPECTION REPORT

HESSLE HIGH SCHOOL

Hessle

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118074

Headteacher: Mr. David Rose

Reporting inspector: Mr. David Bate
1545

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 27th September 2002

Inspection number: 249730

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 18 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
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Date of previous inspection:	25 November 1996

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24894	Clive Petts	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
20825	Brian Ogden	Team inspector	Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
28101	Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	History Business education Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hessle High School is a community comprehensive school educating boys and girls from 11 – 18 yrs. There are currently 1373 students on roll (196 in the sixth form). The school is very popular with parents and is heavily over-subscribed. The school occupies two sites, approximately a mile apart, to the west of Hull near the Humber Bridge. Years 7 and 8 are taught on the Boothferry site and Years 9 – 13 are taught on the Heads Lane site. The school serves a socially mixed catchment area with 69% of students coming from the local primary schools in the Hessle area and 31% coming from outside the locality – mainly West Hull. There is a comprehensive intake, with 117 students having special educational needs (SEN) and 16 in receipt of a statement of need. The number of students receiving free school meals has reduced significantly over the past 3 years and is currently 7%. The students are from predominantly White British backgrounds with only 1.09% of students coming from other ethnic groups. Three students speak English as an additional language although they are all fluent English speakers. Attendance rates are above the national average for secondary schools. Attainment levels on entry in 2001 were broadly in line with national averages in English and science but below average in mathematics, these levels have improved over recent years. The school has been awarded the government's Charter Mark for a second time in 2002, a School Achievement Award in 2001, a Schools' Curriculum Award in 1997, a Sportsmark Award in 1999 and 2002 and the International School Award in 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Students receive a good education which has many very good features. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Students are very positive about learning and behave very well. There are very good relationships throughout the school. Overall standards at the age of 14 are above the national average and they are in line with the average at the age of 16 for this cohort of students. The school adds good value to students' achievement as they move through the Key Stages. Leadership provided by the headteacher is very good and management is good overall. There are very good financial and budgetary procedures in place. The provision of extra curricular activities is very good. The school is giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good leadership by the headteacher
- High proportions of good quality teaching and learning
- The shared commitment by the whole school community to continuing improvement in provision and standards.
- Creates a very good climate for learning
- Very good students' attitudes and behaviour towards learning
- Very good relationships throughout the school
- Improvement of boys' achievement overall
- Good support and care for students

What could be improved

- More consistent use of assessment data by departments to set achievable goals for all students
- More focussed checking of teaching and learning within departments to highlight, inform and spread good classroom practice
- Ensure delegated management responsibilities are applied consistently to further develop middle management and continue to improve classroom practice.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in improving standards of attainment and progress. Levels of attendance have improved significantly and are now above the national average. Good progress has been made in raising GCSE examination performance in all subjects, although some subjects are still below the national average. The National Curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) has been implemented and the school systematically monitors students' access to and use of ICT. The school now provides sufficient time to implement fully the National Curriculum for physical education (PE). Religious education (RE) is now provided in the sixth form. The school's assessment procedures and data relating to students attainment and progress have been drawn together by senior management. This data has been analysed in detail by senior managers but is not yet consistently used by all teachers and departments to ensure more accurate target setting and effective departmental development planning. Key Stage 3 assessment data and attendance rates are now provided to parents through the prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report to parents. The school still does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship but the overall provision for students' spiritual development, especially in curriculum areas, has improved and is now good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	D	C	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A levels/AS levels	B	B	B		

At the age of 16 years in 2001, the overall attainment of students in the GCSE examinations in terms of average points scored was average in comparison with all schools and when compared with those of similar schools. For students achieving 5 or more grades A* - C, the school was average in comparison with all schools and in comparison with similar schools. In 2001 GCSE examination results in business studies, double award science, English Literature and German were above the national average for those students achieving passes at grades at A* - C. Results were weakest in art and design, design and technology, French, geography, ICT, history and mathematics. In relation to these students' prior attainment at age 14 in 1999, the schools results were above those of similar schools, clearly indicating that the school is adding good value to student's achievements. The trend of improvement over the period 1998-2001 is above the national trend. Unvalidated results for 2002 clearly indicate even further improvements. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above those expected nationally in English, science, music, PE and RE. Standards seen in all other subjects were in line with national expectations.

At the age of 14 years in 2001, students' overall results in the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics were above average in comparison with all schools and when compared with similar schools attaining Level 5+. Results in science were average on both comparators. When compared with similar schools attaining Level 6+, English and mathematics were above average whilst science was similar to these schools. The trends in English, mathematics and science show improvement overall. The trend overall based on average points scores was above that nationally. Unvalidated results for 2002 clearly indicate further improvements overall. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics, science, literacy, ICT, PE and RE. They were in line with expectations in numeracy, art, design technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages and music. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress throughout the school.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. All students' consistently display very good attitudes to learning. Attitudes have improved since the last inspection and are a strength of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Students' behaviour in classrooms is generally good. It is very good around the school in corridors and communal areas. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good and all students take advantage of the many planned opportunities for personal development.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

Exclusions are rare. The students really enjoy coming to the school. Students have mutual respect for each other. Ethnic minority students are well integrated into the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching is good throughout the school, with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching and this underpins the standards achieved by students. Teaching is very good in English, science, music and PE. Teachers have very good subject knowledge in the vast majority of subjects. There is good quality lesson planning and teachers have a good understanding of how students learn. Teachers have good relationships with students and treat them respectfully; they respond very well. Teachers organise and manage students well so that lessons start promptly with students listening and ready to work. In most lessons teachers are good at assessing the work students are doing, giving them advice and setting further challenges. Some teachers also do this very well in their marking, which is informative and encouraging, and helps students understand how well they are doing. However, in some subjects marking is perfunctory and unhelpful. Teachers use maximum encouragement and appropriate praise. Teachers have high expectations of students and most students have a good grasp of the standards they are reaching. Most teachers use effective strategies to promote thinking skills and independent learning. The use of homework is generally good. The quality of teaching and learning for students with special educational needs is good and gives rise to good progress and standards relative to students' previous attainment. Teaching of literacy in lessons is beginning to be effective and have an impact in many departments, but the teaching of numeracy in other subjects is in much earlier stages.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good provision is made to meet the academic, vocational, personal and social needs of the students. Extra curricular provision is very effectively linked to curriculum aims.
Provision for students with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for students on the special educational needs register.
Provision for students with English as an additional	The school makes good provision for the very small number of students for whom English is an additional language. They are fully included in all

language	aspects of school life.
Aspect	Comment
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for students' spiritual development is good. Provision for moral and social education is very good. Cultural education is good. The school provides very well for students' personal development.
How well the school cares for its students	The school has good procedures for child protection and very good procedures for: ensuring the welfare of students, monitoring and promoting attendance. The school has introduced good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress but these have not yet been consistently implemented by all of the departments.

There is a thorough Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme which contributes greatly to the personal development of students. The systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are now well established and are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership, vision and educational direction for the school. Delegation of management responsibilities is sound, but is not yet consistently linked to the development of middle managers or classroom practice.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Other than providing a daily act of worship, the governors fulfil their other responsibilities well. They are enthusiastic about promoting the interests of the school and are taking an important part in shaping its direction. The governing body is actively engaged in steering development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision are good. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, including direct observation in classrooms, are satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good strategic use of its resources, including teachers.

A major strength of the school is the shared commitment by the whole school community to continuing improvement in provision and standards. There are rigorous financial procedures in place to ensure efficient and prudent fiscal control. The school rigorously applies the principles of best value when making spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The high expectations of the school• The good teaching• The good progress that their children make at the school• The school is well managed and led• The good behaviour of the students• The school helps the children to become mature and responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework given to their children

The inspection agrees with all of the numerous positive comments made by the parents at the pre-inspection meeting and with the positive reaction to the questionnaires. On the question of homework, which is always a contentious item, the team feels that homework, generally, is satisfactory and complies with the homework programme prepared by the school. However, there are some inconsistencies of approach and application which could be improved.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Sixth form provision is provided as part of a long and well-established consortium with 3 other large secondary schools dating back to 1987. There are 196 students in the sixth form, above the national average. Numbers have increased by 25% over the last four years. There are 104 males and 92 females. The majority of students in the sixth form are those continuing from Year 11, but 3 have come from other schools. 1 student has special educational needs. The students are from predominantly White British backgrounds. The number of students receiving free school meals has reduced significantly over the past 3 years and reflects the main school. The sixth form provides a good range of AS, A level, vocational courses at Advanced and Intermediate levels and AVCE. There are opportunities for students to re-take GCSE mathematics and English. There is a recommended entry policy of 5 A*-C grades. In 2002, 37 out of 56 students entered higher education, 7 students returned to school to further their education before entering university, 9 students entered full-time employment and 3 students gained entry to colleges of further education. Attendance rates are monitored carefully and are satisfactory.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

At the time of the last inspection standards at A level were at least in line with the national average with the exception of history, which was above average. Attainment in post 16 for A/AS levels has improved and is now above the national average for both boys and girls. Most GNVQ students achieve the standards expected. The management of provision in the sixth form is very good. Six new subjects have been introduced recently that are designed to improve the match between need and provision. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject in GCE 'A' level religious education is excellent and very good in English, ICT and French. Retention rates are excellent. The students' attitudes to learning are good overall. The sixth form provides good value for money.

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management sets a well-charted direction for future development.
- Very good aspects of teaching in English, art, ICT, French, A level religious education, mathematics, chemistry, travel and tourism AVCE.
- Care, tutoring and mentoring systems.
- The principles of best value are applied well in the management of provision.

What could be improved

- Increasing the proportion of higher grades at 'A' level.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Standards seen indicate average levels of attainment. These come as a result of good teaching across the different elements of the course. A history of below average attainment has been investigated and measures now in place suggest that standards are improving.
Biology	Good. Students are achieving well as a result of good planning and the good teaching. There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT to enhance students' learning.
Chemistry	Good. Good teaching and effectively managed provision enable students to achieve well.
Design and Technology	Satisfactory. Good teaching; courses completed satisfactorily but accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and this is having a negative impact on standards.
Information and Communication Technology	Good. Good teaching, resources and staffing. The facilities are well used by students. There are enough resources for additional external examination courses.
Performing Arts	Good. Students achieve well because of the good teaching taking place. Students like the variety in the course.
History	Good. Good teaching with teachers showing good subject knowledge. Students achieve very well with all of them obtaining pass grades in 2001 and 2002.
English	Good. Students are achieving well as a result of good teaching. Pre-twentieth century texts are handled well.
French	Good. 'A' level results are satisfactory. Small numbers of higher grades. Teaching is overall good. Students make good progress.

Lessons were also sampled in music technology, AVCE science and travel and tourism, business education, geography, general studies and RE.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Guidance and support for students in the sixth form is very good overall. In English and mathematics students are very well supported by a team of committed and knowledgeable staff. In performing arts, much advice, guidance and counselling take place and all aspects of the course are fully discussed and explained. Good guidance and support is offered in ICT, design and technology, French, chemistry and biology. The mentoring system provides every student with an opportunity to meet individually with a tutor once a month. However, in English, guidance given to Year 11 students to facilitate sixth form course choice needs to

Aspect	be improved. Comment
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. Managers work hard to make the sixth form a success and to provide students with the best possible opportunities. Links between the curriculum of the main school and the sixth form are good and students themselves are still involved with the main school. All students, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to courses, equipment and facilities.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are accessible for help and guidance • Students enjoy the sixth form and would recommend it to others • Help with settling in • Treated as responsible adults • Well taught and challenged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities and enrichments • How the school responds to students' views • Information about progress • The printed information they receive

The inspection found that students are generally positive about the sixth form and the opportunities it provides. Inspectors were very impressed by the mature and calm behaviour of the students. Inspection evidence supports the views of a significant proportion of students in thinking that there is a need for more information about the content of courses in the sixth form. The school has addressed this and the revised presentation is being held for Year 11 this term. The facilities for independent study are good but the growing student numbers mean that facilities are under pressure. Students' views and inspection evidence show that the excellent support and guidance given enables them to select more appropriate courses for their individual needs, either in employment or in places of education.

Students' views of the school

The students' questionnaires were issued to Year 12 students as the Year 13 students had already left the school.

The questionnaires reveal that they are pleased overall with the Sixth Form provision. The things they like most include the teachers' accessibility for help and guidance, they enjoy the sixth form and would recommend it to others, the support they receive to help them settle in, that they are treated as responsible adults and that they are well taught and challenged. The things that they feel could be improved are the range of activities and enrichments, how the school responds to students' views, the information about progress and the printed information they receive.

During the inspection, students from both Year groups 12 and 13 were interviewed and it is quite clear from this, looking at tutor times and observation of the sixth form in action, that most of these concerns have been addressed. For example, many students felt that there was a need for more information about the content of courses in the sixth form. The school has addressed this and included it in the revised presentation held this year for Year 11.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

- The word 'results' refers to how well the students are doing in national tests, GCSE and GCE examinations.
- The word 'standards' is used to define how well the students are doing when their work is compared with what students nationally are expected to know, understand and do at the ages of 11, 14, 16 and 18 years.
- The word 'Level' refers to a particular standard of work described in the National Curriculum.
- The word 'grade' refers to the public examination grading systems for GCSE and GCE.
- The word 'achievement' refers to how well the students are doing at the age of 14 compared with what they were able to do at the age of 11, similarly at the age of 16 compared with what they could do at the age of 14 and finally what they can do at the age of 18 compared with what they were able to do at the age of 16. It indicates how much progress the students are making.

Results and standards on entry to the school at the age of 11 years.

- Students' attainment on entry is close to the national average for all schools.

Results in the national tests at age 11 in the final term of primary school and standardised tests carried out by the school early in Year 7 clearly indicate that students' attainment on entry is close to the national average for all schools in English and science and below average in mathematics. Standards of pupils attainment on entry have improved over recent years.

Results, standards and achievement at the age of 14 years.

Strengths

- Above average attainment in English, mathematics, ICT, RE and PE
- Rising trend in improving test results over time which is above the national trend
- Above average work seen in English, mathematics and science
- Good value being added to students' achievements in relation to attainment on entry
- Good progress in most lessons
- Good literacy skills

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards of students' numeracy skills across all subject areas

1. Results for students attaining Level 5+ in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above the national average for all schools in English and mathematics and close to the national average in science. The proportion of students attaining at Level 6+ in English and mathematics was above the national averages whilst science attainment was close to the average. Results in English have improved steadily from below average at the time of the last inspection to being above average currently. In

mathematics there has been fluctuation since the last inspection. After dips in 1998 and 1999 results are now above average. Attainment in science has remained close to the average since the last inspection and is now above average. The trend over time based on points score has been broadly above the national trend. Unvalidated results for 2002 show a dip in attainment in English but further improvements in mathematics and science.

2. Overall, students' literacy skills are good by the age of 14. Students are articulate and prepared to speak in class. They are confident in using correct terminology. Reading skills are generally good. Most students have good writing skills, and in many subjects are provided with opportunities to write in a range of forms.
3. Overall, students' numeracy skills are satisfactory. They improve and develop these skills as they move through the school, not only in mathematics lessons, but also by using numeracy in other subjects. There are examples in art and science of students displaying good numeracy skills.
4. The statutory teacher assessments in 2001 in all other subjects were average overall with most students achieving the nationally expected standards by the age of 14. Attainment in ICT and RE were above average.
5. Progress was at least satisfactory in all but 3 of the 82 lessons seen during the inspection in Years 7, 8 and 9 with four-fifths recording good or very good progress and advances in students' learning across all subject areas.
6. Standards of students' work seen in English, mathematics and science during the inspection are above average. This represents good achievement and progress by students in Years 7, 8 and 9, compared with their standards on entry to the school. Standards of work seen was also above those expected nationally in ICT, PE and RE. Standards seen in all other subjects are in line with national expectations.
7. Students with special educational needs make good progress by age 14 years and their needs are fully met within the school. All members of staff understand their particular requirements and practical, supportive mechanisms are shared by teachers to ensure full inclusion of these students and all on the special educational needs register.
8. The school has started to identify formally those who are gifted and talented. These students make good progress overall and the standards of their work seen confirms this.
9. There are no perceptible differences between the subject competences of those students for whom English is their second language and those of their peers. All have a standard of English which enables them to access the curriculum effectively. The school includes students with English as an additional language very well into all its activities.

Results, standards and progress at the age of 16 years

Strengths

- Significant improvements in boys' achievements over time
- Good value being added from Key Stage 3
- Trend in improving GCSE results is consistently above the national trend
- Standards of work seen are above those expected nationally in English, science, music, PE and RE
- Standards of literacy are generally good

Areas for development

- Continue to improve attainment from 2001

10. The school's results are close to the national average for 5+ A*-C grades. This figure for 2001 was a significant improvement on the results reported in the last inspection and performance over the intervening years has been improving steadily. In comparison with similar schools the average points score was average. In relation to these students' prior attainment at age 14 in 1999, the school's results were above those of similar schools, clearly indicating that the school is adding good value to students' achievements. Girls performed better at GCSE than boys but there has been significant improvement in boys' performance since the last inspection, with their average points score improving from 26.1 in 1997 to 36.0 in 2001. In the same period the girls have maintained scores which have been close to the national average. Unvalidated results for 2002 show further improvement overall, with boys bucking the national trend and attaining higher results than the girls.
11. The trend since the previous inspection in the school's average points score has been above the national trend. Even though some subjects are below average for students gaining A* - C grades, there have been significant improvements since the previous inspection, and since 2001, in all subjects. Business studies, double award science, drama, English literature, German and PE/sports studies are close to the national average for A*-C grades, with all other subjects being below the national averages. In relation to students gaining A*-G grades, all subjects are close to the national averages with all students in German and PE/sports studies gaining grades.
12. In 2001 the proportion of students attaining 5+ A* - G grades was high compared with the national average. The average points score of 38.0 is close to the national average and continues an improving trend since the last inspection.
13. The students did significantly better in business studies, double awards science, computer studies and PE/sports studies than they did in their other subjects. They did less well in art and design, geography, history and mathematics.
14. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above those expected nationally in English, science, music, PE and RE. Standards seen in all other subjects are in line with national expectations.
15. Almost all students make good progress by the age of 16 years as indicated in the national comparison against prior attainment. Progress was never less than satisfactory in any of the 65 lessons seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11, with almost four-fifths recording good or very good progress and advances in students' learning across all subject areas.

16. Inspection evidence revealed no perceptible differences between the subject competences of those students whose mother tongue is not English and those of their peers.
17. Students with special educational needs make good progress overall in mainstream classes. Most students with special educational needs complete GCSE courses successfully.
18. Standards of literacy are generally good at age 16. Many subjects, in particular English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, RE and PE provide good opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills further by engaging in discussions and debate, writing in-depth and researching information, which often includes the use of ICT. Most students are articulate speakers: they answer questions thoughtfully and are always prepared to express their own opinions and ideas, using appropriate technical terminology with confidence. They listen to their teachers attentively. Most have well-developed reading skills, particularly evident in English and RE, where oral activities are an important factor in learning. Their comprehension is good and students of all abilities are able to write detailed perceptive analyses of the topics studied, although some weaker students struggle to develop an appropriate formal style. Many in higher bands produce creative writing of a high standard in English. However, some weaker students sometimes show an unwillingness to write in depth.
19. Standards in numeracy by age 16 are satisfactory. Students improve and further develop these skills as they move through the school, not only in mathematics lessons, but also by using numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in science they substitute in formulae and solve complex equations. They collect and analyse data which they represent in graphical representations. In ICT they use spreadsheets to analyse data. In these and other subjects numeracy skills assist their learning and progress.
20. Standards in ICT are in line with the expected standard for 16 year olds. In the core skills lessons and GCSE option students are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software, including desk top publishing, use of data base, using spreadsheets to simulate business practice. They can also design web pages. Good use is made of computers to promote individual learning. Computers are also used in other subjects, particularly in science, English, mathematics, PE, business studies, music and art. These subjects extend students' skills in the use of computers. They have opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems, particularly in handling information and data. The higher attaining students understand and use applications to organise, refine and present information for different purposes and produce results of good quality. They are able to discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete.

Sixth form

Strengths

- The number of students attaining grades A to E was above the national average
- Students are making good progress from their GCSE attainment
- A/S results in 2001 were well above average in history and above average in French

Areas for improvement

- Increase the proportion of students attaining A/B grades in all subjects

21. Attainment for A levels, which was in line with national averages at the last inspection, has improved and average points scores overall in 2001 were above the national average. For students gaining grades A to E, biology, chemistry, English literature, French, general studies and history were above average. English language, geography, physics and mathematics were below average. Many subjects' entries were too low to make statistical comparisons valid.
22. There was a significant amount of variation between subjects for students attaining the higher A/B grades.
23. A/S results in 2001 were well above average in history and above average in French. They were below average in biology and well below average in mathematics. There are clear indications from unvalidated 2002 results of significant improvements in both biology and mathematics this year.
24. Students are making good progress from their GCSE attainment in biology, chemistry, design and technology, ICT, performing arts, history, English and French, and satisfactory progress in mathematics. The standards of work seen in the sixth form were above average in English, biology, history, French, performing arts and ICT and average in mathematics, chemistry and design technology.
25. The factors that contribute to this good progress are complex but of particular significance. They are the good standards of teaching, provided by very thorough and professional teachers who prepare very well, have high expectations and challenge and target students' individual needs accurately. Standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills on entry to the sixth form are good. The vast majority of sixth form students have a very positive and responsible attitude to their school and their studies. Relationships with each other and with teachers are excellent. The students are very mature, highly motivated and have high expectations of themselves. The combination of these good levels of key skills and the high expectation and very good subject knowledge that characterise nearly all of the sixth form teaching provides the foundation for their overall good progress in the sixth form.
26. Students studying AVCE performing arts and travel and tourism show a good degree of self-sufficiency when undertaking research that reflects good planning, understanding of the criteria and an ability to organise practical work.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

Strengths

- The behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good
- Boys' attitudes to learning and achieving have improved greatly
- Relationships are very good
- Attendance is above the national average
- Exclusions are rare
- Students apply themselves very well and in many lessons their behaviour was very good or excellent

Areas for improvement

- The behaviour of a small minority of students in Year 9 who caused low-level disruption in a few of the lessons

27. Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good and have contributed significantly to the school's overall improvement since the last inspection. Boys' attitudes to learning and achieving have improved greatly over recent years and reflect the very high levels of effort put in by the headteacher and teachers in raising boys' esteem and expectations in very subtle low key ways. Boys' outstanding achievements in GCSE in 2002 bear testament to the success of this approach. Relationships are very good and all students take advantage of the many planned opportunities for personal development. Attendance is above the national average. Exclusions are rare and are fully justified. All of these factors are major strengths of the school. Parents feel that behaviour is very good and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible young adults.
28. Students identified as having special educational needs display very good attitudes to learning in mainstream classes. They work co-operatively and their behaviour enables them to respond well to the opportunities offered by the school, including the help given by teaching assistants where provided.
29. The students really enjoy coming to the school. They take advantage of the numerous activities and opportunities available to them. The range of opportunities outside lessons is very wide and includes sports, musical activities and many other interests. They contribute to the fulfilment of the school's aims, with high levels of participation in all of the activities.
30. The students socialise very well with each other and are always polite, friendly and courteous. During the inspection, they were very respectful and helpful to inspectors, speaking readily to them on many occasions. Students have full access to the extensive school grounds and buildings during break-times and lunchtimes and although the quality of supervision is good, they are left on trust to a large extent and become responsible for managing their own behaviour. They respond very well to this and it was also very apparent with the students who went into Hessle Town Centre at lunchtime that they were well behaved and a credit to the school.
31. Behaviour in lessons is good overall. Students apply themselves very well and, in many lessons, their behaviour was very good or excellent. There is, however, a small minority of students in Year 9 whose behaviour caused low-level disruption in a few of the lessons. Overall, the students participate well in lessons and maintain concentration for long periods of time. This enables them to make good, sometimes very good, and occasionally excellent, progress. These very positive attitudes contribute considerably to the students' learning. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour observed during the inspection.
32. The students are cheerful and purposeful in lessons and around the school and, coupled with the very good relationships which exist between students and school staff, there is a very good environment for learning. Adults provide very good role models for the students. The students have respect for each other and have great respect for the school. The Student Council meets half-termly to consider many aspects of the school and demonstrates the students' concerns and interest in the school. There is a common purpose and commitment to succeed in the school and this is shown in the good and very good levels of motivation in lessons and other activities. Students take part in many charity fund-raising activities and take the opportunity to work and help other people in the community. The party for the blind is a very good example of this.
33. Students are aware of other people's feelings and have mutual respect for each other and school property. They have a very good understanding and appreciation of the

impact of their own actions on others. Ethnic minority students are well integrated into the school. The school never loses sight of the special educational needs of students. All students are fully included in every aspect of school life.

34. Attendance is good and is above the national average. The level of unauthorised absences is below the national average. All statutory requirements are met. There is little evidence of lateness.

Sixth form

Strengths

- Attitudes to the school and learning are very good
- Very good behaviour provides a good example to the rest of the school
- Relationships are very good

Areas for improvement

- The punctuality of a small number of students

35. Attitudes to the school are very good and students' very good behaviour provides a good example to the rest of the school. Relationships are very good and the development of personal skills is good. Attendance is satisfactory. The students have positive views of the school.
36. At the time of the inspection, the Year 12 students had only been in the sixth form for a matter of weeks. They had settled in very well and a very harmonious atmosphere existed in the Sixth Form Common Room.
37. The students' attitudes towards lessons and to the range of activities available are very good. They work very well in lessons and take a full part in the leisure activities available. For example, a couple of the students are about to form a netball club. Students are enthusiastic about the school. They always behave well in and around the school and their behaviour in lessons is overall good or better. They are ready to help each other in lessons and there are many friendship groups at breaktimes and lunchtimes. A harmonious atmosphere exists at all times and this is a strong feature of the sixth form.
38. Many students help in other parts of the school and with extra-curricular activities. They take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school to demonstrate maturity, self-discipline and a commitment to study. This prepares them well for their chosen futures.
39. Attendance is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. There are a few examples of students arriving late at the start of the school and this is an area that could be improved.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

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.

Strengths

- Very high levels of good and very good teaching
- Teachers have high expectations and very good subject knowledge
- Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good understanding of how students learn
- There are good relationships, teachers know their students and their needs very well
- Very good teaching in English, science, music and PE

Areas for improvement

- The use of marking and assessment

40. Overall, teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good and underpins the standards achieved by students. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all but three lessons seen in Years 7 to 9. It was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen in Years 10 and 11. Across Years 7 to 11, it was good or better in over eight out of every ten lessons and very good or excellent in over four out of every ten lessons. This represents significant improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection. There has been a considerable emphasis by the headteacher and senior staff on improving the quality of teaching and learning and this enables students of all abilities to make good progress.
41. Teaching is very good in English, science, music and PE. Teachers have high expectations. Teachers have very good subject knowledge in the vast majority of subjects. This is used very well to set interesting tasks and motivate students. It also means they set challenging work which engages the students and ensures they become totally involved and work hard. There is good quality lesson planning and teachers have a good understanding of how students learn.
42. Teachers have good relationships with students and treat them respectfully; they respond very well. Teachers organise and manage students in lessons well so that lessons start promptly, with students listening and ready to work. They plan lessons well and generally have clear objectives and start by telling the students clearly the purpose of the lesson, the work to be covered and what they will learn. For example, all teachers begin lessons by making their objectives for the lesson clear to students and end by reviewing what has been learnt at the end of the lesson. When the teaching is good, students are very willing to work extremely hard and can apply considerable concentration and effort. As a result, students of all attainment levels develop good study skills and make considerable gains in their understanding and skills.
43. In most lessons teachers are good at assessing the work students are doing, giving them advice and setting further challenges. Some teachers also do this very well in their marking, which is informative and encouraging, and helps students understand how well they are doing. However, in some subjects marking is perfunctory and unhelpful.
44. The majority of lessons have many good teaching features. Teachers manage their students very well, using maximum encouragement and appropriate praise. Teachers show high expectations of students and most students have a good grasp of the standards they are reaching or could aspire to, and the pace of learning is good, due to consistently strong teaching.

45. While staff changes have taken place at the school since the last inspection, the good quality teaching owes more to changes in style. The school has introduced an effective structure for the monitoring, evaluation and review of teaching, including classroom observation of all staff by the senior management team. The programme gives the opportunities for all staff to be involved with and become more secure with teaching strategies such as aspects of lesson planning and structure, promotion of thinking skills and independent learning, the use of homework and other practical considerations. Teachers use these strategies consistently well. As a result, planning is a good feature of teaching across the school and it allows the very good subject expertise to be fully utilised. Most teachers use homework effectively to enhance students' learning and further develop their independence and research skills. Many teachers give students good opportunities to use ICT as part of their homework.
46. The quality of teaching and learning for students with special educational needs is good and gives rise to good progress and standards relative to students' previous attainment. Teachers understand how to use their expertise and resources to make learning accessible and challenging. Students are usually well motivated and they concentrate well and enjoy their successes. Learning support assistants give good support, which has a positive impact on students' attainment in mainstream classes. Teachers take account of the targets set out in individual education plans, which contain clear targets and are sufficiently practical for subject teachers to implement when support staff are not present.
47. Teaching of literacy in many lessons is effective and is having an impact in many departments but the teaching of numeracy in other subjects is in much earlier stages.

Sixth form

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good or excellent teaching
- Teachers have very good command of their subjects
- Lessons have good pace and there are high expectations of students

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas of weakness in the teaching in the sixth form

48. The quality of teaching is good overall. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory. It was good in eight out of every ten lessons seen and very good or excellent in three out of ten lessons. The quality of teaching is similar in both Years 12 and 13.
49. Amongst the strongest features of sixth form teaching is the very good depth of teachers' understanding of their subjects. This results in good planning and students being given a wide-ranging, articulate and up to date view of their chosen subjects. Most teachers confidently encourage debate, maintain a good pace, provide well chosen resources and convey their personal enthusiasm to students. In-depth marking generally gives students an accurate view of the standard they have reached and a good level of guidance on how to improve. Staff put in much effort on behalf of students. Key skills and techniques are well taught and reinforced. Homework is used effectively to support and further students' learning.
50. The pre-inspection questionnaire completed by Year 12 students gives a very strong endorsement of the school's teaching. All students who returned the questionnaire feel that they are given helpful and constructive advice, are taught well and expected to do their best, and receive appropriate help with research. A high proportion believe that

their work is thoroughly assessed and that they are kept well informed about their progress. Inspectors agree with these judgements.

51. There are no particularly weak features in the lessons seen. The depth and pace of learning is good. Lessons move along at a good pace, so that sufficient ground is covered. There are high expectations of both teachers and students, with the result that issues are examined rigorously. Good levels of general knowledge and specialist background supports the good progress that students make. Students are confident in seeking support and guidance from teachers and they are encouraged to work independently. Students work productively and respond well to skilful teaching. As a result they make good advances in their knowledge and understanding.

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

Strengths

- The school offers a curriculum that meets the needs of all students and satisfies statutory requirements
- An extensive range of extra-curricular activities is offered making a significant contribution to the personal and social development of students
- Work related provision is very good and well established

Areas for improvement

- Fully implement and closely monitor the delivery of citizenship
- Ensure a full range of technological experiences is given in Key Stage 3

52. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and fulfils statutory requirements. The curriculum aims are explicit and are successfully delivered. Good provision is made to meet the academic, vocational, personal and social needs of the students. Extra curricular provision is very effectively linked to curriculum aims. An effective process of curriculum review involving senior and middle managers is in place, with direct governor involvement.
53. Overall, the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is good and includes all aspects of the National Curriculum and RE. In Year 8 German, in addition to French, is offered to students in the top two bands. Design and technology provision does not include knowledge and understanding of systems and control. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has been fully implemented in mathematics and English and is being introduced this term in science. The school attempts to allocate sufficient time for all subjects, although the study of a second language in Years 8 and 9 restricts the amount of time allocated to ICT and personal, health, social and citizenship education (PHSCE). The reduction in ICT provision for these students is not monitored closely. Activity days for whole year groups in Years 8 and 9 successfully offset the decrease in PHSCE provision.
54. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is very good. Accreditation is mainly through GCSE, with Foundation and Intermediate GNVQ and NVQ available. Students in the third band achieve Asdan accreditation in addition to GCSE and NVQ. All students study a core of English, English Literature and Mathematics together with a Science course of either single sciences, dual award or single award, and a choice between French or German. A choice is made from History or Geography or RE or Leisure and Tourism, Business Studies or Applied Business. In addition, students then make two option choices from a broad option list. The recently introduced Applied Business option has further enhanced provision. A work related option, the Advance Programme, is available for disappled students from the lower band. During Year 10 all students are

expected to undertake a period of work experience. All work-related provision for less easily motivated students is very successful at countering disaffection, particularly with the boys.

55. All students in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11 have timetabled provision, supplemented by year group activity days, for PHSCE. This is designed to promote their personal, social and health development; it also incorporates Citizenship. The PHSCE programme covers a wide range of cross-curricular themes. Provision is good and is well managed and coordinated. Careers and vocational programmes are good and draw on a wide range of stimulating and relevant resources. The course includes modules of sex and drugs education. This well-thought-out provision offers students good advice and guidance.
56. The curriculum for Years 7 to 11 is socially inclusive, with a clear commitment to equal opportunity for personal development. It promotes positive attitudes to learning and ensures that all students have the opportunity to succeed and maximise their potential as young adults in a caring and supportive environment. Students across all Years respond very positively to this commitment to their well-being.
57. A very good range of extra curricular activities enables students to extend their interests and skills in a wide range of areas. These include many sporting activities and teams, music and arts related activities, local trips, trips abroad and field study visits. Informal use of school facilities throughout the day is a particular strength of student learning, creating a positive and purposeful climate in an atmosphere of trust. Coverage of citizenship is beginning to impact across the whole curriculum in a systematic fashion but full implementation and close monitoring are required.
58. The 'Advance' work related programme in Years 10 and 11 makes effective use of Asdan accreditation. A secure vision for the initiative and its effective implementation has been very successful, capturing strong parental support and providing the cohort with key staff in 'confidante' roles. A structured programme of accreditation across the programme includes First Aid, Health and Safety, Army Pathfinder, Animal Handling and Food Hygiene certification and provides a substantial record of achievement.
59. The school has strong links with local businesses through an active school Business and Community Partnership. This has been successful in underpinning the school's science specialist school status bid. In addition, subject areas have successfully developed individual business links, for example visiting speakers from Health and Social Services and local hotels and visits to local hospitals to support science lessons. Productive links have been established with initial teacher training (ITT) providers, including Hull University. Links with feeder primary schools and schools in the sixth form consortium are very good. A supportive Parents' and Friends' Association meets regularly.
60. The school makes good provision for students on the special educational needs register. The learning support department provides effectively for the needs of individual students and monitors their progress well. All students with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum and are fully included in the work and life of the school. The provision for students with statements of special educational needs meets the needs of their statements and these are monitored and reviewed annually. Students benefit from good support from a wide range of external agencies including the educational psychology service, Connexions and the service for the visually impaired.

61. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for students' spiritual development has improved significantly since the last inspection.
62. Although the school still does not fully comply with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all students, the wider provision within the school for exploring issues of spirituality is good. Within the acts of collective worship students are encouraged to reflect on their own feelings and attitudes and to relate these to the needs of other. The school believes that empathy is at the heart of this approach and good examples can be noted within RE, art and music.
63. Provision for moral education is very good because there is an active programme designed to promote a sense of right and wrong. In drama, discrimination by age, sex and race is explored in roleplay, along with the consideration of bullying and its consequences; in RE there is a strong accent on the treatment and consideration of others; in history issues of peace and pacifism are explored, and in English students debate the treatment of animals.
64. Social education is also very good. There is a thorough Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme and the school has begun to audit the range of curricular opportunities available for citizenship education with the aim of further enhancement. A very wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are provided including a variety of sporting teams, music, visual and performing arts clubs, curriculum and homework clubs and a range of trips and visits, both in England and abroad. This informal curriculum also contributes greatly to the personal development of students because many opportunities exist for them to take responsibility.
65. Cultural education is also good. In music in Year 7 the social and cultural origins of the Blues are explored and in Year 9 students study Asian music from Japan and India. The teaching and learning of world religions in RE is a departmental strength and by this route a strong understanding of the cultural origins and features of such religions are extensively explored.
66. Behind these individual strengths, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has a greater strength at this school because there is an emerging trend of examples of curricular planning which draw all the strands together into one whole. Examples of this include the joint art and history visit to Berlin, which leads to the creation of strikingly creative and thoughtful diaries in which students reflect movingly on their observations of mistreatment and suffering; the joint art and history visit to the First World War's cemeteries; and the Year 8 reception and party for blind people, which involves the whole year group and develops empathy and understanding through a practical activity. In a coordinated way students are able to explore feelings, weigh up values, inter-relate with each other and a wider community, and to experience cultural variation.
67. The use of ICT across the curriculum is continuing to develop. ICT is used successfully in other subjects, particularly in science, English, mathematics, music, business studies, art and PE, where teachers and students have access to computers either in teaching areas or computer rooms and make good use of the resources available. In science students use spreadsheets to compile data and present this in the form of graphs and tables. Students produce a school newspaper using desk top publishing. In PE lessons students use the Internet to carry out research for project work and lessons are presented using Power Point. There are opportunities for students to use computers at lunchtimes and after school. At present, students have too few opportunities to use computers in some subjects because teachers are not planning

for the use of computers in their teaching. The school has invested heavily in ICT hardware and software in recent years and provision of computers to give students access to ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now good. An audit of the use of computers across the curriculum has been carried out but the coordinator does not monitor and review developments.

68. The quality and range of the curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. Changes made to the curriculum now ensure provision is more relevant to the needs of students and have played a key role in raising achievement, particularly for those likely to be easily 'turned off' by school.

Sixth form

Strengths

- The curriculum offered through consortium arrangements is very broad with a wide range of choices offered
- Enrolment continues to exceed expectations
- Enrichment activities are of a very good quality

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas for improvement

69. The curriculum opportunities offered within the school and through the well established and successful Consortium arrangements are very good. They are very broad and include A/S, A2, GNVQ and AVCE. In addition RE is timetabled for all sixth form students. All programmes for students are educationally inclusive and students value the open access to courses. The recent inclusion of additional courses: media studies, music technology, geology, RE, and performing arts has made a significant contribution towards increased enrolment. Retention rates are excellent. The option arrangements in the consortium work well and there are sufficient students to provide lively teaching groups in current Year 12 programmes, particularly A/S groups. The arrangements made for key skills are good overall. All students are provided with individual guidance following an audit of their academic programmes, in order to identify opportunities for planned key skill development.
70. Students are provided with a range of occasions for the enrichment of their academic programmes, for example, Community Sports Leadership Award, Hawks Head residential and Social Committee consortium events. Overall, the curriculum and programme of enrichment activities provided in the sixth form are very good. Academic guidance and support for students are well organised and consistent in its quality. The curriculum offered to students has been broadened significantly since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Strengths

- There are good procedures for child protection and very good procedures for ensuring the welfare of students
- Good level of care and concern for students with special educational needs
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good
- The systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are now well established and are good

Areas for improvement

- The school does not fully comply with the requirement of the EEC Directive to undertake risk assessments
- Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress have not yet been consistently implemented by all of the departments in the school

71. The school has good procedures for child protection and very good procedures for ensuring the welfare of its students. There are five Heads of Year, two of whom are based at the Boothferry Road site; the other three are accommodated in a central pastoral office on the Heads Lane site. The headteacher, deputy head and assistant headteachers, together with the five pastoral heads, ensure that the policies to promote the well being of the students are followed. Child protection procedures are the responsibility of one of the assistant head teachers. The procedures follow the Local Education Authority (LEA) guidelines.
72. Health and Safety procedures are satisfactory but the school does not fully comply with the requirement of the EEC Directive to undertake risk assessments. Several issues were discovered during the inspection, which were dealt with immediately.
73. The school has introduced good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress, but these have not yet been consistently implemented by all of the departments in the school. They are satisfactory in many subjects and good in performing arts and art. They are very good in science and English. However, in modern foreign languages (MFL), RE and music, the procedures are insufficiently developed or are not yet used to inform curriculum planning. In MFL, a pilot team has been set up to run the system in Years 10 and 11. In RE, they are anxious to set up the system but are still in the early stages. In music, where there is a new head of department, training is needed to enable the department to introduce the system. Target setting has been introduced by some departments, but is not yet universally applied across the school.
74. The school shows a good level of care and concern for students with special educational needs. The procedures for placing them on the special educational needs register are applied consistently and all departments have a copy of it. Individual education plans are developed for all students on the register. Generally they are used well, particularly in music, design and technology, and science. The learning support department is working with curricular areas to encourage their more effective use. The learning support department cares effectively for students with a range of learning and physical difficulties. Assessment of students with special educational needs is good and individual educational plans work well. Procedures comply with the Code of Practice and are implemented consistently.

75. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. First day absences are monitored and progressed by the school, which has a computerised system. Absences are input twice a day and the two educational welfare officers (EWOs) attend each week for the Forum. This is a multi-agency meeting to review students with behaviour, attendance and other difficulties such as disaffection. It is an extremely effective way of dealing with these problems and ensures that they are dealt with efficiently but also provide the best of support and guidance for the students. Agencies involved in this process include the Educational Welfare Service, PRS, Connexions, Careers and Learning Support.
76. The systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are now well established and are good. They are applied by all staff and the systems for eliminating and dealing with bullying are particularly effective.
77. Annual student reports provide good information to parents who are happy with them, but do not include National Curriculum Level indicators as required by legislation. Parents were unanimous in praising the school as a very caring establishment.

Sixth form

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students are very well supported during their time in the sixth form • There are good assessment procedures and provision for individual learning needs and the procedures for monitoring and supporting the students' progress are very good • Students receive good careers guidance • Induction arrangements are good <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of some students' punctuality
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78. The students are very well supported during their time in the sixth form. There are good assessment procedures and provision for individual learning needs and the procedures for monitoring and supporting the students' progress are very good. They receive good careers guidance.
79. Induction arrangements are good and students feel that they are given sufficient information to enable them to transfer smoothly into the sixth form. This was certainly true of the current Year 12 who have settled in very quickly.
80. Regular assessments of work are undertaken and provide students with good information about how well they are doing and advice on how to improve. Areas for improvement are identified and targets are set. Any additional needs that the students may have are discussed and action taken to deal with them. Assessment information is used to identify any weaknesses and ways to eradicate them are worked out.

81. Each student has regular tutor time at approximately monthly intervals to review progress and discuss the next steps to be undertaken. The mentoring is very good. The tutors know the students very well and ensure that help is available as and when they need it. The students receive expert and timely advice and support. Thorough and sensitive support is given to those whose results fall below expectation. Since the start of this year, advice on courses has been improved to be more individual and not biased by departments' requirements. Careers guidance is of a good quality and the information that students now receive is clear and backed by impartial advice. Students are happy that they receive good advice and support.
82. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. They comply with statutory requirements. However, there are still several students arriving late in the mornings and this could be improved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

83. The school has good links with parents. They are happy with the standards that the school achieves. They receive satisfactory information on a regular basis about their children's progress and about events in the school. Most parents contribute well to students' learning at school and at home.
84. The parents are very happy, overall, with the school and what it provides and achieves. At the parents' meeting they told us that they consider the standards are good and that their children make good progress. They are pleased with the attitudes and values that the school promotes. They hold differing views about the level of homework set, some considering it satisfactory but many more considering it to be too much. They all feel that the children are well behaved in the school and that the school is very responsive to their concerns and suggestions. They felt that the school had improved since the current headteacher had arrived and that there was a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. They told us that their children enjoyed going to school and that they are very well looked after while they are there. The questionnaires are very supportive and the only area of concern is the high amount of homework given. The team considers that homework, generally, is satisfactory and there is a homework programme. However, occasionally, there is some inconsistency in setting homework.
85. There is close liaison with parents of students who have special educational needs. They are invited to annual reviews of individual education plans and are properly involved in the reviews of statements. Parents appear to be generally satisfied with the school's provision for students with special educational needs.
86. The school provides parents with a well-presented school prospectus and informative annual governors' report. These have improved since the last inspection and now include the National Curriculum test results and teacher assessments and details of students' absences. The parents receive regular correspondence and newsletters, which keep them well informed about school events. Annual reports to parents are good but do not include National Curriculum levels as legally required.
87. There is a flourishing Parents' and Friends' Association, which organises many fund-raising events each year. These funds have helped to support the specialist school bid and provide soundproofing in one of the music rooms. A number of parents work in the school and although the PFA Committee is small, the parents support the social events very well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- The very good leadership of the headteacher
- The corporate commitment to continuing improvement in provision and achievement and desire to succeed
- The overall effectiveness of the governing body in shaping the school priorities and developments
- The development of a positive climate for learning across both sites
- Financial management and the application of best value principles

Areas for improvement

- A more consistent use of assessment data by departments to support target setting
- A more focussed monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning within departments to highlight, inform and spread good classroom practice
- Ensuring that delegated management responsibilities are applied consistently to further develop middle management and improve classroom practice
- Meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship

88. The headteacher provides very good leadership, vision and educational direction for the school. This has clearly resulted in improved standards, high levels of good quality teaching, a very positive climate for learning, good student progress and very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school.
89. Delegation of management responsibilities is sound but is not yet consistently linked to the further development of middle managers and classroom practice.
90. A major strength of the school is the corporate shared commitment by all teaching and non-teaching staff, managers at all levels, the governing body, the students and parents to continuing improvement in provision and standards and a desire to be the best in the locality and beyond. There is a very good reflection of the aims and values of the school in all aspects of its work. There is a very high commitment to equality of opportunity and full inclusion of all students. The school has a very good capacity to succeed and improve further.
91. The school has made tangible improvements since the previous inspection in developing the role and effectiveness of the governing body. The governors and leadership group together have a strong team spirit, characterised by a commitment to seek improvements. There is a clear working accord between the headteacher and governors, with their respective responsibilities being known and appropriately shared. The governors are enthusiastic about promoting the interests of the school and are taking an important part in shaping its direction. They have restructured their committees with clear terms of reference. As a result, they now undertake their roles and responsibilities more effectively and participate willingly in a range of activities.
92. The governing body are actively engaged in steering development planning. They have conducted formal surveys of staff, parents' and students' perceptions, and these, together with useful information gathered during day-to-day contacts within the community, are used to help them in their work. This enables them to gain good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory obligations but does not ensure a daily act of collective worship for all students.
93. Subject leadership overall has improved since the last inspection, although it varies from satisfactory to very good because some managers are new in post and relatively

inexperienced. There are some examples of very effective practice reflecting good progress since the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics, science and PE, where there has been much progress in creating an organisational framework for the support and development of members of the department that has led to improving results.

94. Pastoral management is well established and is good, with the form tutor seen as the lead person supported by very effective Heads of Year. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management, working effectively with a wide range of relevant staff, including the team of teaching assistants. Good administrative arrangements and policies are in place and there is a clear development plan, together with targets for future action. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs provides effective support.
95. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision are satisfactory. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, including direct observation in classrooms, are satisfactory. Monitoring roles of school leadership group and heads of department are clearly defined. There are clearly defined line management routes but these are not consistently contributing to the overall effectiveness of monitoring and support for middle managers or teachers.
96. The monitoring arrangements in many subject departments are good. They are more effective than at the time of the previous inspection and departmental action plans have contributed significantly to the good improvements in overall provision and raising of standards. Provision for the monitoring of particular groups of students, for example, those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the gifted and talented, is very good.
97. The school has established a satisfactory programme of self-evaluation to improve teaching quality. Application of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is recognised as ongoing but the provisional programme to implement the approach in other subjects extends far into the future, though it could benefit from being implemented more widely in the short term.
98. As a result of a review of the school's effectiveness, very good and highly appropriate priorities for development have been clearly identified in the current School Improvement Plan. These include key aspects such as raising attainment with target setting at all stages, behaviour management, alternative curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11, raising self-esteem, embedding the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, community links and the new requirements regarding citizenship. Establishing the ADVANCE programme to improve provision and support for lower attaining and disaffected students and/or those with SEN is a bold step forward. Although the arrangements are recent, early evaluations have indicated growing success.
99. Analysis of test and examination data has recently become much more extensive and rigorous than at the time of the previous inspection. School targets for improvement are part of the development plan and are ambitious but not unrealistic. The effective use of this data requires greater consistency across departments in relation to target setting and curriculum planning. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is understood, successfully incorporated for literacy and all departments recognise their contribution to it as well as numeracy. Similarly, whilst new, citizenship has been added to the items for development across departments.

100. The staffing provision is very good. The school management has made very positive decisions regarding recruitment of good quality, well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. An example of this is in the science department, where all teachers are science graduate specialists. In most departments the quality of the staffing is good, and high levels of expertise, qualification and experience are now having a major impact on the quality of learning and achievement of students. The school currently does not have any unfilled vacancies. Technical support in most practical subjects is adequate, and there is a very good level of administrative assistance with highly competent personnel.
101. The arrangements for performance management are fully in place across the school. There are agreed targets for the headteacher, teachers across the school have agreed targets and the programme of lesson observation and review meetings means the official timescale for the first cycle of performance management has now been met.
102. Arrangements for professional development are satisfactory and are linked to whole school priorities. There are good arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers and those new to the school, and for supporting trainee teachers and supply teachers.
103. The headteacher and governors' finance committee work together to control expenditure, and the school has rigorous financial procedures in place to ensure efficient and prudent fiscal control. Standards Fund expenditure is well directed and rigorously monitored.
104. The school rigorously applies the principles of best value when making spending decisions before placing orders for goods and services. Useful information about similar and other schools' performance is provided, and is now used to make comparisons and set targets in the drive to raise attainment. Importantly, the school does challenge itself in relation to an evaluation of its work against the four principles of best value: consult, compare, challenge and compete. Management and governors are aware of the impact funding decisions make to educational practice and raising of achievement. The outcomes, discussed between governors and staff, are very clear and have given a good steer to help development planning.
105. Despite improvements in some aspects of accommodation since the last inspection the adequacy of accommodation is unsatisfactory in some areas, for example, design and technology workshops and indoor PE space on the Heads Lane site. There is now a shortage of accommodation overall as the school has grown despite extensive refurbishment in some parts. Most subjects have suitable rooms but the quality is variable.
106. The overall provision for resources is satisfactory. Through recent capital injection there are enough up-to-date computers to teach the curriculum and there are enough books in the school. The school has allocated significant levels of funding on developing facilities for information and communications technology (ICT) for which rooms have been adapted. The ratio of computers to students is good and above the national average. The number of books in the libraries (on each site) is average. The school makes effective use of new technology to support the curriculum and its management and administration. New curriculum resources are substantially based upon a networked computer system.

Sixth form

Strengths

- Strong and effective leadership and management
- Good consortium arrangements
- Good financial management
- Gives good value for money

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation for geography, design technology, performing arts and art
- Resources for design technology and performing arts

107. The leadership and management of the sixth form are strong and effective. Tutors work in close collaboration to ensure day-to-day running proceeds smoothly. Good consortium arrangements with school are well organised and allow students a greater range of choice for their studies. There is a very positive ethos for learning. Students are given a great deal of responsibility which they exercise well. Morale in the sixth form is high and in tutor periods there is a relaxed atmosphere in which students meet and talk sensibly. The financial management of the sixth form is good. The sixth form gives good value for money. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship in the sixth form.
108. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is good in science, ICT and in the library. It is unsatisfactory in geography, design technology and the performing arts. The art accommodation is potentially good, but in need of refurbishment.
109. There is a good range of learning resources, including a well-stocked library and ICT suites to meet the needs of the expanding sixth form. There is a good range of resources available for supporting students' skills in the use and application of ICT, which are used extensively. Resources are very good in music. They are good in English, science, ICT, art, PE and the library. They are unsatisfactory in DT and performing arts.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

110. In order for this good school to raise standards further and become an even better school, the headteacher, governors and staff of the school should:

1. Ensure more consistent use of assessment data by departments to set achievable goals for all students by: (Paragraphs: 73, 99, 13, 139, 168, 170, 183, 199, 206, 207, 212, 241)
 - a. ensuring that all teachers make full use of the data to which they have access
 - b. ensuring heads of department and teachers have the expertise to interpret and use the data effectively
 - c. senior managers monitoring the use of the data in departments.
2. Ensure more focussed monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning within departments to highlight, inform and spread good classroom practice by: (Paragraphs: 95, 97, 174, 190, 207, 212, 226)
 - a. highlighting the most effective current monitoring and evaluation practice and disseminating this across all departments
 - b. ensuring all heads of department and teachers are skilled in classroom observation and feedback techniques
 - c. enabling teachers to observe the best classroom practitioners.
3. Ensure delegated management responsibilities are implemented consistently to further develop middle management and improve classroom practice by: (Paragraphs: 89, 93, 95)
 - a. clarifying the management development responsibilities of all senior managers
 - b. monitoring the effectiveness of line management on developing middle managers' skills
 - c. monitoring the effectiveness of middle managers in helping teachers to improve their classroom practice further.

Sixth form

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff of the school should: (Paragraphs: 22, 235, 243, 280, 287)

1. Increase the proportion of students attaining at the very highest grades in GCE A level by the age of 18 years

When drawing up the action plan it is recommended that attention also be given to:

- Meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship. (Paragraphs: 62, 92, 107)
- Carrying out the risk assessments required under EEC directives. (Paragraphs: 72, 173)
- Addressing the inadequacies in accommodation for design technology overall and indoor PE space on the Heads Lane site. (Paragraphs: 105, 176, 218)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	147
	Sixth form	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	14	45	59	26	3	0	0
Percentage	9.5	30.6	40.2	17.7	2.0	0	0

Sixth form

Number	2	10	21	9	0	0	0
Percentage	4.8	23.8	50.0	21.4	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.

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1373	196
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	92	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	16	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	133	1

English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school Year

	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered students in final Year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting Year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	113	117	230

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	81	80
	Girls	92	88	82
	Total	170	169	162
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (72)	73 (63)	70 (62)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (20)	47 (43)	33 (35)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	74	91	74
	Girls	98	96	87
	Total	172	187	161
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (72)	81 (61)	70 (64)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (26)	43 (39)	31 (38)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered students in final Year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting Year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	105	113	218

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	43	102	102
	Girls	59	106	111
	Total	102	208	213
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	47 (46)	95 (97)	98 (99)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38.1 (38.7)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting Year who were entered for GCE A level or AS level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	17	32

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	17	20	37
	Average point score per candidate	16.7 (17.4)	17.8 (18.8)	17.3 (18.2)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (16.9)	17.9 (18.0)	17.5 (17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	15	17	32	2	3	5

	Average point score per candidate	17.7	18.9	18.3	9.0	12.0	10.8
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school Year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1284	20	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	73.4
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	428

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	23.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial Year	2001
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	£
Total income	3,499,860
Total expenditure	3,497,696
Expenditure per pupil	2,699
Balance brought forward from previous Year	213,535
Balance carried forward to next Year	215,699

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two Years	18
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two Years	24

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	1200
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	51	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	66	33	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	53	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	50	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	49	50	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	48	7	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	46	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	36	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	48	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	43	5	0	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents were very supportive of the school. Almost all parents feel this is a good school with a good feel to it. Staff are open, friendly, approachable and able to inspire confidence. Teachers are very committed, they seem to like the school and to be part of the community. Parents were very pleased with the school and most would recommend it as a truly excellent place of learning. Teachers deserve praise for making an excellent effort in school with the children. Parents were unanimous that sending their children to Hesse HS has proved to be an excellent choice. Problems are dealt with swiftly. The school has always been very approachable.

Other issues raised by parents

The amount of homework is a burden.

Too much emphasis on intellectual pursuit and too little on creativity and social development.

There seems to be lack of communication between the office and teaching staff.

The inspection team found that the school has a homework timetable and that generally teachers set homework according to the timetable. However, there are some inconsistencies in practice which occasionally result in several pieces of homework being set close together. Students didn't feel the amount of homework set to be a major concern to them. The school, as well as emphasising the intellectual and academic achievement of students does offer student a wide range of opportunities, both inside and outside the curriculum, for developing their creativity. Provision for students' social and personal development is a strength of the school. The team found no evidence of lack of communication between the school's administrative office and teaching staff. General lines of communication throughout the school ensure smooth day-to-day running and information dispersal.

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.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good
- Teachers plan lessons and manage classes very well so that students are encouraged to raise the standards of their work
- Leadership and management of the department are very good and are helping to improve the use of English throughout the school

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas for improvement

111. Students enter the school at age 11 years with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with the national average. When compared with schools nationally and with similar schools, Year 9 national test results in 2001 were above the national average. The performance of girls has been consistently better than that of boys. Over the three Years 1999 to 2001 students' performance has remained above average. In order to improve the performance of students the department has trained all staff to deliver the National Literacy Strategy, introduced schemes of work to promote reading and created small teaching groups to support the development of literacy. Since the previous inspection, students' performance in English has improved.
112. In 2001 students gained results in GCSE English language and English literature that were in line with the national average. Teachers are setting realistic, but challenging, targets to encourage students to improve. Since the last inspection, GCSE English language and English literature results have improved. The performance of students in English is better than in several other subjects. Over the three years 1999 to 2001 the performance of girls has been better than that of boys. In 2002, the achievement of boys improved significantly. This is due to the success of whole school strategies aimed at raising boys esteem and expectations and internal departmental strategies for improving provision and the quality of teaching and learning.
113. Overall, students' achievement in all years is good. This is because teaching is very good. Also, the department has developed well-balanced schemes of work that provide stimulating lessons. These schemes indicate the content to be taught, the teaching and learning styles that could be adopted, literacy strategy contributions, the resources to be used, and the range of the work to be assessed. These schemes focus on students' basic literacy skills, promoting the development of reading and improving the presentation of students' written work. Teachers have very high expectations of their students' work and behaviour and make these very clear. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is very good, particularly the planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons. Teachers consistently identify the learning objectives for lessons and make them clear to the students. In a Year 8 lesson designed to reinforce the sequential elements of a story, the teacher made sure that learning objectives were

clear and that students wrote them in their books. This resulted in students creating fluent, well-structured outlines for stories.

114. Since the previous inspection there have been some major improvements. The teaching of English is now very good and frequently excellent. The ability of students to speak clearly and with confidence has improved because speaking and listening opportunities are now an integral part of all lessons. Reading standards have improved. There are now full-time librarians staffing the redeveloped libraries on both sites. Strategies are now in place to increase loans and monitor students' reading. Clearer guidance has been introduced to improve discursive writing. English teachers have now developed excellent schemes of work. Management of the department is much more effective and efficient. Year 11 students are provided with clear and regular information about the grade levels they are achieving.
115. Work seen during the inspection is above average for most students. Most students spell monosyllabic words and common polysyllabic words accurately. Many use full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly and they organize simple and complex sentences into paragraphs. Teachers' marking shows that there is a strong emphasis on the need to improve punctuation and spelling. All students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Years 7-9.
116. The overall standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is above the national average. At the end of Year 11 girls achieve higher standards than boys. Recently, the achievement of boys has improved significantly. Students are becoming confident speakers. Standards in speaking and listening are good. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on *Romeo and Juliet* students were able to work with partners to explore reasons for keeping diaries before making presentations to the whole class. By the end of Year 11, the majority of boys and girls listen attentively. Students are keen to answer questions. This is because they are highly motivated and respond to their teachers' very helpful spoken comments and probing questions. Where students are well prepared for discussions, they make well-structured contributions. In a well-planned lesson in Year 11, for example, a group of students analysed the text to compare and contrast characters in *Hobson's Choice*. Their spokesperson made a clear presentation to the whole class.
117. Standards of reading are good. Students read aloud as part of their regular learning routine. A majority of students read aloud with confidence. More able students read with fluency and expression. A shared reading and discussion of *Hobson's Choice* by a Year 11 class showed that students could understand significant ideas and events and make moral judgements based on their understanding of the text. For example, a boy explained, "Hobson sees his daughters as possessions, not people."
118. Higher attaining students write fluently and at length, for example when a student in Year 11 wrote an analysis of Anarchist Philosophy. Information and Communication Technology is used effectively for drafting. Students write for a suitable range of purposes. Good oral work prior to writing often helps students to write more extensively and many students are able to improve the fluency and accuracy of their writing. Their GCSE assignments are carefully drafted and re-drafted to produce focused and well-constructed essays.
119. Throughout the school, well-targeted work, combined with high expectations of learning and behaviour, results in the majority of students making good progress. In Years 7-11 the progress made by students with SEN and with low prior attainment is very good. Gifted and talented students make very good progress. This is because their teachers provide intellectual challenge and support. The attitudes to learning of the majority of boys and girls are very good in each key stage. Most students are very well motivated.

Good behaviour management encourages students to co-operate. The behaviour of most students is very good.

120. Teaching was good or better in all lessons observed. The most effective teaching is well planned and structured to help students learn. Teachers showed very good subject knowledge and succeeded in motivating students to learn. They all have high expectations of their students. They also recognise that students need to be motivated, encouraged and provided with opportunities to succeed. Teachers use constructive spoken comments very skilfully to motivate students and to help them improve. Lessons are very well managed. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is very good as is planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons. This results in good levels of achievement.
121. The English department has raised standards by using assessment to inform planning, combining subject matter with the development of language skills, developing students' confidence and skills to speak effectively in a wide range of situations and improving reading skills. Students are encouraged to use ICT effectively for drafting their written work. For example, in the coursework folders of Year 10 and 11 students there are some very good examples of word-processed essays, stories and newspaper articles.
122. Leadership and management of the English department are very good. Teachers set realistic, but challenging, targets to encourage students to improve. The department has made a very significant contribution to the education of all of the students in the school. The departmental policy documents are clear and well focused on raising students' attainment in English and performance in public examinations. All members of the department share a very strong commitment to the school's aims. Resources for teaching are very good. Accommodation is satisfactory. All classrooms contain stimulating displays that are well organised and of good quality.

Literacy

123. The school has a good strategy for teaching the basic skills of literacy.
124. The school has taken a number of steps to improve literacy including: subject audits to identify contributions to the Key Stage 3 Strategy, introducing good arrangements for the delivery of progress units, introducing consultants to work with the teaching and learning team and providing monitoring time for the Literacy Strategy Manager. The good practice in improving literacy, established in English lessons, is being replicated across the curriculum.
125. Many departments have developed clear literacy strategies and others are following this lead. Teachers recognise their role in making these strategies work. There are examples of good practice in most departments. For example, in mathematics a strong emphasis is placed on the correct use of technical language. Speaking and listening skills are well developed in art, design and technology, and drama. In modern foreign languages students read from a variety of media, including advertisements, magazines, newspapers and the Internet. Guidance is provided in science to help students to construct appropriate written work.

126. Overall, standards of literacy are good at the age of 14 and at 16.

Drama

127. Standards of attainment are satisfactory. Students are developing attitudes, skills and techniques that have a positive effect on other areas of learning. In 2001, GCSE examination results were in line with the national average.

128. Progress in lessons is satisfactory, with students of all abilities being able to integrate fully into the process of creating and presenting work. Units of work have been produced which ensure continuity and progression in the teaching of the subject.

129. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. The teachers have good subject knowledge. The management of drama is good. Many drama topics contribute well to students' personal development. Since the previous inspection provision in drama has improved. As a result the subject makes a significant contribution to the curriculum aims of the school.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and often very good
- There is a strong sense of teamwork in the department
- Students' attitudes are very good

Areas for improvement

- Raising standards of attainment at GCSE

130. At Key Stage 3, attainment in mathematics has recently improved, and is now above average. Girls performed slightly better than boys in 2001, but performance over the last five years show that boys and girls gain very similar results. Results are above average when compared with similar schools, and show improvement since the last inspection.

131. In 2001, GCSE results were below average, but there has been a slow improvement in recent years. In 2002, provisional results show this upward trend continuing. The improvement from 2001 to 2002 is because boys' results improved considerably, while girls' results declined slightly. Given the standards on entry to the school, progress in KS3 is good and progress in KS4 is satisfactory. Standards seen during the inspection confirm the upward trend in performance, and current work in school suggests that standards in KS4 are now about average.

132. All classes cover the full range of mathematical attainment targets. Students produce good work in algebra and shape, space and measures across both Key Stages. Work in number and handling data is satisfactory. By the end of Year 7, most students can construct and measure angles, and understand simple angle properties. In Year 9, students can solve simultaneous equations, setting out their work in a clear, mathematical fashion, and they can solve problems using all kinds of number. Students are less successful in performing constructions using a pencil and compasses. In Year 11, the most able can form, simplify and solve complex equations to find the point of intersection of two curved graphs. Other students can solve problems using a variety of measures, and interpret data that is presented in tabular or graphical form. Provision

for students with special needs is good, and these students progress at the expected rate. Where in-class support is available, this is used effectively to aid student learning. A programme is in place to help those entering the school at below the expected standard to catch up. There is now good provision for gifted and talented students, whose progress is supported by extension work and mathematical challenges. The department has recently introduced a scheme aimed at developing thinking skills.

133. Teaching in mathematics is good and often very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding, which they use to break down the mathematics into manageable steps that the students can understand. Teachers use their subject knowledge in managing class discussion effectively to focus on key ideas. They are effective in using interactive teaching methods that involve students in the lesson, and maintain a lively pace. Most lessons have clear, measurable objectives, which are communicated to students. In some lessons, objectives lack the focus necessary for teachers to reflect upon and evaluate the learning.
134. Class management is good and sometimes very good. As a result, students work hard, behave well and maintain concentration for good periods of time. The department's contribution to literacy is good throughout both Key Stages, with many lessons making a feature of key mathematical words, and students are encouraged to use correct mathematical vocabulary at all times. Lessons make appropriate links with other subjects, and draw on practical applications of mathematics where possible. For example, in a lesson on substituting in formulae, the teacher captured the students' interest by using a story about working to save up for a mobile phone.
135. Students' attitudes to their work are very good. They apply themselves well to both classwork and homework, and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Staff work hard to create a positive ethos, and this has a favourable effect on the students' learning. Staff-student relationships are very good, and students work well with each other. Regular support classes run at lunchtimes, and students with difficulties are advised directly that they would benefit from attending. Other more general invitations to attend are prominent on both sites. Teachers support students further by having available, within the department, stocks of calculators and revision guides.
136. Assessment of students' work is satisfactory. In the best practice, students are given regular feedback from the teacher during the lesson about whether their work is correct or not. In exercise books, work is marked to a satisfactory standard, usually with grades and comments of encouragement. In the best cases, comments also indicate how the work could be improved. Teachers are less effective in their use of target setting. Where targets are set, for example on students' reports, they are too broad to be helpful or measurable. Students would benefit from being given specific short-term targets that can be monitored and assessed.
137. There are adequate teaching resources within the department. Teachers use a range of different resources, including ICT, at both Key Stages, but on occasions teachers fail to make the best use of the available resources. For example, opportunities were missed for aiding learning through the use of visual aids or overhead projector slides for geometrical work. Teaching accommodation on each site consists of a set of adjacent classrooms, often well decorated with teaching aids such as key words and a giant number line. Teaching rooms are satisfactory on the Heads Lane site, but are located in unsatisfactory buildings in the Boothferry site.

138. The leadership of the department is good. The sense of direction is evident from the department's development plan, which focuses on appropriate issues, and specifies intended actions and time scales. Appropriate curricular changes have been made in order to help improve standards, including the recent introduction of a modular GCSE course. The department has responded positively to the Key Stage 3 Strategy, especially with teaching styles. They rely less on a single set of text books, and give more emphasis to developing students' skills of mental calculation, using techniques such as partitioning and bridging.
139. Day to day management is effective. Regular meetings take place, and the head of department monitors the quality of teaching within the department by means of annual observations. The department has not sufficiently addressed its role in developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, or citizenship education. The department has a wealth of statistical data on student attainment and is beginning to use this effectively to monitor and evaluate performance.
140. A particular strength of the department is the strong sense of teamwork within the teaching staff. Staff support each other, and are committed to improving their own practice. The regular professional exchange of ideas contributes towards staff development.
141. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The use of information technology has increased, and time allocations for teaching across Year 8 are now adequate. Teaching is now well matched to the ability of the group, and work is pitched at a suitably challenging level across the ability range.

Numeracy

142. There are several examples of students displaying good numeracy skills. In art, Year 8 students show excellent spatial awareness in sculptures, addressing such issues as elongation and proportion. In science, Year 10 students can plot comparative graphs using the same axes, and can extrapolate values. Students apply their skills to calculating averages, and using a range of measures in science. Mathematics teachers are aware of their role in promoting basic skills of numeracy and, where possible, they take opportunities to discuss underlying concepts and everyday applications. For example, in one lesson, the teacher took time to discuss methods of calculating multiplication tables, and in another, there was a focus on time problems and the 24-hour clock. In design and technology, however, they are still using rulers with an imperial scale.
143. A start has been made in promoting a whole school approach to numeracy. A training day held early in 2002 included input from four members of the mathematics department. A numeracy group has been formed, including cross-subject representation, and is due to start operating in October 2002. The school needs urgently to put in place a system for maintaining a common approach to numeracy, including a written policy from all departments. The effectiveness of the school's numeracy policy is not monitored adequately.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- The improvements since the previous inspection and particularly the rise in standards seen in the results of the National Curriculum assessment tests and in GCSE
- A dedicated staff who communicate well and share good practice to improve their teaching
- The improved resources in information and communication technology and their regular use to enhance learning

Areas for improvement

- To develop further the approaches to scientific enquiry as outlined in the new Key Stage 3 specifications
- Technical support is insufficient in a science department of this size

144. GCSE examination results in 2001 were above the national average for students gaining A* - C grades. The percentage of students achieving the higher grades of A* and A is in line with the national average. Girls' attainment was better than boys but the proportion of boys achieving an A* - C grade is now much closer to that of girls. The percentage of students achieving an A* - G grade has been maintained above the national average for several years. The results are in line with similar schools and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The group of students entered for the three separate sciences produced results well above the national averages both in terms of overall passes and higher grades.
145. The 2001 results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 were above the national average. The girls' results were higher than boys for those attaining level 5 but for those attaining level 6 the position was reversed, with boys attaining higher than the girls. All results improved again in 2002.
146. In work seen during the inspection, standards were above national expectations by Year 11. As their practical skills improve and their knowledge increases, Year 11 students deal confidently with a range of activities. In a Year 11 class of average prior attainers, the students had a grasp of how velocity changed over time and how air resistance affected acceleration. Students with below average attainment gave credible explanations to explain the structure of simple hydrocarbons.
147. By Year 11, students have consolidated their GCSE coursework well. Planning and observation are very good. Analysis is good, but evaluation less so. Scrutiny of the coursework investigations shows them to be well presented with good spelling. Graphs are accurate and the results are well tabulated. Students do some independent investigative work, but not enough opportunities are provided to extend this further.
148. In work seen during the inspection, standards were above the national expectation by Year 9. Students have acquired good literacy skills and use them well in reading and writing. Students in a Year 7 class show enthusiasm when constructing mind maps about specialised cells. A Year 8 class of mainly average prior attainment know that animals adapt for survival either by behaviour or structure.

149. All students make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11. In a Year 7 class, students of above average attainment have a good understanding of the parts of a microscope because the teacher uses the words regularly and assesses the students' knowledge with frequent questions. In a Year 8 class, students with special educational needs made good progress in understanding how a space shuttle orbits the earth because of the resources used by the teacher and their own determination to succeed.
150. Above average attaining students in a Year 10 class had a very clear understanding of how chemical equations need to be balanced because of the very clear way the teacher explained it using molecular models to enhance the explanation. A few of these students have special talents in science, but there is insufficient extension material to challenge them further. In a Year 11 class, average prior attaining students gave answers on the nervous system at A level above their prior attainment because of the perceptive way the teacher drew out these answers from them.
151. Interest, concentration and keenness are strong features in the best learning. Students work well in groups and are similarly confident when working on their own. The department has worked hard in raising standards in literacy, the strategies have paid dividends with a majority of students comfortable in reading the science textbooks used in class.
152. Teaching is good throughout the school and is a major strength of the department despite some instability of staffing since the previous inspection. The good resources and laboratories support the teachers' organisation and management. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Their expectations of the students are high and the very good behaviour and attitude of the students are praised. Lesson objectives are shared with the students as a matter of course and the clarity of the explanations allow all students to make good progress. Very good planning is a feature of most lessons. Students respond positively to challenge and persevere with the difficult tasks because the teachers monitor their progress to ensure they do not fall behind.
153. The department is well supported by three technical staff, but there is an urgent need for additional support in the upper school. Students with physical disabilities are given valuable support by the learning support assistants in moving around the school. The individual education plans of students with special educational needs are well used and their literacy targets are reinforced with specific targets. These plans are used to modify the teaching methods to meet the specific needs of these students. Homework is given regularly throughout the school. It is well marked and comments are crisp and clear allowing the students to improve. Procedures for assessing the attainment of students are very good. They are well used to inform curricular planning, particularly adding to the flexibility of setting where students can be moved according to their progress. Students' individual progress can be accurately tracked. There is a comprehensive analysis of gender attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11 and the results contribute to ways in which boys and girls may improve.
154. The quality of leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has welded together experienced and younger teachers into a strong and effective team. As a result of this, teaching strategies have improved throughout the department. Scientific enquiry is in the early stages of being redeveloped through the newly established national science strategy for 11 to 14 year olds. The head of department and other teachers have already completed an audit of standards, undergone initial training and the material is being introduced into lessons in Years 7 and 9. Monitoring and evaluating is happening via self review and areas covered are

behaviour management and practical investigations. Resources for ICT have improved considerably since the previous inspection, but there is still a difficulty of access on the Boothferry site. The Heads Lane site has a laboratory/computer suite which allows whole class data logging and modelling activities. Years 10 and 11 students regularly use word processing to enhance the presentation of their GCSE coursework, while younger students are actively encouraged to research on the internet.

155. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and include better classroom management particularly in Years 10 and 11 by using a greater variety of teaching strategies. This has led to improved interest and concentration and more rapid progress by students. The rise in standards in externally assessed examinations has taken the departmental results above the national averages. There has been extensive investment in new textbooks and the four laboratories that were refurbished in 2001 make them ideal places to teach and learn science. The interactive white board adds an exciting new dimension to learning. This renewed provision has a clear impact on the students' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The best teaching is exciting and inspirational
- The steady improvement over time in achievement and attainment
- The sharing in many lessons of teacher excitement and enthusiasm with students

Areas for development

- The need to introduce strategies to spread the characteristics of the best teaching across the department
- The need to create a stimulating working environment in all art rooms both to celebrate student success and to inspire others

156. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2001 indicates that the school was at the national average for the proportion of students gaining level 5 or better. GCSE results in 2001 were significantly below the national average for students gaining grades A*- C, but over the four years between 1999 and 2002 they have improved from 20% to over 44%, which is approaching the national average. Entries at A/S and A level are small, which makes them statistically insignificant, but in 2002 all passed – one with an A grade.

157. Attainment in lessons in Years 7 to 11 is at the national average, but with evidence of excellence in all Years. It is good with A/S and A level students, and those possessing exceptional talent produce work of high quality, vitality and inspiration. Students with special needs attain well, and the curriculum and its delivery are fully inclusive in nature. In a Year 7 class, students explored the concepts of expressionism in portraiture very successfully. Year 8 students produced high quality and entertaining collages inspired by the work of Max Ernst. Other Year 8 students working successfully on Giacometti-inspired sculptures had also produced many excellent pen and colour-wash drawings of bones and joints, with one boy and one girl showing exceptional talent. Some Year 11 students were producing excellent miniatures showing attention to detail and the creation of images using colour, shape and texture. Sixth form students were working successfully on drawing and painting drapery, and Year 13 students had produced high quality observed drawing and a delightful painting

based on grids. A great deal of excellent sixth form work was seen from student portfolios.

158. Teaching and learning are both good up to Year 11, and very good in the sixth form; at all levels excellent teaching and learning was seen. In most lessons good relationships gave students the confidence to take risks and there was good feedback inside lessons to maximise development. Planning and preparation are good, and linked to clear target setting where criteria for success are established. Questioning is also good, reinforcing, exploring and extending awareness and knowledge. The undoubtedly high level of teacher skills and knowledge are linked to enthusiasm, and are communicated very well to students, whose response is equally enthusiastic and exciting. With the sixth form, teachers act as mentors and consultants, supporting the pursuit of excellence. Students learn through teacher input and example, observation and analysis, selection and rejection, self evaluation, and, above all, by creating and refining.
159. Student response is good up to Year 9, very good in Years 10 and 11, and excellent in the sixth form. Students are open and positive; they concentrate deeply and listen intently. They have the self-confidence to use language well to express a view and explore concepts. There is a sense of enjoyment and involvement, and students share the passion and enthusiasm of teachers. In most lessons there is a strong sense of common purpose.
160. There is a broad and balanced curriculum, including input from a wide historical and world context. There are excellent policies for SMSC and citizenship, and the recent significant investment in ICT resources is underpinning major developments based on good current practice and teacher expertise. Provision in Years 10 and 11 includes GCSE and the *ADVANCE* course, with A/S and A level courses post-16. Increasingly abler students are opting for examination courses in art. The assessment system is good; it is being reviewed at the moment to take account of attainment target levels, success criteria, target setting and self assessment. Leadership in art is very good and is having a major impact on standards and focussing on the pursuit of excellence. The accommodation is potentially very good, but needs refurbishment so that exciting working environments may be created in all art rooms to celebrate and inspire student work.
161. Improvement since the last inspection in art has been good. Attainment is steadily improving in lessons and examination results. All teaching is now satisfactory or better, and often good or very good. Assessment has significantly improved and is still developing, and ICT has recently received major investment and is an area of major development.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Planning for the implementation of citizenship

Areas for improvement

- The development of an assessment strategy
- Further development of the citizenship curriculum audit

162. Since the last inspection citizenship has been established as an identifiable element of the wider curriculum and has been fully incorporated into the schemes of work for Personal Social and Health Education [now renamed Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education].
163. The standards of work seen were good in both Key Stages. These included the outcomes of a multi-disciplinary art-led initiative involving reflections of the experiences and suffering of people in the First World War in Year 9; a whole Year group involvement in a reception and party for blind people organised by Year 8 and the outcomes of an Industry Day arranged for Year 9. However, much more remains to be done to develop the overt provision further.
164. Students' achievements are good because they find these activities very stimulating; and their attitudes to the subject, their behaviour in citizenship activities and relationships formed within the subject are very good.
165. The citizenship curriculum is an inclusive one so that SEN students of all kinds are able to participate and achieve fully. The design of many of the opportunities enables gifted and talented students to be fully extended and challenged.
166. Within the limited range of citizenship opportunities fully in place, teacher knowledge and understanding is at a high level, with strong challenge and appropriate teaching methods.
167. The curriculum opportunities for citizenship education have been subject to an initial curriculum audit. Whilst a productive exercise, further work will be required to ensure that the whole curriculum is responsive to the needs of citizenship.
168. Assessment in citizenship is presently underdeveloped and work will be needed to enable attainment levels to be identified, instead of the existing arrangement which merely recognises active participation. Reporting, whilst adequate at present, will become more effective once the assessment strategy becomes more advanced.
169. Leadership in citizenship is thorough and imaginative and has laid a firm foundation for the further embedding of citizenship within the curriculum and within the values of the students.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Overall improvements of GCSE results
- Secure staff knowledge and understanding
- Very good relationships between staff and students
- Strong staff commitment to working as a team

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation and technical support in resistant materials, graphics and textiles is inadequate
- Provide adequate time in Years 7-9 to include systems and control
- Urgent development of provision for ICT, computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacture (CAM)

170. Standards in GCSE 2001 results, and unvalidated 2002 results in resistant materials and textiles are close to national expectations and reflect a steady improvement since the last inspection. Standards in food technology are well below national expectations and reflect on-going staffing difficulties. Standards in child development have been consolidated. Coursework folders are systematically developed, well structured and reflect a secure grasp of problem solving. Research skills are competent but need to use more annotated digital and Internet materials. Students are confident when generating design ideas; analytical skills are good. Graphic skills require more refinement; making skills are sound. Oral and written contributions are confident, providing a good basis for extended technological understanding. GCSE grade predictions of students' performance is very good but targets are not consistently set for students. Assessment is not effectively used to inform planning.
171. Overall attainment at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with national standards. Graphics standards are slightly below national standard at the upper end of the ability range. Many students lack refinement and sophistication in the presentation of their work. Most students use tools and equipment skilfully. Knowledge of materials is secure across the full ability range. Student grasp of technical terms is good.
172. Students' attitudes to learning across all Year groups are very good; they are interested and keen to learn. They cooperate well together, collaborating and sharing ideas when solving design problems. They are confident when working independently. Overall, students of all ages display maturity when analysing design ideas. They concentrate for long periods and work at a good pace. The overall quality of teaching is good, it is consistently good in Years 10-11. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Management of students is very good. Lessons are adequately planned; specialist teachers display a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Effective use is made of exemplar work in displays which underpins sound teacher expectations. All students would benefit from greater challenge to their technological understanding. More varied teaching strategies, incorporating ICT, would further raise achievement.
173. Leadership and management from the acting department head are good. A clear vision is developing and priorities identified for staffing and resourcing of courses. A sharper focus on monitoring and evaluating teaching performance would more effectively inform staff in-service and subject improvement. Risk assessments need to be incorporated into lesson planning. Whilst staffing difficulties have been unsettling over an extended period, teachers have displayed a clear commitment to working as a team.
174. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 does not allow students to gain a full range of technological experiences. In Years 10 and 11 students gain relevant technological experiences. Facilities for graphics, resistant materials and textiles are inadequate and inhibit student achievement. Numeracy skills should be consistently developed with a common subject approach, for example, estimating and dimensioning.
175. Overall provision for ICT in design and technology is unsatisfactory. A broad range of ICT skills need to be developed in all areas. Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM) needs to be introduced across all material areas in Years 7 to 9 and further developed in Years 10 and 11. Computer Aided Design (CAD) needs to be urgently introduced into GCSE courses. Provision for control and systems are weak across all years.
176. Technical support is inadequate; teachers are not released to support and encourage developmental work. Capitation is low across all material areas. Student attainment in graphics, resistant materials and textiles has risen steadily since the last inspection; standards in food have fallen significantly in the last two years. Run-down

accommodation, identified in the last inspection, still remains. No specialist textiles accommodation is available on the Heads Lane site. Staffing and accommodation needs urgent attention in order to consolidate overall improvements in achievement.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is satisfactory.

Strengths

- An appreciation of the need to raise achievement in geography
- A departmental improvement plan that is researched, costed and allocates responsibilities to specific people, including monitoring and review
- Opportunities for field study in each Year group
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Areas for improvement

- Raising standards of attainment in each Key Stage which are well below national expectations and school averages
- Applying the outcomes of assessment, monitoring, tracking, target setting and review, including ICT, to teaching and learning in order to raise achievement
- Ensuring that students know, understand and are prepared for what is needed in their examinations
- Greater attention to the presentation of work and consistency in applying the marking policy

177. In Years 10 and 11, attainment at GCSE in recent years has been an issue. It has risen slowly but not at the same rate as the school generally and lies well below the national average for higher grades. Consistently, girls have done better than boys. In the 2001 examination, point scores in geography were the lowest in the school and whilst 98 per cent gained a grade A* - G, only 38 per cent attained the higher grades, A* - C. In comparison with their other subjects, students taking geography to GCSE level recorded a lower level of achievement as indicated by the relative performance indicator. In 2002 this changed little. This situation is mirrored in the sixth form, although attainment rose in the 2002 examinations. Accordingly, there is a cause for concern which the new Head of Department certainly recognises and is already implementing strategies for change.

178. Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations. Work seen in Years 7 to 9 was indifferently presented and standards were not high enough. There was seldom any evidence in books of ICT usage. There were however some good examples of sophisticated work including river hydrographs in Year 7, wildlife in the rainforest in Year 8 and sensitive work on volcanoes in Year 9.

179. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good with some very good features although a small minority was unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 varies from unsatisfactory to good. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how to teach it. Most teaching had good pace and was purposeful. Lessons are very well-planned, in a structured time sequence. Teachers generally have high expectations of students who are expected to work hard. Their learning is extended through careful and good quality questioning. In most lessons teachers manage the students and the learning environment well. However, a minority can become insufficiently challenged as expectations are not high enough to accomplish the objectives the teachers set. Most students respond extremely well to opportunities for research, collaborative work and independent learning. Lessons that have these

features were very good. The department's marking policy is, however, inconsistently applied, with not enough constructive feedback in students' books.

180. Teaching in Years 10-11 is well organised, efficiently delivered and to good effect. Much teaching was of high quality and in Years 10 and 11 it is clear that written work is more systematically monitored and that staff are regularly overseeing progression and development.
181. Relationships seen between students in lessons are positive, in group work, pairs or whole class lesson work. Behaviour is normally very good. Most students show very good levels of interest in their work and learning and concentrate well for sustained periods, especially where teaching is good. Students with SEN learn well and make good progress.
182. The department is now well led by the recently appointed head of department. She is very well supported by a newly appointed enthusiastic team of teachers. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction and a team consensus of what is to be achieved by dedicated, hardworking subject specialists. The team have fully recognised the significant weaknesses they inherited and the need for rapid improvements and have been very pro-active in taking major steps to overcome these. Schemes of work have been rewritten. A thorough analysis of strengths and areas for improvement has been made with the appropriate priorities identified and plans made to eradicate weaknesses. Resourcing is adequate overall, but accommodation on the Boothferry site is unsatisfactory where geography has had to spill over into non-specialist areas.
183. There is a good understanding of future priorities for development, including raising attainment, development of the use of ICT and new fieldwork opportunities. The department should make sure that it consistently secures a good monitoring and assessment system based on standardised tests. Target setting after assessment is currently unsatisfactory and is a priority.
184. The department has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Improving GCSE results; results in 2002 were significantly higher than those in 2001
- Good teaching, with teachers using their good subject knowledge to explain topics well and capture students' enthusiasm

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the department in order to ensure that standards continue to improve
- The use and application of information and communication technology

185. At the end of Year 9, results in tests were average in 2001. Teachers' assessments of students indicated that the majority was attaining in line with the national expectations for their age. Results in 2002 were higher than those in 2001. At the end of Year 9, standards in the work observed during the inspection were in line with the national average. Students of all attainment levels have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics such as the outbreak of the First World War and most can

select information from various sources to make deductions and communicate findings. This was demonstrated in a lesson on how the Balkan countries became involved in war in 1914, where most students were able to use textbook materials to analyse successfully the motives for going to war. Lower attaining students studying the murder at Sarajevo were able to use information to complete sentences but found it more difficult to produce an extended account of the incident.

186. At the end of Year 11, results in GCSE examinations in 2001 were well below the national average. The proportion of students obtaining grades A* to C was well below the national average and the proportion obtaining grades A* to G was in line with the national average. On average students performed significantly better in their other subjects than they did in history and girls did significantly better than boys. Results in 2002 were significantly higher than those in 2001 with boys doing better than girls. In 1999 and 2000, the proportion of students obtaining grades A* to C was well below the national average whilst the proportion obtaining grades A* to G was in line with the national average. At the end of Year 11, standards in the work observed during the inspection were average. Students of all attainment levels show satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics such as the Chartist movement and the Liberal reforms of 1906 to 1914. Most students can use a wide range of historical source materials competently. Higher attaining students completing coursework projects were able to use contemporary documents, including ordnance survey maps, to determine the age of Tranby House, which is part of the school that had previously been the focus of fieldwork. Lower attaining students found it more difficult to explain why the house was built.
187. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 for all students, including those with special educational needs, is good. They are developing a greater knowledge and understanding of the periods of history being studied and are developing the ability to use evidence appropriately from source materials. Higher attaining Year 7 students demonstrated this when classifying a range of evidence into primary or secondary sources.
188. Achievement across Years 10 to 11 for all students, including those with special educational needs, is good. They make good progress in acquiring historical knowledge, understanding and skills. Students of all attainment levels are developing the ability to use source material to support arguments and higher attainers are making progress in evaluating the reliability of historical evidence. Year 10 higher attaining students were observed developing their knowledge of medicine in Minoan Crete and using textbook information to analyse public health conditions.
189. Teaching and learning overall are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of history that is used effectively to explain topics well and capture students' enthusiasm at the start of lessons. Good questioning techniques enable teachers to check students' understanding of issues and fully involve them in class discussions. In the best lessons, teachers' good classroom management skills are combined with a variety of well-chosen activities. Appropriate timing ensures that teaching has a fast pace with students' interest and concentration being maintained throughout lessons. The learning of students with special educational needs is good because teachers use appropriate resources and support students well, especially on an individual basis. Teachers have positive relationships with students and use praise and encouragement well. This ensures that the attitudes and behaviour of students are good. They quickly settle to listen to teachers' introductions and explanations and work well together on a collaborative basis. Good relationships are a feature of all history lessons.

190. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department, in post for only three weeks at the time of the inspection, leads a relatively new team of teachers that includes two newly qualified teachers. Key priorities for the future development of the department have already been established with an emphasis on supporting the relatively inexperienced team. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the department, to ensure that standards continue to improve, is an area for further development. There are good schemes of work and a helpful departmental handbook.
191. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. GCSE results have improved significantly from 2001 to 2002. A range of appropriate visits has enhanced the curriculum. There has been some development in the application of ICT in the subject, but this is also an area for further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Students have a sound grasp of concepts, apply them well in class work and in answering routine questions, and overall are achieving well
- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities which effectively help students to build their knowledge and understanding effectively
- When working in groups, students share ideas freely and work well together
- A very good range of learning resources is being built up

Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 4
- The use of assessment to set targets for improvement, particularly at Key Stage 4
- The use of computers in other subjects of the curriculum
- There is no accreditation at present for those students who are taking the core skills course in Key Stage 4
- The management and coordination of ICT across the curriculum

192. In 2001 GCSE examinations, results for students attaining grades A* - C were well below the national average. The standards achieved by boys were higher than those of girls. Results for students attaining A* - G grades were above the national average. The results show that the students have made progress and achieve better results than expected for their prior attainment. The school's analysis of unvalidated results for 2002 show that GCSE grades have improved.
193. By the age of 14 years, teacher assessment shows that standards are above the national expectations for 2001. The results for 2002 show significant improvement on previous years. The review of students' work shows that standards are above those expected. Attainment in the information communication technology lessons is in line with the national expectation in a range of activities and this is reflected in the above average quality and quantity of work produced. In lessons students demonstrate skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. They are familiar with processing text and images, presenting information and handling data. They can also access the internet and use this to carry out research and download images.

194. In Years 10 and 11, students' attainment in the ICT option is in line with the expected standard for 16 year olds. In the core skills ICT lessons and GCSE option students are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software, including desk top publishing, use of data bases, using spreadsheets to simulate business practice. They can also design web pages. Good use is made of computers to promote individual learning. These subjects extend students' skills in the use of computers. They have opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems, particularly in handling information and data. The higher attaining students understand and use applications to organise, refine and present information for different purposes and produce results of good quality. They are able to discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete.
195. Students make good progress in their knowledge of and application of a range of skills in ICT. There are opportunities for students to use computers and practise these skills in other subjects, which helps their progress. In Years 7 to 11 the majority of students make progress through a range of opportunities to develop aspects of desk top publishing, spreadsheets, web page design and word processing. Their progress in other strands specified in the National Curriculum programmes of study is satisfactory but, although the department has introduced the teaching of computer control, insufficient attention is paid to the aspects of control systems and computer aided drawing.
196. Students have good attitudes to the subject and behave very well in lessons. They treat equipment with care and work hard to master new skills. All lessons include much independent work, which students enjoy as their confidence grows. Students arrive promptly for lessons and are prepared to use their own time to complete work. They are co-operative and responsive, listen carefully to teachers' instructions, read the guidance material thoroughly and try to work accurately. They enjoy discussions about their work, set themselves suitable targets to achieve and try to meet them.
197. In specialist ICT lessons the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are planned to a high standard and have suitable challenge. The management of classes is good. Clear learning objectives are set for students of similar levels of attainment. This careful matching of work motivates students and maintains their interest. Relationships are very good and the skilled support given to students in their work quickly builds their confidence. Students make progress in all Years because the good teaching is effective in helping students to improve their ICT skills and understanding. Where teaching is good, teachers have a good understanding of how and what to teach. Teachers are careful to make objectives for lessons very clear, ensuring a brisk start with students working right from the beginning. High expectations of both behaviour and learning mean that students are stretched by the work. Good relationships, giving students a limited time to complete their work, challenging questions and a good knowledge of each pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses all help to push learning forward effectively. Homework is set regularly and is included as part of teachers' planning. Students learn and behave well, apply much effort to their work and make good progress as a result. Teachers work well with students with special educational needs, and are aware of targets in individual education plans. Special education needs students make good progress and classroom assistants are used well to support learning.

198. The leadership and management of the department are good. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which is reflected in the work of the department. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. There is good delegation to ensure the effective contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities. The head of department has carried out an audit to monitor the delivery of ICT across the curriculum. Technical support is very good.
199. The department has identified appropriate priorities and targets and takes necessary action and review of progress towards them. A development plan has been produced identifying key areas for improvement. The department is currently introducing certification for all students in core ICT skills. The assessment of pupil attainment and progress is not used effectively to inform teachers' planning and to set targets for improvement.
200. Accommodation is satisfactory, the size and number of rooms is appropriate for the number of students being taught. The level of resources and equipment available in the department is good and directly affects the standards that can be achieved.
201. The department has made satisfactory progress with some of the areas identified for development in the last inspection. The joint planning covering all aspects of information technology ensures that the work is challenging and provides progression. There are very good systems in place to monitor the progress and attainment of students. The elements of control systems and computer aided design are still not developed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

202. Opportunities for the consistent application and development of ICT across the curriculum are not sufficiently planned and co-ordinated to achieve full coherence and progression. Computers are used effectively in some subjects, particularly in science, English, mathematics, PE, business studies, music and art. There are examples of competent teaching in other subjects, which contributes to students' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills. Students' achievements across the curriculum are not fully assessed and fully recognised at present. There is a lack of management and co-ordination of information communication technology across the curriculum. There is no tracking of the contribution of other subjects to the use of information technology. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications and access the network. There are good opportunities for students to use computers during the lunch time and at other times when they can develop their computer skills and have access to the internet.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning of highest and lowest attaining students

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning of middle band students
- Setting of clear targets for students
- Further development of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching

203. Results at GCSE in French over the three years leading to 2001 have shown a steady decline in the proportion of candidates who achieved A*-C grades and have been well below the national average. Unvalidated results for 2002 indicate the trend has been reversed but, although they show a substantial improvement, they remain below the national average. The proportion of candidates gaining A*-A grades is high and exceeds the national average. The proportion of students entered for the examination is well above that of most schools. Girls perform better than boys, but the gap between their results has narrowed year on year, and the improvement in the performance of boys appears to have continued in 2002. Results in German are good and candidates consistently achieve a percentage of A*-C grades, above the national average.
204. In work seen, the standard of work of students at the age of 14 is satisfactory. Higher attaining students develop their language skills well. They demonstrate a good understanding of written texts and speak well, with good pronunciation. Written work is accurate and students have a good grasp of present and future tenses. Lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They write accurately with the support of text books and worksheets. They have good understanding and recall of recently acquired vocabulary. The standard of work of students from the middle bands is unsatisfactory. They make only very brief responses to the teacher's questions, with pronunciation that is no more than approximate. Their recall of previous learning is insecure.
205. The standard of work seen by students at the age of 16 is satisfactory. The work of higher attaining students is good. They demonstrate good levels of pronunciation, good knowledge of vocabulary, and a sound understanding of grammar. Students in the middle groups do not develop their skills as well as expected. In particular, their speaking skills are under-developed. They lack confidence in using any structures beyond simple sentences. Students with special educational needs make good progress. They identify accurately specific items of information from short and slightly extended extracts of speech. They understand short, written extracts of French on familiar topics. They make brief, appropriate responses to their teacher with comprehensible pronunciation.
206. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. There are several elements of good teaching in lessons throughout the school. Teachers have a very secure command of the language they teach. Their management of students is good. A brisk pace keeps students on their toes. In most lessons, teachers provide a variety of appropriate activities which enable students to practise listening, speaking, reading and writing. Expectations of higher and lower attaining students are high. The teaching of modern foreign languages makes a good contribution to the development of students' literacy skills by encouraging them to think about language patterns and sounds and to compare them with their own language. With some groups of average attaining students, however, there is a tendency to teach to one level and not to discriminate between individual students' needs. There is an inconsistency of practice in the marking of students' work. Apart from a small number of students in Year 11, there is little awareness among students of the levels of their performance. They do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to raise their standards. Insufficient use is made of ICT to help develop students' language skills.
207. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has identified areas for improvement and is developing with her colleagues a shared vision relating to the raising of standards. Organisational changes in the grouping of students have had a positive impact upon the attainment of boys in Years 10 and 11. Disruption of staffing as a result of enforced absences during the year prior to the inspection has hindered

the development of systems of monitoring the teaching of the subject. The resumption of a formal programme of identifying and extending the sharing of the good practice that takes place in the department will help to raise standards. Work on the provision of clear targets for students' improvement, especially of those in the middle of the ability range, is in need of development.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

Strengths

- Increase in uptake and improving standards at GCSE
- Very good teaching with excellent features
- Very good resources including ICT

Areas for improvement

- Monitor students' subject performance and use assessment information to guide curricular planning and raise standards in Years 7 to 9
- Detailed planning for the more able and talented student

208. By age 14, the proportion of students attaining level 5 or above is close to the national average. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Numbers taking external examinations in music are small but trends over three years show higher grade GCSE passes for both boys and girls. Uptake has increased from six students in 2001 to 28 students in the present Year 10.
209. Attainment in lessons seen with students up to the age of 14 is overall below average; up to the age of 16 it is above average. Those with special educational needs achieve equally well in all Years. A small minority of students achieve above and well above average levels in playing and performing. These students are supported in their learning by instrumental tuition and opportunities to play and perform in school and in the community. About one third of students in Year 7 are able to use their voices to interpret a simple graphic score and improve their performance. Students in Year 8 show an understanding of the construction of a triad and more able students can play a simple melody with the chords. Most students in Year 9 are able to programme keyboards and play using both hands. They are familiar with triads and are able to build on a given tonic note in three major keys. A few groups in one Year 9 class seen were able to compose a short pentatonic melody using shape and a varied rhythm. For the majority of students in Year 9, the work is still unfamiliar and consequently they find it difficult to keep with the beat and each other. However, all appear keen to learn and, in lessons seen, made very good progress.
210. Students in Year 10 keep a glossary of musical terms and language. There are nine music students in Year 11 this year. Most Year 10 students, including those with special educational needs, play and perform with increasing confidence. Most understand how all the equipment works and are able to use the new software for composition. Standards overall are close to average at the beginning of this course. Students are achieving well, considering that the subject was less prominent earlier in their school life.
211. The quality of teaching overall was very good in lessons seen and is a major strength of the department. Excellent features are teachers' subject knowledge and classroom management. This leads to overall good and often very good learning. In one instrumental lesson seen where the quality of teaching was very good, two Year 9

students made very good progress in improving their technique and using it to improve their interpretation of the piece. Classroom management is excellent. As a result, students show respect for teachers, each other and the wide range of technical equipment and musical instruments. Teaching encourages students to perform with confidence. On-going assessment is good in lessons. However, there are too few opportunities for students to evaluate their own work and reflect on the quality of other performances. Homework is set regularly and used in lessons. In one Year 7 lesson seen on the development of 'pop' music, students produced a wide range of work including ICT, artwork and recordings.

212. The management of the department is satisfactory overall. Strengths lie in the strategic use of resources for the subject and the shared commitment to improvement of the subject of the senior management and departmental staff. Areas for improvement lie in assessment procedures and their use, the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject and the use of National Curriculum levels to set targets for improvement for individual students. The very good use of ICT in most lessons has resulted in eleven students studying music technology in the sixth form.
213. Progress has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. Since the appointment of the new head of department, standards are beginning to rise and the profile of music in the school is being raised. This has resulted in a substantial increase in uptake this year. Progress in lessons and work seen is now overall very good. Students are enthusiastic in lessons and in the wide variety of good quality extra-curricular activities provided by the department. The quality of teaching has improved and is now very good overall.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Students' responses and attitudes
- Very good curriculum provision
- Very good teaching standards

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring procedures to accompany development planning

214. The percentage of students reaching A*-C in the 2001 GCSE examinations was above the national average. The most recent 2002 results have maintained the trend of above average results since the last inspection. Present GCSE students are maintaining these high standards in their practical studies. The standards of their theoretical studies are not as high but are satisfactory overall. Attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 in core studies is satisfactory overall. A significant number of students are working at A level above national expectations. These high standards were observed in health-related fitness and some games lessons.
215. Good levels of achievement are maintained across all discrete areas of study. On entry to the school students are immediately challenged with higher National Curriculum level tasks. Between the ages of 11 and 14 they acquire good knowledge and understanding of how to apply individual skills and techniques to game situations. There are high expectations for students to describe appropriate techniques and in doing so they consistently use a wide range of specialist vocabulary. Very good literacy strategies are

used to inform students of health-related issues. They have above average knowledge and understanding of health and fitness and the impact of exercise on their bodies.

216. These good levels of learning are maintained between the ages of 14 and 16. Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection in developing a scheme of work for these students. The national accreditation of 'Sportsmark' was achieved for this curriculum development. These advances enable teachers to use a wide range of challenging study tasks and for students to be entered for numerous accredited courses. Year 11 girls made excellent progress in identifying positive coaching role models in netball. Year 11 boys made very good progress in a GCSE football lesson applying advanced techniques into game situations. Although these students have above average abilities, they need further opportunities to evaluate their practices consistently. Standards in theoretical studies are not as high. However, the department has made good progress since the last inspection in developing classroom strategies to improve learning. Students in lower ability groups make good progress. Work is well suited to their needs and sensitive instruction is an important motivating factor. The most talented of performers flourish in a very good range of extra-curricular and community clubs accessed through the school. They play an important part in the successes achieved by the school in local competitions.
217. The overall quality of teaching is very good, often with excellent features. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. All teachers have very good specialist knowledge and they relay the appropriate skills and techniques in an interesting and informative manner. Teaching methods are varied to develop students' planning skills and in many lessons to critically evaluate performances. Video recording and the use of ICT would make present evaluation of performances more relevant and extensive. Lessons are often organised to highlight reciprocal learning. Students are encouraged to share instructions and tactics and gain from involvement in collaborative learning and planning. An updated scheme of work ensures that teachers use a variety of interesting tasks to pinpoint the principal progressions in learning for all ability groups. Teacher produced workbooks enable students to focus further on tasks and are important learning aids. Present day-to-day planning is not making best use of teachers' assessments of performance to influence the immediate next stages in learning. The relationships between teachers and students are very good. Students relate well to challenges and enthusiastic teaching. As a result, there are good levels of behaviour and participation with students responding well to teacher interventions. The use of homework makes a significant impact on standards. Students regularly extend their learning using research skills to prepare for their next lessons.
218. Good leadership and management and a positive ethos enable the department to embrace change positively. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in using assessment procedures to track National Curriculum levels and then to record and report students' achievements and targets. Equally the department has been involved in national initiatives to improve the attitudes and performances of girls in physical education. The exemplary practices in this area of work are a major reason why the girls' results exceed the national trends. Present development plans show clear educational direction for the subject. Opportunities to raise standards further are hampered by cramped and poorly resourced classrooms. This impacts negatively on students' motivation to learn in theory lessons. Years 10 and 11 students cannot easily access satisfactory indoor practical accommodation. A number arrive late as a result of walking to the Boothferry Road site for their lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching, especially the range of techniques used and the depths of subject knowledge
- Challenging curriculum
- Pupil responses, particularly to multi-faith learning
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

Areas for improvement

- Marking
- Target-setting for students
- Assessment strategies
- Monitoring and evaluation to promote consistency

219. Standards in religious education are generally above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus because good teaching is having a strong effect on motivating the achievement of most students.
220. Achievement at age 14 is at least good because many students are achieving standards above expectation. Most students recognise that religious education involves the active acquisition of knowledge and understanding about various aspects of world religions and are able to make reflective deductions from that experience, frequently adding their own constructive ideas and making connections with their previous learning. Their oral capacity is good and able students especially write extensively in confident prose. The style of learning promoted enables SEN students to access the curriculum fully and also enables gifted and talented students to extend their skills.
221. Achievement at age 16 is good, with a significant minority of students demonstrating profound insights which place them on the pathway to more advanced study. All students in Years 10 and 11 are now working towards the GCSE short course examination, with a minority opting for the full examination. The evidence seen is that the standards of attainment are at least in line with national averages.
222. In 2002 just under half of an initial entry of students for the GCSE short course obtained grades A*-C. However, over two thirds passed at grade D or better, this significant grouping just below the higher grade boundary, being attributed to unfortunate long-term staff absence. Additional support is being offered to the present Year 11 throughout the school year to compensate for the previous interruptions in their preparations.
223. The quality of teaching now is good overall, and often very good and excellent. It is characterised especially by strong teacher subject knowledge, careful planning, an insistence on pace and challenge and individual support for all students. The outcome is a highly motivational context which inspires very positive attitudes to learning and good levels of achievement.
224. The curriculum is broadly based and fully meets statutory requirements. Its approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a particular strength because students are regularly introduced to the spirituality behind religious faith, to the issues of right and wrong which underpin morality, to various cultural practices which have value for other people and they are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility in carrying out these studies.

225. Marking is thorough but the departmental marking scheme is not being applied consistently and very little subject-specific guidance on points for improvement is given. This lack of guidance is also evident in the reporting arrangements. At the heart of this weakness is the fact that assessment is underdeveloped and this is a weakness outstanding from the previous inspection.
226. Strategic leadership and management are good in that new leadership and staffing have dealt with most of the challenges from the previous report and most current priorities, such as the Key Stage 3 strategy, improving examination results and inclusion. Assessment is now an urgent priority. There is insufficient consistency of practice of monitoring and evaluation as part of the route to further improvement.
227. Religious education provision within the sixth form now meets statutory requirements. In addition, A level courses have now commenced, with the first students all securing AS passes in 2002. Teaching and learning in sixth form general and examination courses were sampled during the inspection and the standard observed was good or better, with two students using the A level courses as a pathway to theological study in higher education.

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

In the inspection, nine 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 A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		Average point score			
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	12	92	88	33	34	5.33	5.25
Business Studies	1	100	92	0	32	2.00	5.50
Chemistry	14	100	90	29	43	4.86	5.90
Computer Studies	1	100	86	0	23	4.00	6.62
English Language	6	50	91	33	30	3.33	5.27
English Literature	6	100	95	33	37	5.67	5.91
French	5	100	89	0	38	4.80	5.59
General Studies	35	89	85	20	30	4.5	4.91
Geography	8	88	92	0	38	3.75	5.74
German	2	100	91	0	40	5.00	5.81
History	6	100	88	33	35	6.00	5.45
Mathematics	13	77	87	23	43	4.62	5.80
Music	3	33	93	33	35	2.67	5.74
Other Sciences	6	50	90	0	30	2.00	5.16
Other Social Studies	4	100	87	25	34	5.00	5.30
Physics	12	83	88	2	4	4.67	5.67
Sociology	3	100	86	67	35	7.33	5.32
Sports/PE Studies	1	0	92	0	25	0	5.09

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection covered two alternative AS and A level courses. One includes modules in pure mathematics and mechanics, while the other includes modules in pure mathematics, statistics and discrete mathematics. The re-sit GCSE course was also inspected. The application of number element of the key skills qualification is available on the timetable, but no students have opted to take the course.

The school offers three sciences: biology, chemistry and physics at AS and A level, and AVCE science. Biology and chemistry were target subjects for this inspection and no lesson or work in physics was seen. AVCE science was lightly sampled and is reported on at the end of this section.

Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, and they use this effectively to maintain a good pace in lessons
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to probe student thinking and deepen understanding
- Students' attitudes to work are good
- Staff-student relationships are excellent

Areas for improvement

- Recent improvements in AS level grades need to be carried through to improve results at A level
- The current provision for teaching GCSE mathematics is unsatisfactory
- The standard text books should be supported by a greater range of additional teaching resources

228. At AS level, results in 2001 were well below average, and, given the GCSE grades that they achieved, these students failed to make satisfactory progress. Provisional results for 2002 are considerably better, and suggest satisfactory progress from GCSE. Examples of students' work seen during the inspection suggest that standards at AS level are now close to national averages. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but are successfully building on their GCSE work in new areas. For example, they are extending their understanding of combined probabilities by looking for more efficient mathematical methods for solving problems. Students' work in discrete mathematics shows above average standards. Students can successfully apply algorithms to a range of situations, and use linear programming to solve complex problems.

229. In 2001, results at A level were below average, roughly in line with results in previous years. Provisional results for 2002 are well below average, but represent satisfactory progress from these students' AS level attainment. More boys than girls study mathematics, in line with national norms, but girls' attainment has been higher than boys' attainment in recent years. Standards seen during the inspection indicate average attainment across pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. For example, students in early Year 13 can discuss the fundamental ideas behind calculus, they can

differentiate and integrate simple functions, and are beginning to use the chain rule to differentiate more complex functions. They understand the applications of calculus in mechanics problems. In statistics, students understand the binomial distribution, and can use the normal distribution with confidence.

230. Not surprisingly, standards of work in the GCSE group are below average for GCSE work. Students apply themselves well and discuss their work actively, but only a small number of re-sit candidates are able to attend lessons regularly due to timetable clashes with other subjects. Consequently, provision for GCSE mathematics is unsatisfactory.
231. Teaching is good overall. A particular feature of the teaching is good subject knowledge and understanding, which, along with good quality planning, helps to ensure that lessons have a good pace. Teachers make use of skilful questioning and manage class discussions well. As a result, students are challenged to clarify their mathematical thinking, to re-formulate ideas, and hence learn more effectively. Class management is good, leading to a relaxed working atmosphere where students share ideas and become more involved in the learning.
232. There are excellent staff-student relationships, and students work together in a supportive way. Students display good attitudes to their work, and take responsibility for their own learning. This is demonstrated by their willingness to attend for regular extra lessons during lunchtimes.
233. Within class, students' understanding is assessed in a satisfactory way through discussion, questioning and checking written answers. When homework or tests are returned, students are given good quality verbal feedback, along with written comments. Teachers and students make good use of the standard text books, but the quality of learning would be enhanced by making use of a greater variety of resources and visual aids, and a greater range of software packages.
234. The department is well led, and this has helped create a strong sense of teamwork within the teaching staff. The teachers are enthusiastic, committed to improvement, and are working hard to bring this about. Appropriate action has been taken in response to the dip in students' results, and the early signs are that this has been successful in raising levels of attainment. An encouraging development is that recent numbers opting to start AS level mathematics have increased dramatically.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is good.

Strengths

- A strong team of committed teachers who have a very good knowledge of their subject
- Very good resources and accommodation
- Students do well in practical investigations as part of their course work

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use is made of computers to support the students' learning
- To improve the pass rate at AS level and the proportion of higher grades at both AS and A level

235. The GCE A level examination results in 2001 were good. 92 per cent of students achieved a pass and 33.3 per cent achieved a higher grade of A or B. The proportion of

students achieving grades A to E is above the national average, while the percentage of students achieving a higher grade is in line with the national figure. There is no significant difference between the results of female and male students. The percentage of students passing has improved by 17 per cent since the previous inspection. In the AS level examination taken at the end of Year 12 in 2001 both the percentage of passes and higher grades were below national figures at 40 per cent and 13 per cent, but improved in 2002 to 55 per cent passes and 20 per cent higher grades. Biology continues to be popular with 23 students in Year 12.

236. The standards of work seen during the inspection are above average and a significant number of Year 13 students achieve A level higher than their GCSE results predict. Achievement therefore is good. Effective teaching challenges all prior attainers, and learning is focused during lessons because of the strategies used by the teachers and the perseverance and concentration of the students. Students have very good listening skills and can discuss their work confidently. However, a significant proportion of them seem reluctant to answer questions in class. Their progress in key skills is not fully monitored by the department. There is no audit or specific documentation.
237. Students in Year 12 have successfully bridged the gap from GCSE to AS level. They have a good knowledge of carbohydrate biochemistry and can carry out experiments to identify specific reducing and non-reducing sugars. They can use the difficult language of this module with confidence.
238. Learning is good as a result of good teaching. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and their expectations of students are high. Lessons are very well planned and there is good use of resources. The question and answer sessions at the start of lessons to recap previous work are a strength of teaching. This sets the pace of the lesson from the start with all students fully engaged.
239. The quality of the coursework investigations has brought positive comments from the A level examination board. Marking of students' work is good. It is consistent across the department and there is good analysis in class following homework, allowing the students to see where there are errors and how they might improve. The comments on essays are specifically relevant to points which could be included to raise the attainment of students.
240. Relationships among students are very good. They share ideas and respect each others' opinions. They are expected to work on their own away from lessons. They do this in a mature way. They use their textbooks confidently and can extract information to supplement their notes. While the use of ICT has improved since the previous inspection, as yet word processing and Internet research are the only areas where this facility is regularly used. There are many areas in the modular schemes of work where data capture, data logging and modelling would enhance the learning of students.
241. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for six months, but has already established a vision of how the subject should evolve. Target setting is being developed from the diagnostic use of assessment data. Improvements since the previous inspection are good, but there is a need to raise attainment, particularly at AS level in respect of the higher grades and the overall pass rate.

Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision for chemistry is good.

Strengths

- The challenge provided in lessons through teachers' high expectations of students
- The monitoring of students' progress through assessed work
- The co-ordination and management of the subject

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities for students to work independently
- More rigorous assessment of students' immediate learning needs in lessons

242. Initial results of the 2002 GCE A level chemistry examinations indicate that more students gained A and B grades than in 2001; every student gained at least grade E. In 2001, standards at the end of the sixth form were below the national average; in 2000, standards were close to the average. The percentage of students gaining grades A and B was close to the national average in 2000 and below in 2001. In both 2000 and 2001, all students gained at least grade E; this was above the national average. Students achieved significantly better in A level chemistry than in most of their other subjects in 2000 and 2001. The standards attained by boys and girls were similar.
243. Half the students who took AS level chemistry in 2002 decided to continue studying the subject in Year 13. From work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by these students are close to the national average. While most students are adept at grasping new ideas and can build successfully on earlier work, a few have significant weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts. This was evident in a lesson on reaction rates, in which the failure of some students to recall earlier ideas on chemical kinetics hindered them in making satisfactory progress.
244. The number of students electing to take AS level chemistry in Year 12 has doubled compared with last year. At this early stage of their course, students are making good progress and standards achieved in lessons are above the national average. In a good lesson on solution strengths, students successfully extended their existing knowledge of relative formula masses from GCSE and learned to calculate molar concentrations. This was a direct result of the teacher's well-structured explanations of the concepts involved.
245. Students display a good attitude to their work. Their response is always positive. They concentrate well and persevere in lessons. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. However, many students are rather quiet and over-reliant on their teachers for information and guidance; some more competent students lack confidence in their ability to succeed. This is particularly the case in Year 13. More opportunities for students to work independently would help remedy this situation; at present, lessons are mainly teacher-directed.
246. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned and delivered effectively. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm results in lessons providing a high degree of challenge for students. However, on occasion this leads to an over-elaborate approach that causes some students to become confused. This was the case in an otherwise good lesson on chemical equilibrium, in which the teacher's very detailed development of the argument resulted in less competent students failing sufficiently to keep up with the work. There is a need to ensure adequate on-going assessment of students' understanding in lessons and to provide appropriate individual learning programmes.

247. The overall monitoring of students' progress is effective, with good attention being paid to the setting and marking of homework. Teachers know their students well and provide helpful guidance and advice on ways to improve. As a result, students have a good awareness of how well they are doing.
248. Facilities for ICT have improved since the last inspection and an appropriate development plan is now in place. However, there is a need to ensure that students' computer skills continue to be refined, particularly in relation to the use of scientific applications such as remote sensing and data capture.
249. Overall, there has been good progress since the last inspection. The subject development plan builds on existing strengths and supports effectively the few weaknesses identified through monitoring processes. In particular, appropriate opportunities are provided for teachers to receive training in aspects of course delivery and assessment. Work in the subject is effectively co-ordinated and teachers work well together as a team.

ADVANCED VOCATIONAL SCIENCE

250. In the one lesson of AVCE science that was observed, teaching was good. This enabled students successfully to learn how to measure the vitamin C content of different plant materials. While overall attainment levels were below the national average, students were making good progress. They had a positive attitude to the course and enjoyed the work.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

In this area the school and consortium offer design and technology which was a target subject for this inspection.

Design and Technology

The provision for design and technology is satisfactory

Strengths

- Students display structured approaches to analytical thinking
- Students collaborate well, work hard and express ideas freely

Areas for improvement

- Greater variety of demanding design activities in coursework
- Provide a wider range of approaches when designing, modelling and evaluating to extend student technological knowledge and understanding
- Use ICT to present information to enhance and improve the quality of student work

251. Standards in 2001 for both AS level and A level were satisfactory. Unvalidated 2002 results reflect an overall improvement in standards at AS level. In lessons students are interested and display maturity in their approach to solving problems. Students demonstrate logical thinking when analysing problems and are confident in generating and communicating design ideas. Coursework folders are developed systematically and concisely. Standards in model making are good with students producing accurate, well-made models quickly. Increasingly difficult design problems need to be presented to students in order to extend their technological understanding. Poor ICT resources,

both in material areas and graphics, hinder the development of more sophisticated graphical presentation.

252. Students are well integrated in teaching groups; successful AS enrolment is resulting in large, lively teaching groups in the current Year 12. This provides a good basis for further raising of interest and motivation. Students have a satisfactory grasp of production principles and quality issues. Experience of CAD equipment is limited and requires urgent development for AS Graphics: Product Design.
253. Students across Years 12 and 13 are well motivated, take responsibility for their learning and work independently. They display the ability to work at a faster pace in lessons and appear able to cope with more advanced challenges.
254. Overall, teaching is good. The development of more varied teaching strategies, incorporating more elaborate ICT methods, will lead to greater impact on the quality of student learning. Assessment of coursework folders and projects need to incorporate clear targets for improvement in order to guide student progress more effectively. Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
255. Management of sixth form provision is satisfactory, often good. The upgrading of resources is urgently required to meet new syllabus requirements and raise attainment levels of talented and committed students.

BUSINESS

Business studies was only lightly sampled. Standards were found to be average and the quality of teaching satisfactory. Only three students are currently studying to A level.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology was a target subject for this inspection.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the quality of provision in Information and Communication technology is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good or better
- Recent investment in resources
- Recognition of need for further development

Areas for improvement

- The timetabling of ICT
- The number of students undertaking AVCE courses in both Years 12 and 13
- Extension of the formal assessment and monitoring procedures

256. The level of attainment in ICT of students entering the sixth form is below the national average based upon the GCSE results. However, the good quality provision in the sixth form ensures that students progress and develop both their own knowledge and ICT skills.

257. The school first entered students for the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in ICT in 2002. The results from the five students were above the expected national average. The majority were entered for a double award and achieved well in both parts of the award with 77.7% gaining grade A.
258. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan lessons thoroughly. They allow good positive discussion in lessons and at all times set high expectations by encouraging students to develop their own strategies. They provide constructive explanations of lesson requirements and give individual help and guidance. They set work appropriate to the level at which the students are working and include progressive tasks which allow the students to extend their knowledge and skills continually. Homework is set as appropriate and students are required to prepare for each lesson. The quality of teaching advances students' learning and progresses aptitude and expertise.
259. The work of students undertaking the AVCE course in Year 13 shows good achievement, with an understanding of the role and nature of ICT. Students are highly motivated and confident about the tasks they undertake. They can explain their work and why they use certain facilities in the software. They produce presentations using a range of resources including multi media and recognise the need to match the presentation to the audience. The work also demonstrates an appreciation of the software used and its facilities and limitations. Students also use the Internet with precision and purpose. The work is at an appropriate level for the students' age and stage of progress and they have the potential to obtain high grades.
260. Key Skills has been re-organised this year and timetabled under General Studies with all students having one period a week for the year. Groups are large and attendance in both Years 12 and 13 is good. Students work with enthusiasm and appreciate the need to match the Curriculum Vitae they are developing to the potential audience. They are able to select appropriate layouts and formats and use the facilities of the software with ease and confidence. They can explain why they chose a particular layout and are consistent in their approach. The Year 13 group is creating a spreadsheet to model the management of a university student's budget – a realistic task, which gives them the opportunity to research on the Internet and other resources. However, in some lessons opportunities were missed to discuss the implications of ICT and the wider issues of using ICT in certain situations.
261. Students' behaviour and response is positive and co-operative. They work independently with enthusiasm and are prepared to collaborate with and assist each other. Teachers create a good rapport with the students and an atmosphere in which students can develop their own skills and knowledge.
262. The school has recently invested significantly in ICT and now provides full and extensive resources for the ICT courses. In addition to the ICT laboratories there are adequate resources in the library and the sixth form common room. The curriculum is appropriate and relevant with the Key Skills modules meeting the necessary requirements. However, there are opportunities to extend further the current constructive development. Consideration should be given to the group sizes in the sixth form and the timetabling arrangements to ensure that the good quality of provision and teaching is utilised to its fullest and more students can access ICT in the sixth form.

263. There is now a formal monitoring structure based upon criteria set by the examination boards and teachers regularly discuss individual progress with each student during lessons. However, consideration should be given to displaying the criteria so students can discover for themselves what they have to do to achieve various levels and thus set their own targets and timescales in conjunction with teachers.
264. There has been a good level of development since the last inspection. The department is led by an experienced and enthusiastic head of department, who is supported by other experienced and quality staff. There is an appreciation of the issues that need attention to further expand an already good sixth form provision.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The school, through the consortium, offers GCE A level PE/sports studies, which is taught at a partner school. No lessons or work were seen in this subject.

AVCE travel and tourism was only lightly sampled. Small numbers of students opt for this area of study. Students' attainment is average overall. The provision and quality of teaching is good.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No lessons or students' work were sampled in this area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The school offers AVCE performing arts and AS and A level art and music technology. Performing arts was a target subject for this inspection and art was lightly sampled.

Entries at AS and A level art are small, which makes them statistically insignificant, but in 2002 all passed – one with an A grade. Attainment is good with AS and A level students, and those possessing exceptional talent produce work of high quality, vitality and inspiration. Sixth form students were working successfully on drawing and painting drapery, and Year 13 students had produced high quality observed drawing and a delightful painting based on grids. A great deal of excellent sixth form work was seen in student portfolios. The quality of teaching and provision for art in the sixth form is good overall with many very good and excellent features.

The new music technology course started in September. Uptake is good, with 11 boys and one girl. In the lessons sampled, students made very good progress because of the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and the very good quality and range of equipment in the department.

Performing Arts

Overall, the quality of provision in performing arts is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching
- Positive attitudes and commitment

Area for improvement

- Quality of accommodation and resources

265. The advanced vocational course in performing arts is a new course. It is taught in a consortium with three other schools and the teaching is shared between them. This inspection only looked at the teaching and work of the twelve students in year 12 and the two students in Year 13 from this school. At this early stage in the school year, the students in Year 12 have only just started the course: Much of the portfolio work of students in Year 13 is still with the examining board.
266. Currently, the attainment of students at the start of the course is above average with almost all students having gained at least a grade B in their GCSE drama examination. Year 13 students attain well and achieve the higher grades in the units they have already done. Students are very positive about the course. In discussions Year 12 students say that they enjoy the variety of work in dance, drama and music and it is a course that they would recommend to others. These students have started to apply their knowledge to the world of work and many hope to have a career in the arts.
267. All students achieve well and make good progress in building up their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject because of the effective teaching that demands much of them. Year 13 students show a good degree of self-sufficiency when undertaking research that reflects good planning, understanding of the criteria and an ability to organise practical work.
268. Teaching is good and students learn well because they are exposed to a rich and varied diet in the performing arts curriculum that is carefully matched to their needs and interests. The range of methods to bring about learning includes clear objectives and a well-chosen pace to match students' abilities. The teacher's good subject knowledge and the quality of planning ensure that the needs of students are met by the tasks that are set. Occasionally there is too much teacher input which doesn't enable students sufficient time to work independently. In a lesson on health and safety in the workplace, the teacher's good choice of questions and background information encouraged students to discuss the practicalities of wheelchair access, lost children, fire hazard and electrical faults in preparation for their work experience at the Hull Fair. No lessons were seen in Year 13 but scrutiny of work available showed a portfolio that included a log book, a summary of what had been learned, extended research in the arts and planning for putting on performances to outside agencies. This represents effective learning over time due to good teaching having taken place and shows that pride was taken in the work done.
269. The library is used one lesson per week for students to do their research using the Internet facility.

270. Students are keen, attentive and respond well to the teaching and varying artistic experiences to which they are exposed. The inclusive nature of the subject encourages students to take part in and organise extra-curricular activities. There is very good cooperation and support for each other and students are prepared to help younger students to do well. Students have researched marketing at the City Hall and programming at the Ice Arena and Hull Truck Theatre. Two hundred students attended auditions in York for ITV's Young Presenter of the Year and two male students in Year 12 progressed to the finals. All of this makes a contribution to the school's development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being.
271. The good teaching and learning is the result of work in the subject being well-led and managed and with the introduction of the performing arts advanced course there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The scheme of work and the improvement plan are in place and monitoring, evaluation and assessment are effective. In spite of the good work that is going on, the standard of accommodation and resources is unsatisfactory for an advanced vocational course in performing arts. Although the drama teaching room is large and has a block stage, there are no lights, no TV and video recorder and only a small stereo player. Dance takes place in the school hall but competes with some music lessons taking place on the stage. School examinations are held in the hall and this places more restrictions on dance lessons.

HUMANITIES

The school offers geography and history in this area. History was a target subject for this inspection.

Geography was only lightly sampled. Provision was found to be good. Standards had been well below the school and national averages, but in 2001 and 2002 there has been a welcome improvement which reflects the skill, good teaching, dedication and commitment of the new departmental team.

History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Results at A level: in 2002 all students obtained pass grades with more than half of them obtaining A and B grades
- Good teaching: teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively and support students well
- Very good student attitudes towards history; they are very appreciative of the support received from teachers

Areas for improvement

- A wider range of teaching approaches, allowing students more opportunities for independent learning in lessons
- Monitoring and evaluating sixth form courses especially the quality of teaching

272. The department offers AS and A2 level courses in history. Currently there are 45 students in Year 12 and 20 in Year 13. There are good levels of retention with most students completing their courses.

273. In the A level results in 2001 all six candidates obtained a pass grade with two of them gaining A and B grades. Results improved in 2002 with all 12 candidates obtaining a pass grade and more than half of them gaining A and B grades. In 1999 results were in line with the national average but well below it in the following year. Results at AS level in 2001 were well above the national average with all 14 candidates obtaining pass grades. Results declined in 2002 with 22 of the 29 candidates obtaining pass grades.
274. By the end of Year 13, standards in work seen were well above the national average. Most students have a very good knowledge and understanding of historical issues such as the mid-Tudor crisis and Hitler's foreign policy. They showed a very good knowledge of 16th century Britain when discussing whether there was a mid-Tudor crisis and were able to give convincing explanations of the concept of factionalism. Most students can formulate complex views that are supported by appropriate evidence; students were able to use a range of documents to plan a structure for an essay on Hitler's foreign policy up to 1935. Students achieve very well and make very good progress in developing appropriate historical knowledge, understanding and skills. Year 12 students were observed developing their increasing understanding of society in 17th century Britain and developing analytical skills when describing how the structure of that society had changed in comparison with today.
275. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge that is used effectively to explain issues and engage students in historical debate. They give good levels of support to students and do much to encourage them, especially in the marking of their work. A good variety of resources, including contemporary sources, is used to support student learning, although some lessons would benefit from a wider range of activities allowing students more opportunities for independent learning. Overall, learning is good with students making rapid increases in the range of their knowledge and depth of understanding as well as historical skills. Students show very good attitudes to the subject and very much appreciate the support they receive from teachers.
276. Sixth form history courses are well co-ordinated by the newly appointed head of department, working closely with three teachers. There are good schemes of work and policy documents. Monitoring and evaluating sixth form courses, especially the quality of teaching, is an area for development. The curriculum has been enhanced through the provision of visits and speakers from the local university. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. A level results have improved, resources for students are now more accessible and the curriculum has been enhanced through the application of information and communication technology.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

277. The school offers English language and literature and French and German at AS and A level. English and French were target subjects for this inspection.
278. No lessons or students' work was seen in German. Numbers taking German A level were very small but all students gained a pass in 2001.

English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is very good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good; students are intellectually challenged as teachers pass on their subject expertise
- The teaching of literary criticism is a strength
- Students receive high quality support throughout the AS level and A level courses, which they recognize and value
- The subject is very strongly led and very well managed

Areas for improvement

- Students need further guidance to improve their sixth form course choices
- The department needs to introduce strategies to increase the number of students who gain higher grades at A level

279. A level English language examination results in 2001 were well below the national average. This is because some students made inappropriate course choices after their GCSE results due to insufficient guidance and support. A level English literature results were in line with the national average. Achievement, however, is satisfactory when related to these students' GCSE results. This is because of very good teaching which challenges students intellectually and also provides high quality support in lessons.

280. Since the previous inspection there have been some significant improvements. The teaching of English is now very good and often excellent, because of this students' ability to tackle pre-twentieth century texts has improved. This is the result of the good foundation provided in Years 7 to 11.

281. Students achieve very good standards in discussion and the analysis of texts. In a Year 13 lesson on *Measure for Measure* students presented their initial views of major characters supported by references to the text, which were very perceptive and well thought through. Students' critical writing is good. Teachers encourage them to develop and express a personal response to literature.

282. In Years 12 and 13, students' attainment in all areas of the curriculum is good, especially in reading and interpreting literary texts. Year 12 students enjoy speaking and listening and most make significant contributions to oral work. They express their viewpoints clearly and are prepared to express their ideas - necessary skills for meeting the requirements of the assessment objectives in the examination. By Year 13, students have developed in greater depth the skills of speculation and forming hypotheses, as seen in their written work on *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Explaining and illustrating their views with evidence are prominent features during discussion of literary texts in both Years 12 and 13.

283. Although Year 12 students have only begun their course, they are reading analytically. They are starting to establish a good standard of critical reading. They read quickly and perceptively. Students write effectively and their achievement is good. High attaining students show skilful control and great confidence when expressing their ideas. They produce well-structured essays, draw on a wide vocabulary and use technical literary terms well when conveying their response to literary works.

284. Teachers know their subject very well and adopt a scholarly approach to prepare and deliver intellectually challenging lessons. They provide a wealth of information on the background of literary texts and use this information to assist students with interpretation. The use of talk is central to all lessons as teachers extend students' communication skills and encourage them to adopt a critical approach. The skills of intellectual enquiry through research, effective questioning and assessment are used in lessons. Expectations are high and teachers' support independent learning. Marking is thorough and assesses strengths and areas for improvement.
285. The subject is led and managed very well. The department is well established and its members have a shared commitment to teach students a love of literature and language as serious critics aiming for a high standard. Planning for success is at the heart of the department's work. The department monitors students' achievement and provides appropriate advice about how to improve and succeed.

FRENCH

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

Strengths

- Good quality teaching
- Assessment based thorough knowledge of the students
- Positive attitudes of the students

Areas for improvement

- Development of strategies to increase the proportion of candidates gaining higher grades at the end of Year 13
- Provision of more opportunities for students to speak at length

286. Over the last three years the numbers of students entered for A level French have varied from eight to none. Results were satisfactory in 2001 and good in 1999. All of the candidates successfully gained grades within the A-E range, but few A or B grades were awarded. At AS level in 2001, all seven candidates gained A-E grades; two were awarded a grade A. Of those seven candidates, five continued with the A2 course. Provisional results for 2002 indicate 100% A-E success for the five A2 candidates, with one B grade. The trend of improvement is indicated also at AS level: 11 of the 12 candidates gained A-E grades, including five at grade A or B.
287. Standards of work seen during the inspection are good in both Years 12 and 13. At the beginning of their first term in Year 13, students speak confidently with good pronunciation. They have a good range of vocabulary. They are beginning to come to terms with discussing abstract topics, but they betray some limitations in their ability to engage in extended speech outside conversations based on their personal lives and interests. Progress at this stage of their sixth form courses is good. They read and understand texts from a wide range of sources. They use the Internet well in order to carry out independent research into topics such as crime and racism for their coursework. They are also coming to terms with extended writing. They all make some elementary errors, for example adjectival agreement, subject/verb agreement, and there are some weaknesses in the use of tenses, but most mistakes arise from attempts to use more complex grammatical structures. The content of their writing reveals the application of mature thought to a wide range of issues. Year 12 students are at a very early stage of their AS course. They have well-developed speaking skills and engage confidently with good pronunciation in conversations about themselves.

They respond appropriately to unpredicted questions. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of grammar.

288. The sixth form teaching is good with some very good features. Teachers have a very good command of the language and they set an appropriate challenge to their students by using French extensively during the lessons. High expectations are reflected in the insistence on grammatical accuracy. Teachers know their students well and have a very good understanding of their individual learning needs. Consequently, students themselves are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. They respond with interest and they work hard to make progress and to achieve success. Occasionally, the teacher over-dominates the lesson and the students do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their own skills or develop their learning.
289. Management of French in the sixth form is good. There is a clear, well-planned scheme of work. The transitional stage from GCSE to AS is carefully planned to cater for students' needs. The teachers involved work well as a team and this has a positive impact upon students' work and attitudes.